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Bilateral Strategies and Development Agenda

Dr Chandrama Goswami[†]

The recent visit of the Chinese president, Xi Jinping, to India has great significance for both the countries. The relationship between India and China has always been one of distrust, especially after the collapse of the friendship attempt made by the then Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and Mao, India's decision to allow Tibet's Dalai-Lama (who Beijing considers a dangerous separatist) to reside in India, and the Sino-Indian Border War which followed in 1962. The border dispute still continues with both countries contesting land along their border in Ladakh and China's claim over India's north-eastern province of Arunachal Pradesh. India's concern also lies with the construction of the Chinese dam on the side of the River Brahmaputra. Each country is also skeptical about the other's relationship with Third World countries. In China's case, India's developing relationships with countries in the Asia-Pacific, especially Japan and the US; and in India's case, China's relationship with Pakistan. The Manmohan Singh Government brought in new levels of India-American co-operation which troubled the Chinese, thinking that India would become a part of an American 'containment' policy. Another cause of concern was when India tested the Agni-5 ICBM in April 2012, expanding the scope of India's nuclear deterrent and bringing the whole of China in range for the first time. Narendra Modi was quite vocal about the territorial dispute with China during his campaign stating that China should give up its policy of expansion. This has however been considered as campaign trail rhetoric by Chinese foreign experts.

President Xi Jinping has so far advocated neighbourly diplomacy. Delivering the keynote address at CICA before the leaders of Middle

Eastern, East, South and Central Asian nations, the Chinese President set out his vision of Asia where the principles of respect for sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and mutual non-interference in internal matters should govern international matters. He further emphasised that for the Asian countries, development is the greatest form of security.

President Xi Jinping's visit to Ahmedabad and to Delhi is likely to have a significant bearing on the stability of relations in the years to come, and on the long-term economic development of both the countries. Modi's win and the BJP-led government at the Centre is an added advantage. Modi had already visited China during his tenure as Chief Minister of Gujarat to seek investments and markets for his state and companies. Though Modi was always concerned about security issues with China, he always has admiration for its economic achievements. He now needs China to deliver his campaign promises of growth and development. For the first time, agreements were signed at the regional (Gujarat state) level on development-related issues when Prime Minister Narendra Modi met President Xi Jinping in Ahmedabad. China announced an investment of \$20 billion in the next five years; this was much less than the expected amount, particularly because India has a huge trade deficit with China. However, this investment can be considered as a breakthrough and the changes can be expected in the years to come.

China is interested on a closer economic relationship with India, particularly in developing the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) economic corridor and the 'Maritime Silk Road', an oceanic trade route linking China and Europe via South East Asia, India and Africa. Thus, India is an important part of China's vision for economic integration with western Asia and beyond.

If both China and India does not allow the border issue to hamper their relations, one can be sure of positive outcomes for both. Modi

[†] Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Mangaldai College & Guest Lecturer, Department of Women Studies, Gauhati University, India, Email: chandrama06@gmail.com

will get an opportunity to work with Asia's largest economy whereas China needs support from India in its march-west policy and its desire for security in its western region.

This issue of the journal *Space and Culture, India* has five articles and a book review. The article by Mr Prasenjit Bujar Baruah studies the unorganised sector in Assam. The unorganised sector plays an important role in developing and underdeveloped countries. In India, this sector is not only important in terms of its contribution to national income of the country but also in employment generation. However, the enterprises in this sector face various problems such as small and fluctuating level of income, lack of skill, use of proper technology and most important of all, non-accessibility to credit. In spite of Assam being an agrarian state, the non-farm sector is gaining importance in recent years. However, a large percentage of unorganised enterprises lack adequate amount of capital. Since they are denied institutional credit, they have to depend on non-institutional sources, who exploit them by charging higher interest. And smaller the enterprise, more dependent they are on the non-institutional sources of credit.

Ms Julia Guenther examines the work of two sanghams (collectives) by the Andhra Pradesh Mahila Samatha Society (APMSS) in Sangareddy and Yellareddy, two districts of Telangana. The work consists of songs created by the Dalit and indigenous women, which are used as a form of protest against inequality. The sanghams prove that, despite societal differences, solidarity among women for a common cause can make a difference in combating social issues. Education leads to empowerment. APMSS approach to empowerment and education is a holistic one where apart from literacy sessions, an understanding and analysis of issues, such as a lack of drinking water, legal assistance, etc. are discussed. The study comes up with the finding that literacy is not the only solution to fight for women's rights—what is needed is an understanding of local contexts, social issues and the ability to link them to life-experiences.

Mr Biswajit Ghosh and Ms Namita Chakma studies the process of urbanisation in West Bengal in the 19 districts of the state (without the incorporation of the Alipurduar district), from 1981 to 2011. Based on Census data, the study uses the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to find out the variables affecting urbanisation. It has been found that West Bengal has experienced a high level of urbanisation during 2001-2011, though high inter-district disparities exist. The study finds a high density of urban population in those districts with a high level of economic development. And it is found that the three factors affecting urbanisation are rural-urban displacement, decadal growth rate and rate of urbanisation.

Dr Anuradha Singh in her article *Buddhism in Sarnath: An Account of Two Chinese Travellers* studies the importance of Sarnath, a place where Lord Gautama Buddha is known to have delivered his first sermon after his enlightenment in Bodhgaya. With the increased popularity of Buddhism in China, the Chinese people started visiting India to study the Buddhist religion and philosophy, and carry home copies of Buddhist compositions. The paper studies the accounts of Fa-Hien and Hiuen-Tsang in Sarnath. Fa-Hien visited India during the reign of Chandragupta II and lived for about 14-15 years. He mentions Sarnath as the place where Buddha gave his first sermon. He also talks about the stupas and the two sanghams where Buddhist monks used to live. Most of the deities of Buddha during the Gupta period show the importance of Buddhism when Fa-Hien visited India. Hiuen-Tsang visited India during the reign of Harshavardhan and lived in India for about 15 years. He first visited Varanasi, a densely populated city and found people courteous and devotional. He describes in details the life of monks and their way of living during that time.

Dr Sujit Kumar Paul examines the role of DFID (Department for International Development), Government of UK for strengthening decentralisation in rural West Bengal. The 73rd Amendment Act has made panchayats an

institution of self-government, and Article 243G envisages Panchayats as Institute of Self Governance, which means that they enjoy functional, financial and administrative autonomy in their working area. He stresses the fact that the Gram Panchayats in West Bengal have been given more powers in comparison with powers given to Block/District Panchayats. Encouraged by the West Bengal Government's commitment to rural decentralisation, DFID has come forward to support the decentralisation initiatives. The Programme for Strengthening Rural Decentralisation (SRD) has been carried out with the support from DFID. This has led to

the success in rural decentralisation leading to sustainable reduction in poverty in the rural areas of the state. The interventions on SRD mode should start in all tiers of panchayats and in all districts of the state for better outcome in the form of enhanced resource mobilisation, improved financial management, participatory planning, social mobilisation, transparency, inclusiveness and accountability—all leading to reduction of poverty.

Finally, this issue of our journal brings you a book review titled *Life and Times of Unborn Kamla* written by K.K. Varma and our regular *Publication Watch*.

Financial Access of Unorganised Manufacturing Enterprises in Assam

Mr Prasenjit Bujar Baruah[†]

Abstract

The unorganised sector is no more considered as a residual one in the developing and in the underdeveloped countries; rather it is considered as a common component of such economies. This sector is playing an important role in those countries both in terms of its contribution to the national income and employment generation. However, despite its importance, the enterprises in this sector are facing various problems. A large segment of enterprises state non-accessibility to credit is the most important problem faced by them. Moreover, existing reports and literature states that the formal financial institutions are not interested to deal with the unorganised enterprises. As a result, they have to depend on the informal sources of credit. This present paper based on secondary data analyses the various characteristics of unorganised manufacturing enterprises in Assam and their accessibility to credit. Results indicate that the average amount of outstanding loan per unorganised manufacturing enterprise in Assam is smaller than that of all-India average. Again, the enterprises in the rural areas are more dependent on the non-institutional sources of credit when compared to those in the urban areas. Similarly, the smaller enterprises have limited access to credit from the formal financial institutions as compared to the larger enterprises.

Key words: unorganised enterprise, manufacturing, financial access, financial resource gap and credit

[†] Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Rajiv Gandhi University, Rono Hills, Doimukh, Arunachal Pradesh-791112; Mob: 094010-45756, Email: prasenjitbb@gmail.com

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Introduction

The unorganised sector has attracted the attention of the theoreticians and the researchers in the dynamics of development economics since long back. Those economic activities taking place outside the organised sector are termed as informal sector by the international organisations like International Labour Organisation (ILO). In India, this segment of the economy is generally termed as the unorganised sector. Moreover, the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) in India makes differentiation between the unorganised and the informal sector. This definition makes the informal sector a sub-set of the unorganised sector. Earlier, this section of economic activities was regarded as a residual sector. It was assumed that along with economic development, those engaged in this sector would be able to absorb themselves in the organised sector (Harish & Todaro, 1970). However, currently it is considered as a common component of the developing and underdeveloped economies; where it is playing an important role both in terms of its contribution to national income and employment generation. Nevertheless, the enterprises in this sector are facing various problems, such as small and fluctuating level of income, lack of skill, use of poor technology and non-accessibility to capital, etc. Among these non-availability of credit is regarded as the most important one (Honorati et al., 2007); as other problems such as lack of technology (Bhavani, 2006) or skill formation are also related to access to adequate amount of credit. Major segment of the unorganised enterprises do not have access to credit and other financial services due to their inability to pay higher interest rate, meet collateral requirements, and cope with plethora of procedure and formalities (Subramanian, 2012). One segment of literature states that, the access of small enterprises to capital market was limited because of greater behavioural risk of default and higher lending cost (Bhavani and Tendulkar, 1997). As a result, the internal funding (Allen et al., 2006) and credit from the non-institutional sources constitutes the major

source of funding for these enterprises. Based on this information, this paper tries to address the following objectives:

- To examine the nature and importance of the unorganised manufacturing enterprises in Assam.
- To analyse the financial accessibility of unorganised manufacturing enterprises in Assam.

Data Source and Methodology

The unorganised sector is a heterogeneous one, comprising of unorganised workers and enterprises. Moreover, this sector includes both the farm and non-farm activities. Again, the non-farm sector includes both the manufacturing as well as service sector enterprises. However, the nature and characteristics of the enterprises in the farm sector are quite different from those in the non-farm sector and the service sector within the non-farm sector is also a highly heterogeneous one. Moreover, as the research concentrates in a particular area, this paper deals with the manufacturing enterprises only.

The concept of financial access is widely discussed in the existing literatures. The World Bank (2008) considers financial inclusion or financial access as the availability of financial services to all without any barrier. Thus, financial access is a broader concept that includes those using financial services and those who are voluntarily excluded. Indeed, it is a supply side concept, but due to the difficulty to differentiate between the voluntary and non-voluntary exclusion from financial services, Bhavani et al., (2012) measured financial accessibility as the actual availability and adequacy of loan from Formal Financial Institutions (FFIs). They used the concept of Financial Resource Gap (FRG)¹ to measure the adequacy of credit. FRG indicates the percentage of loan taken by an enterprise (or

¹ Financial Resource Gap indicates the proportion of loan taken by the enterprises from the non-institutional sources i.e., $FRG = (\text{Amount of Loan taken from non-institutional Sources} / \text{Total Amount of Loan})$ (cited in Bhavani et al., 2012, pp.9).

an individual) from the non-institutional sources. This research also tries to analyse the unorganised enterprise's accessibility to financial services using the concept of FRG.

This research is based on secondary data that are compiled from different rounds of NSSO surveys, Economic Survey of Assam, Statistical Hand Book, Assam and the internet. In India, NSSO is the principal source of data for the unorganised sector. However, the concepts and coverage of the surveys change from time to time. That is why; the data are not strictly comparable over the years. Therefore, this is one of the major limitations of this research.

This research examines unorganised manufacturing enterprises in Assam a relatively backward states in India, with higher rate of unemployment. Although the economy of this state is basically an agrarian, the non-farm sector is also emerging in the recent years. The agricultural productivity in this state is very low and the overall condition of the organised industrial sector is also not satisfactory. Thus, the non-farm unorganised sector is expected to play an important role in this state. Existing literature and reports also indicate that the overall indebtedness of households and enterprises is relatively lower in this state when compared to the rest of country. Moreover, the overall FRG in Assam is sufficiently inadequate (Bhavani et al., 2012). Therefore, this research is an attempt to concentrate in only in Assam.

This research consists of four sections: following the introduction, it discusses different characteristics and importance of the unorganised manufacturing enterprises in Assam. The third section discusses about the unorganised manufacturing enterprise's access to credit. The fourth and the concluding section summaries the discussion and recommends policy implications.

The Unorganised Manufacturing Enterprises in Assam

Before discussing other aspects of the unorganised manufacturing enterprises it would be wise to have an idea regarding the definition and coverage of the unorganised

enterprises. The 15th International Conference for Labour Statisticians (ICLS) held in January, 1993 for the first time tried to give an inclusive definition of the unorganised/informal enterprises. According to this definition, informal enterprises are those private unincorporated enterprises owned by individual or households who do not have any legal status independent of individual or households who own them. As a result, no complete account of the enterprise is available that enables the financial separation of the enterprise from other activities of its owner. Further, this definition adds that to be regarded as an enterprise, the production or service unit must sale at least a part of its product in the market. Neither the enterprise nor its employees are registered under national legislation. The issue of maximum number of workers employed in such unit is left to the country concern. Noted that this definition includes enterprises belong to the non-agricultural sector only.

In India, the 62nd round of NSSO survey on unorganised manufacturing enterprises, 2005-2006 defined unorganised enterprises² as all those private enterprises which are not registered under sections 2m (i) and 2m (ii) of Factories Act, 1948 and Bidi and Cigar workers (Condition of Employment) Act, 1966. Actually, any enterprise in India, employing 10 or more workers with the use of electricity (and 20 or more workers without using electricity) has to register under the Factories Act, 1948. In addition, the Annual Survey of Industries (ASIs) covers these industries. The NSSO's unorganised manufacturing sector survey covers those industries, which are not included in the ASI. Thus, in principle, the NSSO survey on unorganised manufacturing enterprises excludes those enterprises employing 10 or more workers with the use of electricity and 20 or more workers without using electricity. But in reality many bigger units (that is, employing more workers) are not registered under the

²The 57th and 63rd rounds of NSSO survey on unorganised service Sector in India also used the same definition to identify an enterprise.

section 2m (i) and 2m (ii) of Factory Act, 1948 and are excluded from the coverage of ASI. And such, bigger units are also covered by the NSSO unorganised manufacturing enterprise survey. Thus, in India, the unorganised sector is a residual sector and it covers those enterprises for which data from any other regular sources is not available. The NSSO applies the same system to other sections of the unorganised sector too.

Considering the importance of the unorganised sector, the Government of India appointed National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS) in 2004 to study different aspects of the unorganised enterprises. The definition provided by this commission (Bhalla, 2009) is a more inclusive—according to this commission, unorganised/informal enterprises are all those unincorporated private enterprises owned by individuals or households engaged in the sale and production of goods and services operated on a proprietary or partnership basis; with less than 10 workers. This definition gave more emphasis on the maximum number of workers employed irrespective of the sector in which they lie. Moreover, the registration of such enterprises was made a flexible criterion.

Having discussed different definitions of unorganised enterprises it is found that non-registration with some recognised agency, non-maintaining the accounts of their business and some maximum limit on the number of labour employed are regarded as the characteristics of the unorganised enterprises.

Types of Unorganised Manufacturing Enterprises

It is now essential to have an idea about the different categories of the unorganised manufacturing enterprises in Assam. The NSSO broadly classified the unorganised manufacturing enterprises into three categories: Own Account Manufacturing Enterprises (OAME), Non-Directory Manufacturing Enterprises (NDME) and Directory Manufacturing Enterprises (DME). OAME are those manufacturing enterprises working without employing any regular worker

on a fairly regular basis. NDME are those enterprises employing workers between two to five. And those enterprises that employ more than five workers are known as DME. The total number of different categories of unorganised enterprises in Assam over the years can be shown with the help of the Table 1.

From Table 1, it can be seen that the percentage share of different types of enterprises in the total number of unorganised manufacturing enterprises of Assam is more or less constant over the years. In Assam, the maximum percentage of unorganised manufacturing enterprises belongs to rural area. During 1994-1995 as well as during 2005-2006, around 90 per cent of the unorganised enterprises were rural enterprises. During 2000-2001, the percentage of rural enterprises decreased to 86 per cent. Again, Assam's share in the total number of unorganised manufacturing enterprises of India decreased from 2.12 per cent during 1994-1995 to 1.64 per cent in 2000-2001; and then it increased to 2.17 per cent in 2005-2006. Assam's share in the total number of rural unorganised manufacturing enterprises in India is relatively higher than that of the urban. Similarly, Assam's share in the smaller units is relatively higher than that of the bigger units.

During the 2010-2011, the NSSO conducted another round of survey of the Unincorporated Non-Agricultural Enterprises (excluding construction) in India. By definition the unincorporated non-agricultural enterprises is a sub set of unorganised enterprises. This survey covered the enterprises from manufacturing, trade and other services categories. All the enterprises surveyed were classified as Own Account Enterprises (OAE) and Establishments. OAE were those enterprises working on a fairly regular basis without employing any workers. And those enterprises employing workers from outside were termed as establishments. This survey also indicated that in Assam, the higher percentage of the unincorporated manufacturing enterprises were rural enterprises. Again, larger number of OAEs

belonged to the rural areas; relative to that of the establishments.

The unorganised manufacturing enterprises are classified into different categories; which also changed over different rounds of NSSO survey. The 56th and 62nd rounds of NSSO surveys classified the unorganised manufacturing enterprises into 24 categories. These are cotton ginning, cleaning and baling; food products and beverages; tobacco products; textiles; wearing apparels: dressing and dying of fur; tanning and dressing of leather (luggage, handbag, saddler, harness and footwear); wood and products of wood and cork (except furniture), articles of straw and planting materials; paper and paper products; publishing, printing and reproduction of recorded materials; coke, refined petroleum products and nuclear fuel; chemical and

chemical products; rubber and plastic products; other non-metallic mineral products; basic metals; fabricated metal products, except machinery and equipment; machinery and equipment (not elsewhere classified); office equipment and computing machinery; electrical machinery and apparatus (not elsewhere classified); radio, television and communication equipments and apparatus; medical precision and optical watches and clocks; motor vehicles, trailers and semi trailers; other transport equipments; furniture manufacturing (not elsewhere classified) and recycling. During 2005-2006, in Assam among the different categories of unorganised manufacturing enterprises, food products and beverages was the largest sub- sector; followed by textile industry and furniture manufacturing sector.

Table 1: Numbers of Unorganised Manufacturing Enterprises in Assam (Figures in the bracket gives per cent value)

		OAME (O)	NDME (N)	O+N	DME	All
1994-1995	Rural	244616 (89.00)	29450 (10.72)	274066 (99.72)	776 (0.28)	274842 (100.00)
	Urban	18242 (56.55)	12553 (38.92)	30795 (95.46)	1463 (4.54)	32258 (100.00)
	Rural+	262858 (85.59)	42003 (13.68)	304861 (99.23)	2239 (0.73)	307100 (100.00)
	Urban					
2000-2001	Rural	224130 (93.20)	14881 (6.20)	239010 (99.40)	1395 (0.60)	240405 (100.00)
	Urban	23310 (61.30)	13339 (35.10)	36649 (96.30)	1394 (3.70)	38043 (100.00)
	Rural+	247440 (88.90)	28220 (10.10)	275659 (99.00)	2789 (1.00)	278448 (100.00)
	Urban					
2005-2006	Rural	306157 (91.94)	24581 (7.38)	330738 (99.32)	2268 (0.68)	333006 (100.00)
	Urban	21984 (58.20)	13647 (36.13)	35631 (94.32)	2143 (5.68)	37774 (100.00)
	Rural+	328142 (88.50)	38228 (10.30)	366370 (98.81)	4411 (1.19)	370781 (100.00)
	Urban					

Sources: Compiled from Report No.434, Unorganised Manufacturing Enterprises in India: Silent Features, NSS 51st Round, 1994-95; Report No. 478, Unorganised Manufacturing Sector in India: Characteristics of Enterprises, NSS 56th Round, 2000-01 and Report No.524, Operational Characteristics of unorganised Manufacturing Enterprises in India, NSS 62nd Round, 2005-06

During the same period, in Assam, none of the unorganised enterprises lies into the categories such as manufacturing of coke, refined petroleum products and nuclear fuel, manufacturing of office equipment and computing machinery, manufacturing of radio, television and communication equipments and apparatus, manufacturing of medical precision and optical watches and clock, manufacturing of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers and recycling.

Unorganised Enterprises Not Registered with any Agency

One of the important characteristics of unorganised enterprise is their status of registration. One segments of reports and literature categories those enterprises as unorganised which are not registered under some specific laws of the country concern. The 15th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) left this issue to the country concern whether registration should be the basis for categorising enterprises as organised or unorganised.

In India, those manufacturing enterprises that are not registered under section 2m (i) and 2m (ii) of Factories Act, 1948 and Bidi and Cigar

Workers (Condition of Employment) Act, 1966 are regarded as the unorganised enterprises. However, there are some other agencies too, where the unorganised (as well as the organised) enterprises may register themselves. For example, an enterprise may register itself with the District Industries Centre (DIC) as Small scale Industry. Other such agencies where an enterprise may register are Khadi and Village Industry Commission; Development Commissioner of Handicrafts; Development Commissioner of Handloom; Coir Board; Silk Board; Jute Commission; Municipal Corporation, Panchayat, Local Body; Section 85 of Factories Act, 1948. It should be noted however that, registration with these agencies do not necessarily make an enterprise the organised. Sometimes, the same enterprise may be registered with the more than one agency.

In India, the registration status becomes necessary for an enterprise to have assistance from the government. For example, if an industry has to avail any benefit from the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), it needs to be registered with the District Industries Centre (DIC). The distribution of the enterprises according to their status of registration in Assam can be explained with the help of Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of the Unorganised Manufacturing Enterprises not Registered with any Agency (in per cent)

	2000-2001			2005-2006		
	Rural	Urban	Rural + Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural + Urban
OAME	97.6	81.4	94.2	97.8	77.9	96.4
NDME	71.8	44.1	58.7	92.3	31.2	70.5
DME	53.1	37.0	45.0	53.4	61.5	57.3
All	93.8	66.7	90.1	97.1	60.1	93.3

Sources: Compiled and calculated from Report No. 478, Unorganised Manufacturing Sector in India: Characteristics of Enterprises, NSS 56th Round, 2000-2001 and Report No.524, Operational Characteristics of unorganised Manufacturing Enterprises in India, NSS 62nd Round, 2005-2006

From the above Table it is apparent that the lion's share of the unorganised manufacturing enterprises is not registered with any agency. Higher percentage of manufacturing enterprises located in the urban areas fulfils the registration criteria compared to those in the

rural areas. Similarly, the probability of fulfilling the registration criteria increases as the size of the enterprise increases. NSSO 67th (July 2010-June 2011) round also indicates that more than 87 per cent of unincorporated manufacturing enterprises in Assam are not registered with

any agency; which is slightly higher than the all-India figure.

In Assam, the largest percentage of unorganised manufacturing enterprises is registered with the Municipal Corporation, the Panchayats and other local bodies; followed by those registered with the DICs. Although Assam is rich in the weaving of silk and other forms of handlooms and handicrafts, no industry is found to be registered with Silk Board, Development Commissioner of Handlooms and Development Commissioner of Handicrafts.

Enterprises Not Maintaining Any Account of Their Business

The 15th ICLS defined those enterprises as informal, which do not keep any account of their activities and as a result, they could not be separated from the other activities of the entrepreneur. Thus, information regarding maintenance of their accounts is also of importance. The percentage distribution of unorganised manufacturing enterprises in Assam those do not maintain any account of their business can be explained with the help of the following Table 3.

Table 3: Distribution of Those Enterprises that do not Maintain Their Accounts (in per cent)

	2000-2001			2005-2006		
	Rural(R)	Urban(U)	R+ U	Rural	Urban	R+ U
OAME	99.5	97.7	99.3	97.5	97.3	97.5
NDME	88.4	94.7	91.4	83.5	85.1	84.1
DME	68.4	75.5	71.9	53.7	80.0	66.5
All	98.6	95.9	98.3	96.2	91.9	95.8

Sources: Compiled and calculated from Report No. 478, Unorganised Manufacturing Sector in India: Characteristics of Enterprises, NSS 56th Round, 2000-2001 and Report No.524, Operational Characteristics of unorganised Manufacturing Enterprises in India, NSS 62nd Round, 2005-2006

Table 3 shows that the percentage of enterprises that do not maintain any accounts of their business separately is declining over the years. Almost all the OAME do not maintain any account of their business separately. Similarly, larger percentage of the rural enterprises does not keep any account of their business compared to the urban enterprises. Higher percentage of DME keeps their accounts separately and within the DME, relatively higher percentage of rural enterprises keeps their accounts separately. The 67th round of NSSO survey reveals that more than 97.1 per cent of the unorganised manufacturing enterprises in Assam do not keep any record of their accounts.

Number of Workers Employed in the Enterprise

Some definite (maximum) number of workers employed by an enterprise is also considered as a criterion to classify the enterprises as an unorganised one. As stated above, the 15th ICLS left this issue to the accounting authority

of the country concern. Therefore, it is reiterated that in India, the NSSO's unorganised manufacturing sector survey in principle covers those enterprises employing less than 10 workers with the use of electricity and less than 20 workers without using electricity. However, in reality the NSSO does not put any limit on the maximum number of workers employed in an unorganised unit. NCEUS classified that all those private, unincorporated units in the manufacturing as well as in the service sector as unorganised enterprise that employ less than ten workers. Thus, the numbers of workers employed by an enterprise is an important characteristic in case of the unorganised sector. The distribution of unorganised manufacturing enterprises according to the number of workers employed by them is shown in Table 4.

As can be seen from the Table 4 that majority of the unorganised manufacturing enterprises are employing less than five workers; although the percentage of enterprises employing larger number of workers is increasing over the years.

By definition, OAMEs do not employ any workers on a fairly regular basis; while the NDMEs employ 2 to 5 workers on a fairly regular basis. But from Table 4 it can be seen

that maximum percentage of OAMEs are employing 2 to 5 workers over the years and during 2005-2006 even 0.40 per cent of them were employing more than 10 workers.

Table 4: Distribution of Enterprises According to Number of Workers Employed (in per cent)

		1	2 to 5	6 to 9	10 ≤
2000-2001	OAME	49.80	50.20	0.00	0.00
	NDME	0.40	98.80	0.80	0.00
	DME	0.00	0.00	68.30	31.70
	All	44.30	55.60	0.80	0.30
2005-2006	OAME	43.00	56.60	0.00	0.40
	NDME	0.00	94.00	4.40	1.60
	DME	0.00	2.00	30.40	67.60
	All	32.10	59.40	3.00	5.50

Sources: Compiled and calculated from Report No. 479, Unorganised Manufacturing Sector in India: Employment, Assets and Borrowings, NNS 56th Round, 2000-2001; Report No. 526, Unorganised Manufacturing Sector in India: input, output and Value Added, NSS 62nd Round, 2005-2006

Importance of the Unorganised Manufacturing Enterprises in Assam

It is already mentioned that the unorganised enterprises are playing an important role in the developing and in the underdeveloped countries. The story is not exceptional in the case of Assam. In Assam, the unorganised manufacturing enterprises have a significant share in the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) and are also employing large number of workers. During 1994-1995, the unorganised manufacturing enterprises were contributing 1.93 per cent to the GSDP of Assam; which increased to 2.13 per cent per cent during 2000-2001. This percentage share increased to 2.29 per cent during 2005-2006 and then it decreased to 1.95 per cent per cent during 2010-2011. As the coverage of the survey is changed over the years, the data belonging to different years is not strictly comparable. However, the coverage of the survey made during 2000-2001 and 2005-2006 are similar; so it can be concluded that the share of the unorganised manufacturing enterprises in the GSDP of Assam increased during this period. Again, the major percentage of this contribution comes from the rural enterprises.

Here it remains important to have an idea about the productivity of these enterprises, that is, Gross Value Added (GVA) per enterprise in this sector. The GVA per unorganised manufacturing enterprise increased from ₹29,370 to ₹36,725 during 2000-2001 and 2005-2006. During 2010-2011, GVA per unorganised manufacturing enterprise was ₹100,240, which was found to be higher among the urban enterprises. Moreover, the GVA per enterprise is increasing along with the increase in the size of the enterprise.

Unorganised enterprises are the employer of a large number of unskilled and semi-skilled labourers. Total number of workers employed in the unorganised manufacturing enterprises increased from 4,98,830 to 6,32,481 during 2000-2001 and 2005-2006. Larger percentage of workers was found to be employed in the rural sector. During 2010-2011, the number workers employed in the unincorporated manufacturing enterprises were 4,22,025. This decreased number is probably due to the changed in the definition and coverage of this survey. Along with the number of workers employed, the productivity of the workers is also of importance. The GVA per worker increased from ₹16,395 to ₹21,529 during 2000-2001 and 2005-2006. The GVA per worker

in Assam is lower than that of the all-India average (₹24,034 during 2005-2006). Again, the GVA per worker increased along with the increased size of the enterprise.

From this discussion, it is clear that the unorganised manufacturing enterprises are playing an important role in Assam. However, existing reports and literature state that the enterprises in this sector are facing various problems such as small and fluctuating level of income, lack of skill, use of poor technology and non-accessibility to capital, etc. Among these, non-availability of credit is regarded as the most important one; as other problems such as lack of technology or skill formation are also related to availability of adequate amount of credit. As a result, internal funding and credit from the non-institutional sources constitute the major source of funding for these enterprises. This information inspires to have an investigation into the financial accessibility of the unorganised manufacturing enterprises in Assam, which is done in the following section.

Financial Access of Unorganised Manufacturing Enterprises

Access to finance is one of the pre-requisites for any enterprises to work smoothly. The World Bank (2008) considers financial inclusion or financial access as the availability of financial services to all without any barrier. In other words, financial access indicates timely availability of adequate amount of credit and other financial services to all at an affordable cost. Thus, access to finance is a broader concept which includes access to savings, credit and insurance services. However, considering the limited scope of this research, it deals only with access to credit. An entrepreneur needs credit for different purposes. Debraj Ray (2000) classified the purposes of credit into three categories: capital expenditure, working capital expenditure and finally, consumption expenditure. According to him, capital expenditure is that part of the expenditure made to start up new businesses or for large-

scale expansion of the existing one. Expenditure on working capital includes the ongoing production expenditures like raw materials or labour cost. Sometimes an entrepreneur may also borrow for consumption purposes. Again, the consumption expenditure can be divided into two categories, that is, current consumption expenditure and expenditure on consumer durables.

Notwithstanding, a large segment of existing reports and literature state, that the unorganised enterprises do not have access to credit. Different rounds of NSSO surveys also indicate that larger percentage of unorganised manufacturing enterprises in Assam as well as in India stated shortage of capital as the main constraint faced by them. For example, during 2000-2001, 73.8 per cent of the unorganised manufacturing enterprises in Assam stated shortage of capital as the constraint faced by them. Similarly, during 2005-2006, 67.3 per cent of unorganised manufacturing enterprises in Assam stated shortage of capital as their key constraints. The outstanding amount of loan per unorganised manufacturing enterprises in Assam can be explained with the help of the Table 5.

From the data in Table 5, it can be seen that the amount of loan per enterprise increased over the years. The average amount of loan per enterprise increased from ₹700 during 2000-2001, to that of ₹1367 during 2005-2006. Such an increase in the average amount of loan per enterprise was found for all types of enterprises. Again, the average amount of loan per enterprise was found to be increased along with the increase in the size of the enterprise. For example, during 2005-2006 the average amount of loan per DME was ₹73, 022. During the same period, the average amount of loan was ₹182 and ₹3, 271 respectively per OAME and NDME. The average amount of loan per enterprise is higher in the case of urban unorganised enterprises compared to that of the rural ones.

Table 5: Outstanding Amount (in ₹) of Loan per Unorganised Manufacturing Enterprise in Assam

	OAME			NDME			DME			All		
	Rural (R)	Urban (U)	R+U	R	U	R+U	R	U	R+U	R	U	R+U
1994-1995	106	344	NA	1804	1894	NA	9219	23818	NA	313	2011	NA
2000-2001	133	216	141	2397	2684	2533	53010	10550	31784	580	1460	700
2005-2006	174	293	182	1796	5928	3271	72990	73057	73022	790	6457	1367

Sources: Compiled and calculated from Report No. 435: Assets and Borrowings of the Unorganised Manufacturing Enterprises in India, NSS 51st Round, 1994-1995; Report No.479, Unorganised Manufacturing Sector in India: Employment, Assets and Borrowings, NNS 56th Round, 2000-2001 and Report No.525, Unorganised Manufacturing Sector in India: Employment, Assets and Borrowings, NSS 62nd Round, 2005-2006

During 2010-2011, the outstanding amount of loan per manufacturing enterprise in Assam was found to be ₹978. During the same period, the outstanding amount of loan per OAME is as low as ₹66, while that of per establishment enterprise is ₹3339.

Information about outstanding amount of loan only is not sufficient to understand the financial health of an enterprise. To have a clearer idea about it, information about fixed asset of the entrepreneurs is also important. This is because

entrepreneurs with a higher level of fixed asset have the capacity to borrow higher amount of money. Thus, outstanding amount of loan as a percentage of fixed assets of an entrepreneur can give a clearer picture of the financial status of the unorganised enterprises. The outstanding amount of borrowing per unorganised manufacturing enterprise as a percentage of their fixed asset can be explained with the help of the Table 6.

Table 6: Outstanding Amount of Loan per Unorganised Manufacturing Enterprise as a Percentage of their Fixed Asset

	OAME			NDME			DME			All		
	Rural (R)	Urban (U)	R+U	R	U	R+U	R	U	R+U	R	U	R+U
1994-1995	1.65	4.14	NA	7.82	6.74	NA	10.89	47.42	NA	3.72	11.23	NA
2000-2001	1.28	0.88	1.20	5.43	3.48	4.24	20.48	4.54	12.94	4.16	2.88	3.69
2005-2006	1.25	0.58	1.11	3.23	4.43	3.91	16.19	13.93	15.01	3.96	6.01	4.74

Sources: Compiled and calculated from Report No. 435: Assets and Borrowings of the Unorganised Manufacturing Enterprises in India, NSS 51st Round, 1994-1995; Report No.479, Unorganised Manufacturing Sector in India: Employment, Assets and Borrowings, NNS 56th Round, 2000-2001 and Report No.525, Unorganised Manufacturing Sector in India: Employment, Assets and Borrowings, NSS 62nd Round, 2005-2006

Table 6 illustrates, that the outstanding amount of loan as a percentage of their fixed asset is not very high among the unorganised manufacturing enterprises. The debt asset ratio declined during 1994-1995 and 2000-2001; then it slightly increased during 2005-2006.

Again, the debt asset ratio is found to increase along with the increase in the size of the enterprises. There is no clear indication whether rural or urban enterprises have higher debt asset ratio. However, it could be concluded that as the overall debt asset ratio is

not very high among the unorganised manufacturing enterprises, they have the potentiality to have higher amount of borrowing.

From the above analysis, it can be clearly seen that the average amount of outstanding loan per unorganised manufacturing enterprise is lower than the potentiality they have to borrow. Here queries arise whether it is due to lack of demand for or supply of credit. This could be partially answered with the help of information regarding the sources of credit. The sources of loan can be broadly divided into institutional and non-institutional sources. The institutional sources include co-operatives, commercial banks, regional rural banks and various governments and semi-government institutes, while the, non-institutional sources include the endogenous money lenders (loan sharks), traders and merchants, friends and relatives, Self Help Groups, etc. Regarding financial inclusion of the unorganised enterprises, it is commonly assumed that the institutional (formal) sources denied providing loans to those enterprises. As a result, they

have to depend on the non-institutional sources, who exploit them by charging higher rates of interest. It is assumed that if an individual were able to have credit from institutional sources he would not move to a non-institutional source. In other words, institutional sources are the first choice of any borrower. Only if he were unable to have credit from institutional sources he would borrow from the non-institutional sources. Thus, when an entrepreneur borrows from the non-institutional sources one can say that there is demand for credit, but the actual supplier (Formal Financial Institutions) is not in a position to fulfil his demand. The proportion of loan an individual borrow from the non-institutional sources can be termed as the Financial Resource Gap (FRG). In other words, FRG explains the percentage of demand for credit could not be fulfilled by the existing supply. That the average amount of loan per enterprise had been borrowed from different sources are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Per Unorganised Manufacturing Enterprise Estimated Value of Loan from Different Agencies in Assam (in ₹)

		All Institutional Sources	Money Lenders	Friends & Relatives	Others	All Non Institutional Sources	Total	FRG
1994-1995	Rural	203	14	47	50	111	314	0.35
	Urban	1844	64	6	97	167	2011	0.08
2000-2001	Rural	193	39	144	204	387	580	0.67
	Urban	1012	168	122	158	448	1460	0.31
	Combined	306	55	141	198	394	700	0.56
2005-2006	Rural	465	81	205	39	325	790	0.41
	Urban	5064	261	*	*	*	*	*
	Combined	933	99	252	83	434	1367	0.32

Sources: Compiled and calculated from Report No. 435: Assets and Borrowings of the Unorganised Manufacturing Enterprises in India, NSS 51st Round, 1994-1995; Report No.479, Unorganised Manufacturing Sector in India: Employment, Assets and Borrowings, NNS 56th Round, 2000-2001 and Report No.525, Unorganised Manufacturing Sector in India: Employment, Assets and Borrowings, NSS 62nd Round, 2005-2006

**These data are not used as the data in the published report contradicts itself. (Report no.525, Unorganised Manufacturing Sector in India: Employment, Assets and Borrowings; NSSO 62nd Round of Survey)*

From the Table 7, it can be seen that institutional sources plays an important role as

the source of credit for unorganised enterprises in Assam over the years. Among the non-

institutional sources, friends and relatives play the important role, followed by the endogenous money lenders. The rates of interest on loan taken from the non-institutional sources are generally found to be higher than that on institutional sources. However, the loan taken from friends and relatives are interest free. Table 7 further shows that the FRG is declining over the years. Moreover, the FRG of the rural enterprises are higher than that of the urban enterprises. From

the existing FRG, it can be concluded that still there is demand for credit; which could not be fulfilled with the existing supply arrangement.

It is also imperative to have an idea about the FRG of different types of unorganised enterprises in Assam (please refer to Table 8). However, Table 8 gives information only for 2005-2006, as data related to this issue are not available for rest of the years.

Table 8: Estimated Value of Outstanding Loan per Unorganised Manufacturing Enterprise (in ₹) from Different Agencies and the Financial Resource Gap in Assam during 2005-2006

		All Sources	Institutional Sources	Non- Institutional	FRG
Rural	OAME	174	10	164	0.94
	NDME	1796	1213	583	0.32
	DME	72990	53752	19238	0.26
	All	790	465	325	0.41
Urban	OAME	293	119	174	0.59
	NDME	5928	3757	2171	0.37
	DME	73057	64093	8964	0.12
	All	*	5064	*	*
Combined	OAME	182	18	164	0.90
	NDME	3271	2121	1150	0.35
	DME	73022	58777	14245	0.19
	All	1367	933	434	0.32

Sources: Calculated from Report No.525; Unorganised Manufacturing Sector in India: Employment, Assets and Borrowings; NSS 62nd Round, 2005-2006

** These data are not used as the data in the published report contradicts itself. (Report no.525, Unorganised Manufacturing Sector in India: Employment, Assets and Borrowings; NSSO 62nd Round of Survey)*

From the data in Table 8, it is apparent that the smaller the enterprises are, more dependent they are on the non-institutional sources for credit. For example, during 2005-2006 the FRG of the OAME taken together is 0.90; while that of NDME and DME is 0.35 and 0.19 respectively. The overall FRG for all the unorganised enterprises taken together is 0.32. Similarly, the FRG of the enterprises in the rural areas is higher than those in the urban areas. Thus, it can be concluded that FRG decreases as the size of the unorganised enterprise increases and rural enterprises have higher FRG. In other words, smaller as well as the rural unorganised enterprises depends more on the non-institutional sources of credit.

Conclusion

The above discussion makes it clear that in Assam, larger percentage of unorganised enterprises over the years stated lacking of adequate amount of capital as the constraint faced by them. Again, the average amount of loan taken by the unorganised manufacturing enterprises in Assam is smaller than that of all-India average. In Assam, the FRG is higher for the enterprises in the rural areas as compared to those in the urban areas. Thus, those enterprises in the rural areas are more dependent on the informal sources of credit as compared to those in the urban areas. Moreover, the smaller enterprises have limited access to credit from the formal financial institutions compared to the larger enterprises.

Hence, it can be concluded that there is demand for credit from these enterprises; but the formal financial institutions are not in a position to fulfil their demand. Therefore, they are dependent on the non-institutional sources of credit. For these reasons, the policies regarding financial inclusion of the unorganised manufacturing enterprises should be such that would be able to fulfil the credit needs of the smaller unit of unorganised enterprises, especially those in the rural areas.

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About the Author

Mr. Prasenjit Bujar Baruah completed his graduation from B. Borooah College, Guwahati and Masters in Economics from Gauhati University, Guwahati. Then he did M. Phil. in Economics from University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad. He worked as assistant professor in Economics in Bijni College, Bijni and Dispur College, Dispur (Guwahati). Presently he is serving as an Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Rajiv Gandhi University, Itanagar and also pursuing Ph.D from Gauhati University, Guwahati. His area of specialisations is macroeconomics, monetary economics and development economics. So far, he has published one book on micro-finance and a number of articles and research papers in various journals and edited volumes.

Feminist Collective Activism in Telangana, South India: Exemplary by the Andhra Pradesh Mahila Samatha Society

Ms Julia Guenther[†]

Abstract

This research aims at contributing to the ongoing debate of feminist standpoint epistemology by introducing a study on feminist collective activism in Sangareddy and Yellareddy, two districts of the newly established 29th state of India, Telangana. The purpose here is to document the work of two sanghams (collectives) by the Andhra Pradesh Mahila Samatha Society (APMSS). The focus lies on songs created by Dalit and indigenous women, which are used as a form of, protest against societal and gender inequality. Those songs contribute in making a positive difference on a local level. Analysis of two group interviews strengthens this argument. The sanghams have shown that despite all societal differences, solidarity among women for a common cause can make a difference in combating social issues on a local level. Taking the APMSS as an example, this research shows that the use of a holistic approach to education to support women in their responses to social issues has an overall positive effect on women. Furthermore, and most importantly, women are strengthened in believing that their life-experiences matter. My research shows that literacy is not necessarily needed to be a successful advocate for women's rights. What is needed, however, is an understanding of local contexts, social issues and ultimately the ability to link them to life-experiences.

Key words: feminist collective activism, songs, Telangana, feminist standpoint epistemology, Dalits

[†] University of Vienna, Austria, Email: juliamguenther@gmail.com

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Introduction

Feminist standpoint epistemology is an important topic in Gender Studies. This research aims at contributing to the ongoing debate by introducing a study on feminist collective activism in Sangareddy and Yellareddy, two districts of the newly established 29th state of India, Telangana. The purpose here is to document two sanghams (collectives) by the Andhra Pradesh Mahila Samatha Society (APMSS).¹ Dalit and indigenous women,² who are members of the sanghams, make use of their long tradition of songs and folklore. This research represents songs as a form of protest against societal and gender inequality. It is argued that they contribute in making a positive difference on a local level. Analysis of two group interviews strengthens this argument.

The structure of this research is as follows. First, I discuss the feminist standpoint epistemology, which has been used as the main pillar of the research. In the next section, it attempts to give a brief geographical contextualisation of Telangana. In the third section, the focus lies on feminist collective activism by Dalit and indigenous women who collectively question and oppose social hegemony and the effects of neo-liberal policies.

The Research Framework: Feminist Standpoint Epistemology

It remains well known that feminist research aims to “give voice to women’s lives that have been silenced and ignored, uncover hidden knowledge contained within women’s experiences, and bring about women-centered solidarity and social change” (Brooks, 2007: 53).

¹ At the time of publication, according to its website <http://apmss.org/> the name of the Andhra Pradesh Mahila Samatha Society has not been changed because of the bifurcation of the state into Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

² A Dalit is a designation for a community also referred to as the “untouchables”. Dalits are on the lowest strata of the caste hierarchy and are also called caste-less people. Indigenous people belong to culturally distinct groups, which are one of the first inhabitants of the sub-continent (Kumar, 2010).

Feminist standpoint epistemology is based on two positions: first, on the understanding, knowledge, experiences and perspectives of women, and second, on the encouragement of women’s activism for social change (Brooks, 2007). Besides, feminist standpoint epistemology “is a way of understanding the world, a point of view of social reality, that begins with, and is developed directly from, women’s experiences” (Brooks, 2007: 60). As often and rightly argued (Rose, 1997), though, women’s experiences can neither be generalised nor can women be subsumed under one category—women are heterogeneous, hence differences among them are important to discuss in feminist based research. Consequently, this means that “knowledge that claims to have universal applicability to all women” (Rose, 1997: 307) ignores the diversity amongst women. Therefore, this paper emphasises on the complexity and interplay of women’s identities, which results in a variety of responses to changing framework conditions. Although, I have been introduced to various forms of responses by the sanghams, such as street plays, poster and slogan productions, in the third section of this paper I will only focus on one particular form of protest, namely the creation of songs.

In continuation of the previous point, it is important to note that identity is “based on *difference* from others but not on *separation* from others” (Rose, 1997: 314). As Meenakshi Thapan (2009), a sociologist at the Delhi School of Economics, notes, women speak “with a complexity located in the multiplicities of economic deprivation, caste, familial and gender relations. This multiplicity is importantly located in the physical and social conditions of everyday life that women experience” (Thapan, 2009: 2). The present work aims to reflect on such multiplicities and various women’s standpoints and to strengthen the ability to understand social, political and economic developments. Sandra Harding (2004), an American philosopher of feminist and postcolonial theory, emphasises on this point in

her introduction to *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader*:

Each oppressed group [women are understood as an oppressed group] will have its own critical insights about nature and the larger social order to contribute to the collection of human knowledge. Because different groups are oppressed in different ways, each has the possibility (not the certainty) of developing distinctive insights about systems of social relations in general in which their oppression is a feature. (Harding, 2004: 9)

Furthermore, one must note that a woman's locality and position in the time of the experience(s) matter to the analysis (Brooks, 2007). In other words, "women's experiences, perspectives, and the issues they face are constantly evolving and changing across space and time" (Brooks, 2007: 76). This implies further that women's identities are not fixed categories but rather dynamic and evolving in their nature. Therefore, while one of my interview partners identifies herself as a Dalit activist, who embraced Leftist and Marxist ideology in her 20s, she does not do so anymore. Through time and space, the identities and subjectivities of my interview partners have been changing continuously.

As this research derives from a feminist standpoint epistemology (Hartsock, 1983; Brooks, 2007), it seeks to highlight women's collective's efforts to raise awareness on social issues and women's rights. In the context of my research on subjectivity formations and resistances of feminist writers in Telangana, the research is an additional outcome of my encounters in the first half of 2012 with the collectives run by Dalit and indigenous women, where I sought to understand women's everyday lives according to their various social, economic and political backgrounds, and their subjective understandings of resisting against unjust situations and conditions.

The analysis that I am drawing upon derives from group interviews and participatory observations at the women's collective meetings. The group interviews, which took place in Sangareddy and Yellareddy, were held in Telugu, one of the official languages of Telangana. I had the help of a female translator, whose first language was Telugu. Coming from a Dalit background herself, she was able to connect to the women's stories on a different and a deeper level than me. Therefore, she also functioned as a cultural translator, which in my understanding translations always entail. Hence, the selection process of which group to interview was not based on language compatibility but foremost and mainly on women's willingness to share their life-stories with my translator and me. It is important to note that their individual motives varied. Some women have articulated their wish to share their stories without any further expectations from me. Others enunciated their financial hopes and wishes from me, seemingly coming from a 'rich Western country'. However, before conducting the group interviews, I emphasised on the fact that I am not associated to any donor agency nor could I provide any financial support to them but would rather aim to carry forward their positions, struggles, opinions and stories. Having clarified my position, a few women walked away being disappointed – understandably so – but the majority of the women stayed and shared their stories with my translator and me.

The described pre-interview process clearly shows that my position as a 'white', 'Western', 'middle-class' feminist researcher in Telangana affected the research. Therefore, I do not claim that my analysis continuously derives from my interview partners' positions as my regional and social background, and therefore my objectivity – in terms of Spivak (Do Mar Castro Varela and Dhawan, 2005), is constructed by my biography. As feminist and post-colonial theorists argue, "all knowledge is produced in specific circumstances and that those circumstances shape it in some way" (Rose, 1997: 305). Hence, the circumstances that I am

a native of Austria, of a specific economic class and with a specific educational background, that my translator was an educated Dalit from Telangana and that the interviewed women were mainly illiterate, economically poor Dalit and indigenous women from Telangana influenced the unintentional hegemonic dynamics of the interviews. Therefore, situating the positions of everyone involved is crucial in order to engage in a reflexivity process in this research.

Rose (1997) discusses the power structures that exist within a research, especially if the researcher comes from a different geographical and social background. In her essay, "Situating Knowledge: Positionality, Reflexivities and Other Tactics", Rose argues that positioning one's self, which must be actively performed, is the key to knowledge production that does not have universal claim. As discussed above, feminist research is in line with this perspective, which is why a feminist researcher needs to make her/his position visible to one's self as well as to the interviewees (Rose, 1997). This process, although, is not 'of self-discovery' but rather 'of self-construction' (Rose, 1997: 313). In other words, it is important to be aware of one's own constructed identity when one embarks in the research field. It implies that it makes a difference in how one introduces self to the researched, in this research the sanghams. It can be either in a firm, academic way or on a more personal note introducing my long-lasting relation to India. I chose the latter emphasising on my interest in their life-stories, struggles and forms of resistances against social and gender inequality.

Reflecting on these standpoints, I conclude this section with one further important aspect by the feminist geographer Linda McDowell (1992) in which she argues that the relationship between the interviewee and the interviewer is 'a valid part of the research process' (McDowell, 1992: 406). As such, it should be seen as an evolving, maybe even empowering tool for both parties. Relating to this argument, I embrace my fieldwork in Sangareddy and Yallareddy as an enriching and empowering

experience. During my visits, I was able to witness the creation of songs, which are seen and used as a tool of collective activism. Women, who are mainly illiterate, are able to transform their pain of violence, oppression, marginalisation and discrimination into powerful songs for social change. Being able to share this process with the attendant women was a moment of interchanging experiences, ideas, opinions and thoughts. In a later stage of this paper, I refer to these songs in greater detail but will now turn to the regional and economic contextualisation of those sanghams.

Telangana: Between Its Long Struggle for a Separate Statehood and Neo-liberal Policies

The newly established 29th Indian state Telangana inhabits 35 million people, out of which 90% belong to scheduled caste (SC), scheduled tribes (STs), Other Backward Castes (OBCs)³ as well as minority groups, such as Muslims (Rao, 2014). Their living and working conditions have been centrestaged in the debates on a separate statehood for the region of Telangana. The region of Telangana, however, has always been a witness of a number of debates as well as protests against exploitation, land grabbing, poverty and lack of educational and health institutions. The reasons are of historical nature. The so-called *Gentlemen's Agreement*⁴ in 1956 paved the way for India's first linguistically unified state. Language was the only common identification between the people of Andhra Pradesh. Their economic, educational and social background was heterogeneous. Apart from language, though, the people of Andhra Pradesh were heterogeneous in economical, educational and social background. Since the formation of

³ SC, STs and OBCs are marginalised groups, which are recognised in the Indian Constitution. SC is the term for Dalits, STs is the umbrella term for indigenous groups, OBCs is the umbrella term for socially and educationally disadvantaged caste groups (Bhattacharyya, 2009; Kumar, 2010)

⁴ Despite aversion by the people of Telangana, the *Gentlemen's Agreement* was signed between political leaders – all of them men – of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh to form the state of Andhra Pradesh (Sundarayya, 1972/2014).

Andhra Pradesh, which included the region of Telangana, the diversity as well as gaps between its populations has been visible. Historically, the people of Seemandhra, which combines the regions Rayalaseema and Coastal Andhra, were able to gain from the educational system introduced during the colonial British regime. The people of the Telangana region, however, did not have the same educational opportunities during the Nizams' rule.⁵ Hence, the two regions were merged having different points of departure, Seemandhra being the 'more resourceful, educated, skilled and political dominant' (Rao, 2014: 10) one.

The movement for a separate statehood had since been an ongoing event in the Deccan Plateau. Particularly the book *'We were Making History ...': Life Stories of Women in the Telangana People's Struggle* (1989) introduces women's portraits whose lives are not recorded in common history books. It was written to honour the many women who had played a key part in the people's struggle. With the formation of India's 29th state on 02 June 2014, Telangana's separate statehood movement has reached its goal successfully. Kalvakuntla Chandrashekar Rao of Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS), the first Chief Minister of Telangana, though, faces a number of economic and social challenges during his first term as the century-long movement arose out of people's needs for a better economic and social situation. Apart from land grabbing, the Green Revolution of the 1970s led to a long-lasting damage of cultivatable soil. The goal of the Green Revolution was to limit the production of crops to specific seeds making other crops disappear from the market. Subsequently, multi-national crop companies have neglected traditional farming methods and seeds. Women do the majority of the agricultural labour, which makes them the key resource. However, with the increasing power and entrance of GMO (genetically modified

organism) crop companies in India, women farmers are being pressurised to follow those policies. The sanghams, which I introduce in the following section, strive to overcome those pressures 'which derive from a neo-liberal understanding' (personal communication, Yellareddy, 2012). The women of the sanghams defined neo-liberalism as an accumulation of money and increasing power of financial institutions at the cost of nature and human rights (personal communication, Yellareddy, 2012). This paper defines the beginning of neo-liberalism in India with the economic reforms, which began in the 1990s (Ahmed et al., 2011; Patnaik, 2007; Walkers, 2008). However, it is not only the opening of the national to the international economic market (Ahmed et al., 2011; Patnaik, 2007; Walkers, 2008) but also the question of what is Indian. Hence, along with economic reforms, which had a market-driven agenda, came the question of India's identity as a nation and a people. The economic reforms of the 1990s have caused drastic changes in India. These changes can be seen in the agricultural sector, labour market, cultural influences, technological opportunities (Ahmed et al., 2011; Bhattacharyya, 2009; 2013; Patnaik, 2007; Walkers, 2008), and last but not least in the economic market (Oza, 2006).

Women's Local Responses and Thrive for Social Change

Andhra Pradesh Mahila Samatha Society: Feminist Consciousness and Collective Activism

Generally speaking, women's responses to political and social conditions have been witnessed for more than a century in India (Desai, 1948/1991; Forbes, 1998/2000; Forbes, 2005; Jayawardena, 1986; Kumar, 1993; Spivak, 1985). The women's movements' strong contribution to India's independence in 1947 (Forbes, 1998/2000), for example, had a significant influence on the society at large but in particular on women themselves (Desai, 1948/1991; Forbes, 1998/2000; Forbes, 2005; Jayawardena, 1986; Kumar, 1993; Spivak, 1985). Following feminist standpoint epistemology, which uses "women's

⁵ The Nizam was the title of the sovereign of Hyderabad State, which belonged to the Asaf Jah dynasty. The Asaf Jah dynasty ruled Hyderabad State from 1724 until 1947. Seven Nizams were the sovereigns during these two centuries (Zubrzycki, 2006).

experiences as a lens through which to examine society as a whole" (Brooks, 2007: 59), this section portrays Dalit and indigenous women's experiences with social, political and economic hegemony to understand how it effects their lives. It is thus what feminist standpoint epistemology calls 'the double consciousness' (Brooks, 2007: 63). Double consciousness, firstly, demonstrates social inequality according to women's lived experiences, and secondly, with the insights of women in hegemonic societies, offers possibilities of resistances (Brooks, 2007). In this regard, I highlight how songs carry forward women's voices of collective activism, solidarity among as well as empowerment of women. As feminist standpoint epistemology also bridges the gap between academia/theory and practice/activism (Brooks, 2007), this section aims to contribute to overcoming this gap.

For my fieldwork, I visited two women's sanghams of the Andhra Pradesh Mahila Samatha Society (APMSS) in Sangareddy and Yellareddy, Telangana. The APMSS, which is part of the Mahila Samakhya Project, came into existence in 1993 following the *National Policy of Education* of 1986 and is financially supported by the *Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Education*. In one of the APMSS reports it reads "[t]he main focus is on empowerment of women through education, to facilitate a process of learning to strengthen the self-image and confidence of women and enable them to take charge of their lives" (APMSS, year unknown: 1). As mentioned above, the key element of empowerment is education. APMSS' approach to empowerment and education is a holistic one. Apart from literacy sessions, an understanding and analysis of issues, such as lack of drinking water and legal assistance, is required. This holistic approach enables women to reflect on the effects of those issues on themselves as well as on their families. Through this thought-provoking impulse, the sanghams aim for women to take control over their own lives and environment. Doing so, the women act in a collective effort. In the sanghams, they discuss and work within a triangle, in which personal

life, society and state structures are taken into account. With this perspective, they illustrate the vicious cycle of social issues.

The hegemony that government-funded projects entail diminishes in this project once the sanghams become autonomous functioning units in the form of a federation. It is a process-oriented procedure, which starts with the village unit, which is the social issue committee on the village level formed by women of the sangham, followed by the cluster unit, which unites representatives of the committee in a cluster. The federation is recessed by the mandal unit, which is formed by representatives of the cluster units and which forms the executive committee of the federation. Once a sangham reaches the structure of a federation, which is a process of about two years, it is financially independent from the Ministry of Human Resource Development. Women of the sanghams are henceforth asked to contribute a small amount towards further development by the federation. For example, the sangham's meeting, in which I participated in Sangareddy, took place in a small house financed and built by the women. This house was built for meetings, evening school and functions. Although the federations are financially independent, they continue to be supervised by the APMSS. In addition, after consulting the sanghams, trainings, development plannings and literacy programmes are conducted by the APMSS.

As written above, health issues, such as lack of drinking water, are a problem, which is being addressed by the sanghams. However, the list of further burning issues is long. Broadly speaking, the sanghams are concerned with child marriage, violence against girl children and women, access to educational and health institutions, political participation and spaces, destruction of natural resources, caste discrimination and the increasing influence of neo-liberal policies in the rural area. As a result, the autonomous federations function as pressure groups to implement social, political, economic as well as women's rights. Their aim

is to facilitate a second and third generation of young women and men whose understanding of gender equality is deeply rooted in their habits and values and whose living and working conditions are better than their own. Recalling feminist standpoint epistemology, each woman's experience forms a pillar of a collective, which preferably continues through generations. The song *Future Generations* composed by one of the APMSS' sanghams speaks about it from their particular perspective:

'Children,
 Future generation heirs,
 Prepared fighters,
 We have a road in front of us,
 We will not go back; we will not at all go back.
 Our aim is women's equality,
 Our ambition is women's equality.
 We will go to our villages,
 We will teach about health,
 We will gather women,
 We will change our village.
 We will be 1/3 in the village panchayat committees,
 We will make the decisions in the village,
 We will tell our brothers and sisters to study.
 We will tell them if you study you will know the whole world.'

Although this song speaks from a collective 'we', undoubtedly, when speaking about feminist consciousness and women's collectives, one cannot assume that women are a homogeneous group. Women's experiences are heterogeneous. Therefore, the identity and subjectivity of each member of the collective has to be considered as an individual pillar. Inevitably, the question of how solidarity can be lived in a collective of heterogeneous women arises. The answers I received were positive ones. In the group interviews, women told me that despite having differences in background and opinion, they consider focusing on the collective power for positive societal changes more important. In the following

section, I show how this collective power is translated into songs, which function as a form of protest.

Songs as a Form of Protest

The sanghams of the APMSS have composed a number of songs on issues such as land grabbing, agriculture, neo-liberal policies, identity, health, politics and education. With the composed songs, the women advocate their positions on critical questions concerning their daily lives. They function as a collective tool to address the concerned issues. Created at the sanghams' meetings, the songs illustrate processes of discussions, analysis and opinions. It is the women's pain that is being expressed in a transformative tool (group discussion, Sangareddy, 2012). The songs give the women the freedom to express themselves under the collective anonymity. It allows them to articulate what might be diminished otherwise. Women start every meeting with a song encouraging themselves to continue their struggle for a gender just and caste free society. Besides performing the songs at their meetings, they sing at demonstrations, village gatherings and functions. Therefore, the audiences vary but the addressees are clear: politicians, opinion leaders and decision makers. Although songs are not the only possibility to address issues, the women decided to carry forward an old tradition of their ancestors (group discussion, Sangareddy, 2012). Therefore, the songs are also a legacy of tradition, culture and language of Telangana. The few examples, which I am introducing in this paper, are literal translations by my translator. The originals are performed in a regional Telugu dialect of Telangana.

The following lines are taken from their song titled *The Village is Ours*.

'The village is ours,
 This street is ours,
 This hamlet is ours.
 Housework is ours,
 The outside work is ours.
 We work on the paddy-plantation and do paddy harvesting.

What is this problem? Oh how much
back pain.

Without food our problems are growing,
Bending and so much work,
They are telling us that this work is
common to all.

What is this pain, what is our life?

More and more babies are born but our
strength decreases.

If white discharge becomes more, it may
cause cancer,

Medicine is available but no money in
our hands to buy it.

Elder sister come, brother and sister
come,

Come we will know the unknown issues.

We have so many government facilities,
Come we will know them all.

Our health will become good and we
will get relief from our pain.’ (A.P.

Mahila Samatha Society, year unknown)

This song was introduced to me as one of their most important songs because it talks about a number of issues. The women have composed it in such a manner to show how interrelated social issues are. It is, thus, the vicious cycle that they want to break by looking at the triangle of personal life, society and state. The issue of caste and class is one that cuts across all their activities and hence it is also an inevitable element of this song. Land-grabbing, which took place in the region of Telangana for centuries, is also being addressed, though in a subtle way. The women claim their property but show in the following sentences that they work as labourers for landlords. The lack of working rights leads to insufficient healthcare and increasing health issues. This song, similar to others, does not only address social issues but also of strategic possibilities for social development. In this song, the women suggest to claim their right for information given to them by the Right to Information Act. In the year 2002, the Indian government passed the Right to Information Act to give citizens access to information by public authorities regardless of caste, class, religion or sex. With this access, the sanghams can follow up on their rights and

claim them from the respective people,
institutions and authorities.

The following song called *The Poor Daily Wage Labourer* stresses on the situation of labourers further and emphasises on the need of solidarity to claim their rights.

‘Poor daily wage labourers should have
a union,

One society, oh sister,

One union, oh sister.

We are the samatha, oh sister.

Search and see the world.

There are two things,

Rich people, oh sister,

And poor people, oh sister.

Cobblers, barbers, carpenters and
goldsmiths,

No caste and religious differences, oh
sister.

We are all one, oh sister.

...

We have to discuss problems of our
village.

Step forward, oh sister,

We should be united, oh sister.

We have held night meetings to
increase our knowledge, oh sister.

We have to know our position, oh sister.

That is our biggest aim, oh sister.

We all belong to samatha, oh sister.’
(A.P. Mahila Samatha Society, year
unknown)

The theme of this song is a continuation of the previous one. Here, the women suggest that solidarity, in form of a collective or trade union, is the best option to fight day-to-day caste and class discrimination. It is a song that is goal-oriented with a brief introduction to the issue.

Apart from listing social issues, these songs suggest that a positive societal change is possible if women form in a collective, are informed about their rights and stay united in spite of their differences. Together these songs provide an important insight into the living and working conditions of the women but are also indicative of the positive effects of protest songs. The successes on a local level have been worth noticing. Two of the most important

successes are that women's participation in decision-making processes has increased and violence against women has decreased. Therefore, it can be concluded that it is the effort of the collective that makes such successes possible.

Conclusion

This research has highlighted the importance of feminist standpoint epistemology with the collectives of the APMSS as examples. It has several practical implications. Firstly, it points to the importance of the relation between the interviewer and the interviewee. Secondly, it argues that the researcher's position influences the dynamics of the research. Finally, it brings the lives of the women into focus. Taking the APMSS as an example, this research has shown that the use of a holistic approach to education to support women in their responses to social issues has an overall positive effect on women. Furthermore, and most importantly, women are strengthened in believing that their life-experiences matter. My research shows that literacy is not necessarily needed to be a successful advocate for women's rights. What is needed, however, is an understanding of local contexts, social issues and ultimately the ability to link them to life-experiences.

The sanghams have shown that despite all societal differences, solidarity among women for a common cause can make a difference in combating social issues on a local level. In other words, a union, which the song *The Poor Daily Wage Labourer* advocates for, can provide space for a bigger understanding. As Hartsock (1983) describes feminist standpoints having 'liberatory possibilities' (Hartsock, 1983: 317), I argued in this research that solidarity among women can have similar potentials. However, solidarity among women and collectives, such as the ones of the APMSS, are not the only possibilities to protest against ongoing inequality between men and women, castes, classes and religions.

It is important to notice that the current study was limited to the collectives of the APMSS. However, further research needs to be done to establish a stronger understanding of protest

songs and their implications. Also, further work needs to highlight the lives of Dalit and indigenous women of Telangana. Hence, this essay can be understood as a small contribution to this effort.

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Urbanisation in West Bengal: An Analysis of Recent Processes

Biswajit Ghosh^{†*} and Namita Chakma[‡]

Abstract

The present work intends to study the recent processes of urbanisation of West Bengal by measuring some selected indices: like level of urbanisation, decadal growth of urban population, rate of urbanisation, pace of urbanisation and urban growth, contribution of growth in urban population to total growth and rural-urban displacement. It is a meso-level study, and 19 districts of the state have been selected as units of study. Using Principal Component Analysis (PCA), the research has identified three principal factors that determine the processes of urbanisation in the state: rural-urban displacement, decadal growth rate and rate of urbanisation. All these three factors responded positively in both primary and secondary loadings.

Key words: urbanisation, indices of urbanisation, process of urbanisation, principal factors.

* Corresponding Author

[†] Assistant Teacher, Khorad Amena High School, Satgachhia, Bardhaman, India; Email: bswjtghsh40@gmail.com

[‡] Assistant Professor, Department of Geography, The University of Burdwan, Bardhaman; India;

Email: namitachakma@gmail.com

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Introduction

Examining the process of urbanisation in different states of India remains a continuing concern among many scholars (Dasgupta, 1987; Giri, 1998; Konar, 2009; Sivaramakrishnan et al., 2005; Sita and Phadke, 1985; Samanta, 2012). In the said context, the recent processes of urbanisation in West Bengal are at the heart of understanding of this research. This is a meso-level study, where the 19 districts of West Bengal (except Alipurduar) have been selected. Using the Principal Component Analysis (henceforth PCA), an attempt has been made to determine the three principal factors of the processes of urbanisation in the state: rural-urban displacement, decadal growth rate and rate of urbanisation. It also aims to probe the pace of urbanisation using an Eldridge index. The research begins with the definition of urban areas as outlined by the Census of India. It then goes on to show the gap between urbanisation of India and West Bengal. Following this, the research discusses the methods deployed and then examines the process of urbanisation in West Bengal.

Census of India 2011, defines urban areas as: (a) all places with a municipality, corporation, cantonment board or notified town area committee, etc.; and (b) all other places with a minimum population of 5,000, at least 75 per cent of the adult male main working population engaged in non-agricultural pursuits; and a density of population of at least 400 persons per sq. km. The first category of urban units is known as statutory towns. These towns are notified under law by the concerned state/UT government and have local bodies like municipal corporations, municipalities, municipal committees, etc. whereas other towns are defined as census towns.

The Indian nation as a whole (including the state of West Bengal) has experienced gradual increase of urbanisation since 1951 though the rate of urbanisation is still low. In 1951, the percentage of urbanisation in West Bengal was only 23.90, which increases to 31.89 per cent in 2011. The gap between the levels of urbanisation in India and West Bengal has also decreased from 6.61 per cent in 1951 to 0.78 per cent in 2011 (see Table-1).

West Bengal was one of the most urbanised states in the country in the early part of the 20th Century and was mainly based on Kolkata city. Dasgupta (1987) stated that urbanisation pattern was eventually evolved by the policy of the Britishers. That is, during British period, the tea gardens in Assam and plantation in Africa were the destination of labours from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa. And in pre- and post-Independence period, huge influx of refugees from eastern part of Bengal resulted in concentration of huge number of people in and around Calcutta (now Kolkata) and in Asansol (Giri, 1988). However, the scenario has changed in the 21st century with the development of new census towns and the district-level spatial pattern of urbanisation. Pattern of urbanisation in the state is now independent of the metropolis and existing urban-industrial region (Samanta, 2012). Census data reveals that in West Bengal, census towns have jumped from 48 in 1971 to 780 in 2011, whereas the number of statutory towns remains 127. As per the Census of India, 2011, West Bengal is the 4th most populous state (91,276,115 persons) of the country with a population density of 1,029 persons per sq. km. Current urbanisation rate of West Bengal is 31.87 per cent (slightly above the national average). Here, an attempt has been made to analyse the recent processes of urbanisation in West Bengal (please refer to Fig. 1).

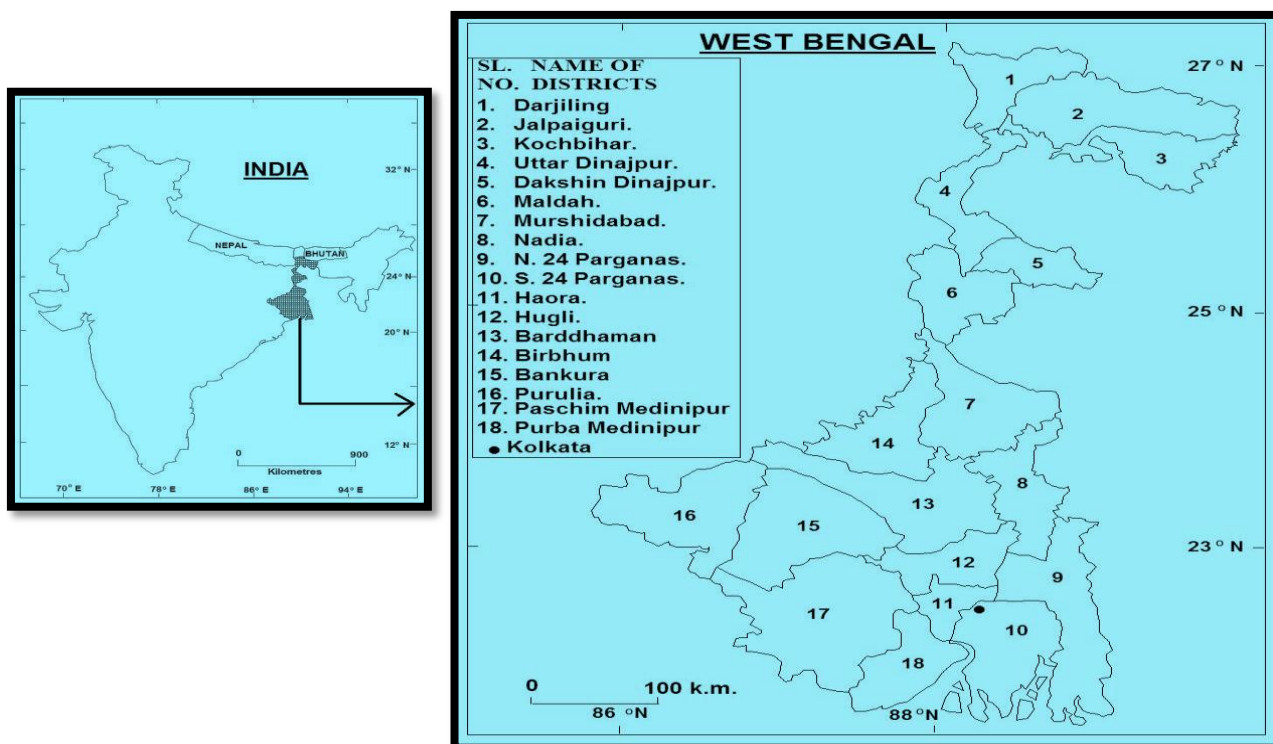


Fig. 1: Recent Processes of Urbanisation in West Bengal
(Source: Prepared by authors)

Table 1: Urban Population in India and West Bengal, 1951-2011

Year	Percentage of urban population in India	Percentage of urban population in West Bengal	Difference
1951	17.29	23.90	6.61
1961	17.97	24.40	6.43
1971	19.91	24.70	4.79
1981	23.34	26.50	3.16
1991	25.72	27.48	1.76
2001	27.78	28.03	0.25
2011	31.16	31.89	0.78

Sources: Census of India 1981 and 1991, Paper-2, Rural-Urban Distribution; ILGUS, 2002; Census 2001 and 2011

Materials and Methods

The study is based on secondary sources of information. Data sources are primarily Census of India 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011. As mentioned above, it is a meso-level study.

Using PCA, the research aims to examine the trends and processes of urbanisation of 19 districts of West Bengal without the incorporation of the Alipurduar district. PCA is a statistical technique to find out the dominant

variables from a set of variables operating in a system and it helps in decision-making process of spatial planning. The process of urbanisation has been analysed on the basis of selected urban indices—level of urbanisation, decadal growth of urban population and the rate of urbanisation (Sivaramakrishnan et al., 2005—please see below for the definition of these phrases). In addition, the Eldridge index (Vaidyanathan, 1981) is also used to investigate the pace of urbanisation. Eldridge index indicates change in proportion of urban population as a ratio to the maximum possible percent change. [Please refer to Sita and Phadke (1985), who used this index to analyse the pace of urban growth and rural-urban displacement in their study.]

(a) Level of urbanisation: It expresses the percentage of urban population with respect to the total population for a particular time. Thus,
 Level of Urbanisation = $(\text{Urban Population} \div \text{Total Population}) \times 100$

(b) Decadal growth of urban population, which indicates the degree of urbanisation with respect to time. Thus,

Decadal growth of urban population (2001-2011) = $\{(\text{Urban Population (2011)} - \text{Urban Population (2001)}) \div \text{Urban Population (2001)}\} \times 100$

(c) Rate of Urbanisation indicates decadal change in percentage of urban population. Thus,

Rate of Urbanisation (2001-2011) = $(\text{Per cent of Urban Population in 2011} - \text{Per cent of Urban Population in 2001}) \div \text{Per cent of Urban Population in 2001} \times 100$

(d) As stated earlier, the Eldridge index (Vaidyanathan, 1981) is used to measure the pace of urbanisation. However, certain difficulties arose in areas like Kolkata with 100 per cent urban population. Thus, Pace of Urbanisation (2001-2011) = $(\text{Per cent of Urban Population in 2011} - \text{Per cent of Urban Population in 2001}) \div 100 - \text{Per cent of Urban Population in 2001} \times 100$

(e) Pace of urban growth takes into consideration absolute growth in urban population in relation to maximum possible growth during the decade. Thus, pace of Urban Growth (2001-2011) = $(\text{Urban Population in 2011} - \text{Urban Population in 2001}) \div (\text{Total Population in 2011} - \text{Urban Population in 2001}) \times 100$

(f) Contribution of growth in urban population to total growth of population is an important measure for analysing process of urbanisation as well. Thus, contribution of Growth in Urban Population to Total Growth (2001-2011) = $(\text{Urban Population in 2011} - \text{Urban Population in 2001}) \div (\text{Total Population in 2011} - \text{Total Population in 2001}) \times 100$

(g) Lastly, a measure of rural-urban displacement has also been considered. Thus, rural-urban displacement (2001-2011) = $\{(\text{Urban Population in 2011} - (\text{Total Population in 2011} \times \text{Per cent of Urban Population in 2001})) \div \text{Urban Population in 2011}\} \times 100$

Standard score has been calculated to generate the composite score value. In statistics, a standard score indicates by how many standard deviations an observation is above or below the mean. The Standard score (z) of a raw score 'x' is:

$$z = (x - \mu) \div \sigma,$$

where, μ is the mean; σ is the standard deviation. And as mentioned above, to probe the most dominant indices and to estimate the inter districts variation, PCA technique has been used with the help of XLSTAT (2006) software. However, before embarking on the results and discussion, it is also essential to define the following terms.

Q-MODE ANALYSIS: A geographical system that consists of space or spaces and variables. Different variables perform in spaces differently depending on existing circumstances. Q – mode analysis is that part of PCA, which analyses the performance of the variables in different stages of analysis.

R-MODE ANALYSIS: It is that part of PCA, which analyses the performance of the spaces

of a geographical system resulting from the interaction of the variables.

EIGEN VALUE: The values of the coefficient vector of the components are called Eigen vector and variance of component is equal to Eigen value of the Eigen vector. The component, which corresponds to the highest, and the second highest Eigen value are known as first principal component and second principal component respectively. In this way rest, Principal Components are selected.

FACTOR SCORE: In different analysis of PCA the components (space or variable) response with respect to their relative importance in all stages. These responses are recorded numerically which are known as factor score. Sum of these scores in all stages is equal to one for each component.

Results and Discussion

Spatial Distribution of Urban Population, 2011

In the state, urban population distribution pattern varied widely across the districts. The districts of Murshidabad, Bardhaman, Nadia, Hugli, Haora, North 24 Parganas and South 24 Parganas are experiencing a very high density of urban population. Comparatively high level of economic development in those districts create a centripetal force in urban areas which attracts people in those urban areas from other parts of district for employment. On the other hand, urban development in the districts of Birbhum, Purulia and Bankura bears low density. The low density distribution of urban population is also found in Jalpaiguri, Koch Bihar, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur and Maldah districts (please refer to Fig. 2) due to comparatively lower level of economic development of urban areas in those districts.

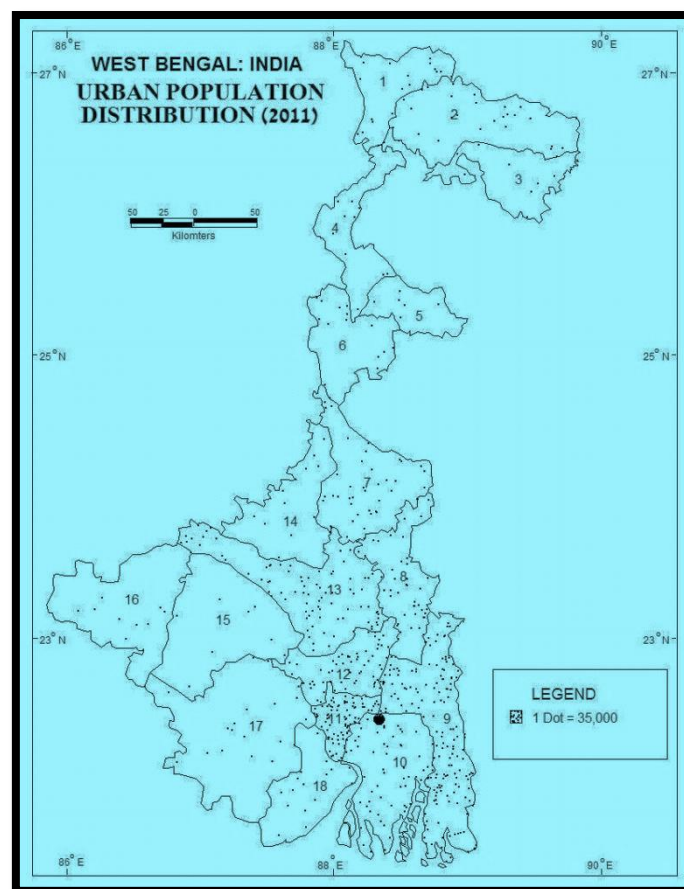


Fig. 2

(Source: Prepared based on author's calculation)

Level of Urbanisation in 2011

The pattern of level of urbanisation in West Bengal perfectly coincides with the pattern of urban population distribution except for Darjiling. In 13 districts of West Bengal, the level of urbanisation is less than the national

average. Only five districts like Darjiling, Barddhaman, Hugli, Haora and North 24 Parganas are experiencing a high level of urbanisation than the national average (please refer to Fig. 3).

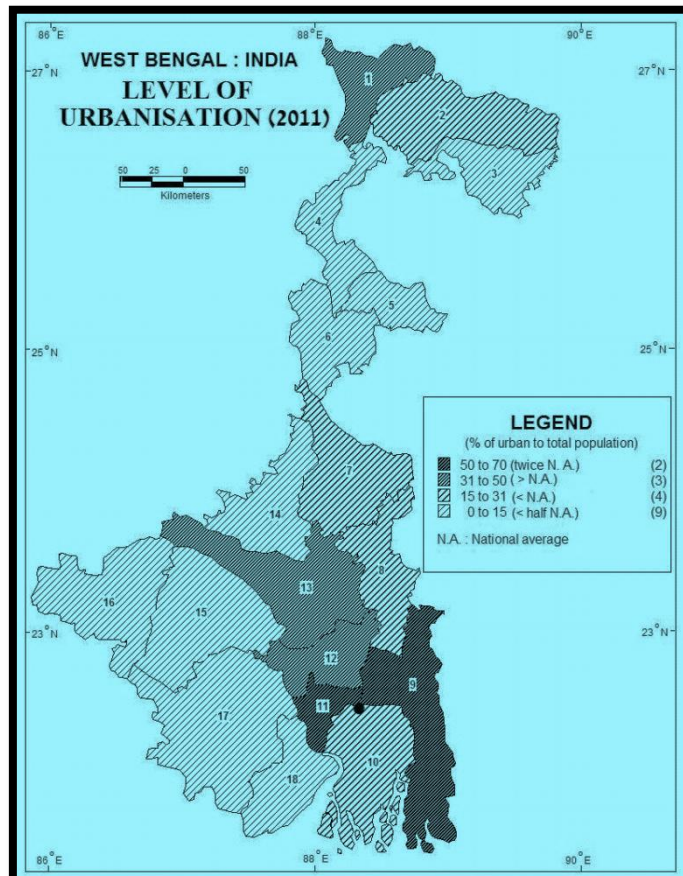


Fig. 3

(Source: Prepared based on author’s calculation)

Decadal Growth Rate in 2001-2011

In four districts of the state, namely Maldah, Murshidabad, Paschim Medinipur and South 24 Parganas, the decadal growth rate of urban populations has doubled at a rate, which is thrice the national average, while in Jalpaiguri and Birbhum districts, it is twice the national average. Darjiling, Purulia and Haora districts have also shown growth rates more than the national average. Hugli and Barddhaman districts have recorded very low rate of decadal growth in spite of higher concentration of urban population there. Interestingly, the growth rate in Kolkata has been found negative (please refer to Fig. 4) due to poor quality of urban services resulting from higher

concentration of people in a constant area or space.

Rate of Urbanisation in 2001-2011

West Bengal has recorded a positive rate of urbanisation during 2001-2011. It indicates increasing number of urban areas in all districts. Interestingly, inter-district variation exists as well. The rate of urbanisation is lower than the national average in Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur, Barddhaman and Purba Medinipur districts due to lower growth in percentage of urban population in 2001-2011 than in 1991-2001, but it is more than five times high than the national average in Maldah and South 24 Parganas districts due to higher growth in percentage of urban population in 2001-2011 than in 1991-2001 (please refer to Fig. 5).

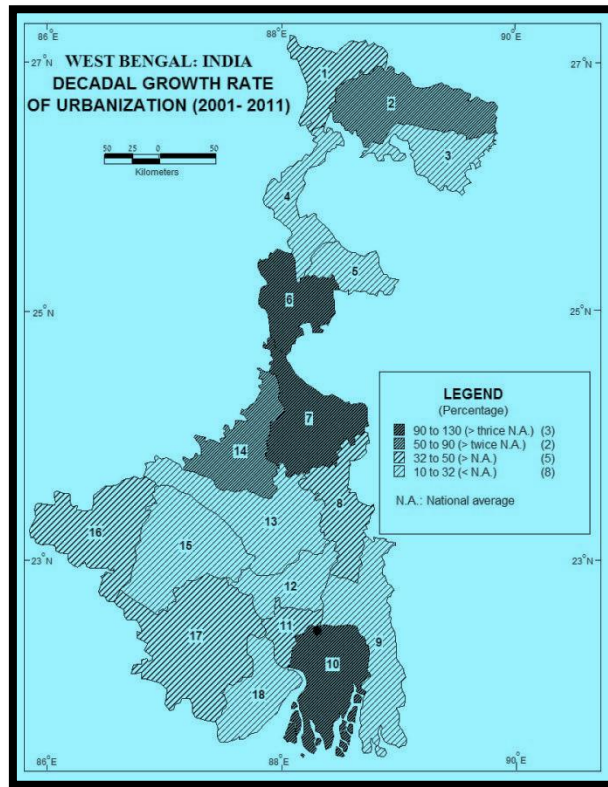


Fig. 4

(Source: Prepared based on author's calculation)

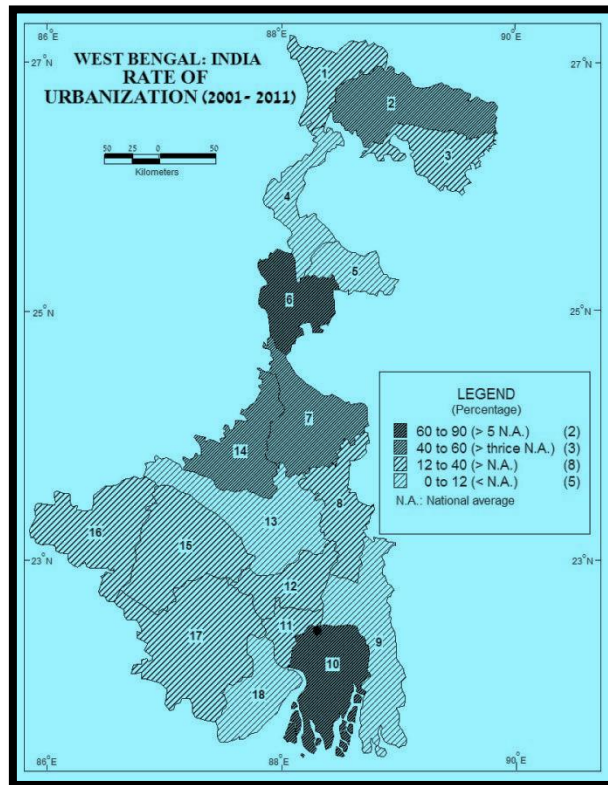


Fig. 5

(Source: Prepared based on author's calculation)

Pace of Urbanisation in 2001-2011

Nine districts of West Bengal are urbanising at a pace less than the national average. Due to proximity to the Kolkata Metropolitan area and industrial development, Haora is urbanising at a pace more than five times the national average.

All other districts also show positive pace of urbanisation during the period as all districts are experiencing a positive growth in urban population in every decade with respect to the previous decade (please refer to Fig. 6).

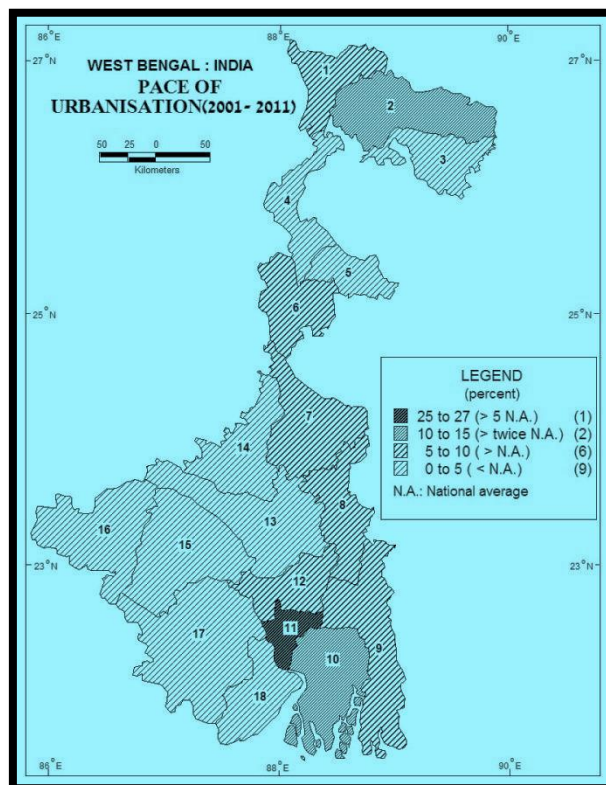


Fig. 6

(Source: Prepared based on author's calculation)

Pace of Urban Growth in 2001-2011

All districts have shown positive pace of urban growth during the period though there exists inter-district variation. Kolkata has recorded an absolute growth. Nine districts have recorded the growth less than the national average as their change in urban population with respect to the change in total population is lower than that in national level and other districts have shown the growth more than the national average indicating a higher change in urban population with respect to the change in total population than that in national level (please refer to Fig. 7).

Contribution of Growth in Urban Population to Total Growth in 2001-2011

Only seven districts namely Koch Bihar, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur, Maldah, Birbhum, Purba and Paschim Medinipur have contributed less than 50 per cent. This is largely because these districts are dominated by rural population. Other districts are contributing more urban population growth during the period because these districts have comparatively higher percentage of urban population. So growth of urban population has a positive contribution to the total population system. Haora is experiencing a very high rate of increase. It is more than thrice the national average (please see Fig. 8).

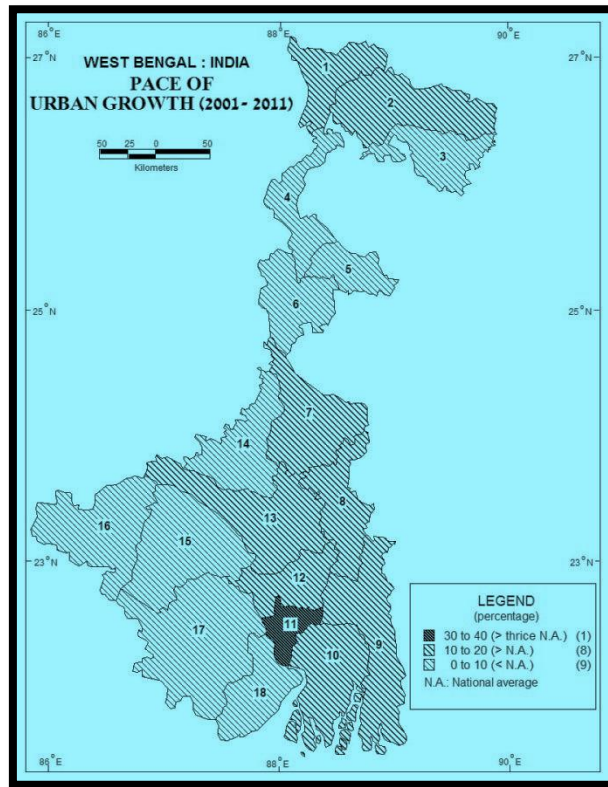


Fig. 7

(Source: Prepared based on author's calculation)

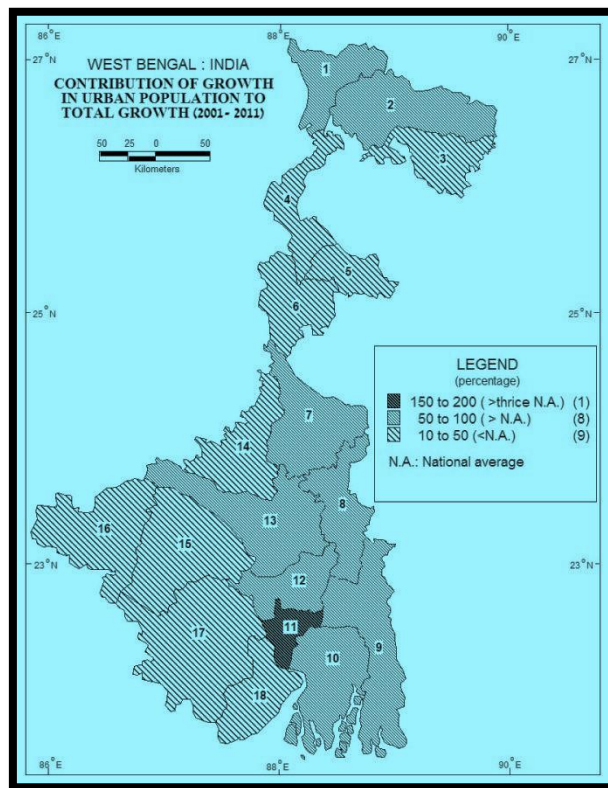


Fig. 8

(Source: Prepared based on author's calculation)

Rural-Urban Displacement in 2001-2011

Inter-district variation has also been found during the period. Rural-Urban displacement rate is less than the national average in Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur, Bardhaman, North 24 Parganas and Purba Medinipur districts. Other districts have shown the rate more than the national average. Among them Maldah has recorded the maximum percentage where 47 per cent of urban people have been displaced

from rural areas during the period. Jalpaiguri, Murshidabad, Birbhum and South 24 Parganas districts have also influenced their surrounding rural areas with a value more than thrice than the national average because urban areas in those districts are playing a dominating role within their sphere of influence which results in migration of rural people to urban centres for job (please see Fig. 9).

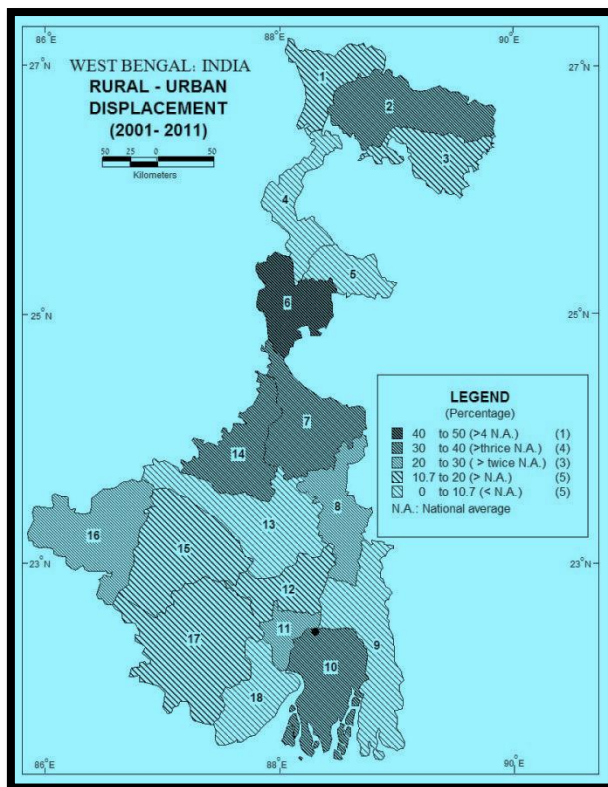


Fig. 9

(Source: Prepared based on author's calculation)

Principal Factors of Urbanisation in West Bengal, 2001-2011

To find out the dominant factors among the aforesaid indices, PCA technique has been applied. [Table-2 (i, ii, iii, iv); Fig. 10]. Results show that the selected variables have extracted 97.15 per cent of the variance. At the first stage of analysis (56.56 per cent) three measures namely pace of urbanisation, pace of urban growth and contribution of growth in urban to total growth are able to extract 36.85 per cent of the variance with a strong positive linkage with other measures like level of urbanisation, rate of urbanisation, decadal growth rate of

urban population and rural-urban displacement. However, in secondary loading these measures are showing a negative influence. Other three factors like rate of urbanisation, decadal growth rate of urban population and rural-urban displacement have become dominant in secondary loading. Rural-urban displacement, decadal growth rate and rate of urbanisation have responded positively in both primary and secondary loading. Therefore, these three factors are principal components for urbanisation process in West Bengal. Konar (2009) has stated that a very important factor causing high growth rate of

urbanisation in the state of West Bengal lies in areas.
massive migration from rural areas to urban

Table-2: PCA; (i) Correlation Matrix

Variables	Pace of Urbanisation, (2001-2011)	Pace of Urban Growth, (2001-2011)	Contribution of Growth in Urban to Total Growth (2001-2011)	Rural-Urban Displacement (2001-2011)	Decadal Growth (2001-2011)	Rate of Urbanisation, (2001-2011)	Level of Urbanisation, 2011
Pace of Urbanisation (2001-2011)	1	0.957	0.941	0.394	0.294	0.339	0.752
Pace of Urban Growth (2001-2011)	0.957	1	0.960	0.205	0.123	0.163	0.902
Contribution of Growth in Urban to Total Growth (2001-2011)	0.941	0.960	1	0.244	0.121	0.183	0.883
Rural-Urban Displacement (2001-2011)	0.394	0.205	0.244	1	0.964	0.986	-0.116
Decadal Growth (2001-2011)	0.294	0.123	0.121	0.964	1	0.992	-0.188
Rate of Urbanisation (2001-2011)	0.339	0.163	0.183	0.986	0.992	1	-0.146
Level of Urbanisation, 2011	0.752	0.902	0.883	-0.116	-0.188	-0.146	1

Source: Computed by the authors

Q-MODE ANALYSIS

Table-2 (ii): Calculation of Eigen values

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7
Eigen value	3.959	2.842	0.125	0.059	0.013	0.002	0.001
Variability (Percent)	56.558	40.596	1.781	0.839	0.187	0.025	0.014
Cumulative Percent	56.558	97.154	98.935	99.774	99.961	99.986	100.000

Source: Computed by the authors

Table-2 (iii): Calculation of Factor score

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7
Pace of Urbanisation (2001-2011)	0.955	-0.194	-0.217	-0.055	-0.004	0.011	-0.016
Pace of Urban Growth (2001-2011)	0.913	-0.391	-0.017	-0.111	0.034	-0.008	0.019
Contribution of Growth in Urban to Total Growth (2001-2011)	0.914	-0.369	-0.028	0.158	-0.054	-0.009	0.006
Rural-Urban Displacement (2001-2011)	0.579	0.806	-0.016	0.098	0.077	-0.010	-0.004
Decadal Growth (2001-2011)	0.494	0.859	0.079	-0.093	-0.050	-0.021	-0.006
Rate of Urbanisation (2001-2011)	0.540	0.839	0.064	0.003	-0.018	0.031	0.009
Level of Urbanisation, 2011	0.713	-0.652	0.257	-0.003	0.018	0.006	-0.012

Source: Computed by the authors**R-MODE ANALYSIS****Table-2 (iv): Calculation of Factor Score**

Districts/ Observation	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7
Darjiling	1.012	-1.154	0.079	0.061	0.028	-0.039	-0.031
Jalpaiguri	1.877	0.951	-0.172	0.373	-0.080	-0.008	0.064
Koch Bihar	-2.160	-0.091	-0.233	-0.047	0.046	0.023	0.005
Uttar Dinajpur	-2.732	-0.839	-0.106	-0.404	-0.265	-0.084	0.019
Dakshin Dinajpur	-2.221	-0.602	-0.146	0.002	-0.021	0.082	-0.003
Maldah	1.535	4.008	0.455	-0.291	-0.148	0.067	0.001
Murshidabad	1.157	2.075	0.078	-0.165	0.070	-0.073	-0.049
Nadia	0.694	-0.114	-0.114	0.403	-0.036	-0.030	0.022
North 24 Parganas	0.818	-2.669	0.960	-0.213	0.139	-0.009	0.060
South 24 Parganas	2.180	1.777	-0.052	-0.019	-0.028	-0.004	0.004
Haora	5.065	-2.744	-0.707	-0.357	0.022	0.030	-0.008
Hugli	0.493	-1.491	0.169	0.506	-0.182	0.007	-0.029
Bardhaman	-0.415	-1.728	0.532	0.087	-0.028	0.035	-0.062
Birbhum	-0.099	1.905	0.015	0.104	0.163	-0.006	0.005
Bankura	-2.255	0.020	-0.289	-0.022	0.073	0.042	0.019
Purulia	-1.181	0.650	-0.126	0.056	0.148	-0.032	-0.012
Paschim Medinipur	-1.432	0.462	-0.159	0.066	0.133	-0.013	-0.004
Purba Medinipur	-2.333	-0.416	-0.187	-0.139	-0.034	0.012	-0.001

Source: Computed by the authors

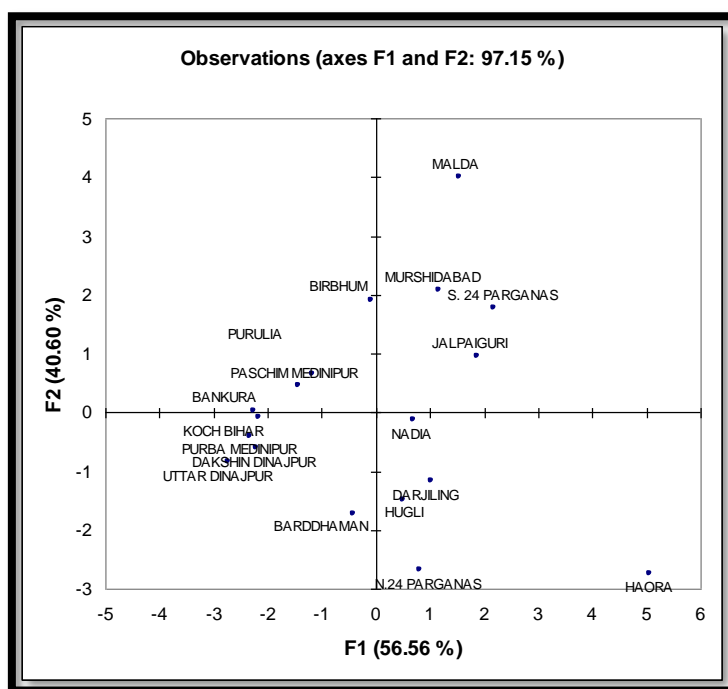


Fig. 10

A very high loading of Haora at the primary level indicates a very developed condition in the perspective of urbanisation but in secondary loading, Haora has responded negatively due to its low value of decadal growth rate of urban population, rate of urbanisation and rural-urban displacement measures. Maldah, Murshidabad, South 24 Parganas and Jalpaiguri have shown positive loading in both primary and secondary stages, so these are in more advanced stages of urbanisation. Nadia, Darjiling, Hugli, North 24 Parganas and Haora are in relatively less advanced stages as they have positive primary loading and negative secondary loading whereas, other districts are in less urbanised stages.

Conclusion

West Bengal has experienced a high level of urbanisation during 2001-2011 though high inter-district disparity exists in urban population distribution. In the state, urban process is strongly dominated by the indices of decadal growth rate, rate of urbanisation and rural-urban displacement factors. The growth of population as a result of in-migration and natural increase is indeed a matter of great

concern. A proper planning should come from the central as well as state government to enhance necessary infrastructure so that inequality among districts may be eliminated effectively.

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Buddhism in Sarnath: An Account of Two Chinese Travellers

Dr Anuradha Singh[†]

Abstract

This paper aims to draw the religious life in Sarnath (and Varanasi) as accounted by the Chinese travellers—Fa-Hien and Hiuen-tsang. The accounts not only talk about the stupas, pillars, statues built by King Ashoka; vihars and monks (bhikshus) living in those vihars but also contain the first preachings of Lord Buddha, establishment of Sangha and the story of Mrigajataka that remain significant. With the increased popularity of Buddha dharma in China, the Chinese were attracted towards travelling to India. They came to India mainly with the intentions to visit the places related to the fond memories of Lord Buddha, to study the Buddha religion and philosophy and carry the copies of the Buddhist compositions. Fa-Hien and Hiuen-tsang occupy significant places among these Chinese travellers. These accounts can be associated with ancient history as well as with historical geography, religion and philosophy. While Fa-hien in his journey details had described about the Buddha Empire, Hiuen-tsang highlighted the civilisation of India and its cultural landscape, albeit it has been often accepted by the historians that these accounts of their journeys should be considered as significant only when they are backed by historical evidences. They opine that these travellers were mainly influenced by the Buddha dharma and therefore, their accounts are liable to containing exaggerated journey details. It is true that the journey details contain few imaginary instances; nevertheless, these accounts have been validated by the remnants, stupas and vihars at the sites.

Key words: Sarnath, Varanasi, Dukkha, Fa-Hien, Hiuen-Tsang, Buddha

[†] Assistant Professor, Department of History, Faculty of Social Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India.
Email: dr.anuradha.bhu@gmail.com

Introduction

This paper is an attempt to sketch a critical appreciation of the account of the Chinese pilgrims: Fa-Hien and Hiuen-tsang on Sarnath—a site for heritage tourism and one of the four holy places associated with the life of Lord Gautama Buddha—the other three being Lumbini in Nepal, Bodh Gaya in Bihar and Kushinagar in Uttar Pradesh. Sarnath, derived from the name *Saranganath*, means Lord of the Deer. There is a well-known Buddhist story of two deers and the ‘deer park’ (Mrigadava) connected to this divine place. Located near the confluence of the Ganges and the Gomati rivers, the holy place of Sarnath is approximately 13-km northeast from the heritage city of Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. Undoubtedly, these heritage structures dominate the subtle collective psyche of the Indians that bears identity and culture. Seemingly, the account of Sarnath as provided by the Chinese travellers make it easier to understand the development of Buddha dharma and its impact on various sects and communities. The paper begins with the first preaching of Lord Buddha, the establishment of *Sangha* and the story of *Mrigajataka* that remain significant to understanding the religious life in the holy place. The followers of Buddha dharma owe extreme faith towards Sarnath. It is known as the place of its origin—a place where Gautama Buddha delivered his first sermon, known also as *Dharmachakrapravartansthala*¹ after he attained enlightenment in Bodhgaya. He first decided to preach his five disciples, who were previously his associates. Further, he came to Sarnath and proposed the four noble truths,² which are as follows:

Four Noble Truth

- The truth of *dukkha* (suffering)
- The truth of the *origin of dukkha*
- The truth of the *cessation of dukkha* and
- The truth of *leading to the cessation of dukkha*.

He further laid down the eight-fold factor for salvation from *dukkha*, which are as follows – right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. He preached to follow the middle way (Cowel, 1893).

After this event, Sarnath emerged as a centre out of its kind for the followers of Buddha dharma (Bhattacharya, 1924). Lord Buddha established the first Bauddha sangha with his first five bhikshus (disciples) and sent them to different directions to spread the teachings of the Buddha dharma (Mazumdar, 1937). Two hundred years after the *Mahaparinirvana*³ of Lord Buddha, King Ashoka built several stupas and erected one inscripted pillar (Hultsch, 1969). During the Sunga period, Vedica pillars were erected around the stupas (Agrawal, 1966). Many *Bodhisattava* statues were erected and established during the reign of Kanishka (Agrawal, 1956). Sarnath entered into the golden age of its art and establishment during the Gupta period and the most beautiful status were erected during this period (Sahni, 1972). During the reign of Harshavardhana, the monumental structures of earlier period were rejuvenated, and Rani Kumar Devi, the empress of Govind Chandra Gaharwal, established *dharmachakrajin vihara*. Fa-Hien and Hiuen-Tsang, both the Chinese pilgrims have mentioned teachings of Buddha, stories related to him, various names of Sarnath and ancient relics of Sarnath.

The description of Chinese traveller is based on two facts. First, they have mentioned the stories related to Lord Gautama Buddha and the Bauddha dharma. It contains the first preaching of Lord Buddha, the establishment of

¹ It refers to the teachings of Four Nobel Truths of Lord Gautama Buddha—the key to understanding the Buddha Dharma and the road to achieving enlightenment (Beal, 1980).

² The Four Noble Truths (2009, November 17). BBC Religions, Retrieved from: http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/buddhism/beliefs/fournobletruths_1.shtml

³ In simple sense, the term *Mahaparinirvana* refers to the death of Lord Gautama Buddha (Beal, 1980).

Sangha and the story of *Mrigajataka*,⁴ which are significant even today. Moreover, it also records what they have seen and observed: stupas, pillars, statues, made by the King Ashoka, vihars and monks (bhikshus) living in those vihars, the method of recitation, etc. Indeed, these accounts of Sarnath as sketched by the Chinese travellers help one understand the subtle influence of the Bauddha dharma on various sects and communities. The following figures: 1, 2 and 3 illustrate the artefacts that speak for the teachings of Lord Gautama Buddha's preaching his first discourse.

When it comes to keep abreast with the customary facts of social, educational, historical and traditional knowledge, all the scholars are in sheer agreement with the view that history mirrors the course of a journey, here it refers to the travelling of the Chinese travellers to India that stands significant. With the increased popularity of Bauddha dharma in China, the Chinese were attracted to travel to India. They came to India mainly with the intentions to visit the places related to the fond memories of Buddha, to study the Buddha religion and philosophy and carry the copies of the Buddhist compositions (Chakravarti, 2012). As stated above, Fa-Hien and Hiuen-tsang occupy significant places among these Chinese travellers. They are important not only in relation to the history of the Bauddha dharma but also for illuminating many other subjects. In the said context, in the absence of the details of these pilgrimages, it would have been difficult to understand the state of art of the Bauddha dharma in India during 500-600 A.D. (Pathak, 1990).

Fa-Hien (399-414 A.D.)

As mentioned already, of the scholarly Chinese travellers, Fa-Hien is the first who visited and presented a contemporary account of India. Fa-Hien visited India during the reign of Gupta emperor, Chandragupta II and lived here for 14-

15 years. The memoirs of the pilgrimage of Fa-hien are contained in '*FO-KYON-KI*'. It was translated into English by James Lege, which was published from Oxford as the *Record of the Buddhist Kingdoms*. Fa-hien started his journey in China from a place called *Si-Gan-Fu*. He traversed the desert of Gobi, Khotan, Gandhar, Taxila, Peshawar, Nagardwar, Punjab, Mathura, Sankasya, Kannauj, Saketa, Sravasti, Kapilvastu, Vaishali, Pataliputra to visit Varanasi and Rishipattanmrigdav (Sarnath). Fa-hien again returned to Pataliputra from Varanasi and carried with him the *Tamraliptis*.⁵ He further travelled through sea route to Ceylon where from he made his return to his own country.

According to him, there lies the Rishipattan Mrigdav (the deer park) at a distance of 10 Li (6.446 km) (Cunningham, 1997) in the north-west of Varanasi (Legge, 1971). The first sermon (*dharma-chakra pravartan*) delivered by Lord Buddha to Kaundinya and his four associates after '*Sambodhi*' (supreme perfect enlightenment) finds mention in the accounts of Sarnath by Fa-hien, similar to the descriptions found in Tripitaka (Legge, 1971).⁶ According to Fa-hien, there are four stupas and two sangaram where the Buddhist monks lived at that time (Mani, 2006). These accounts of Fa-hien are clearly supported by the archaeological remains of the Gupta Age. Most of the deities of Lord Buddha during the Gupta Period depict the affluent state of Buddha dharma, when Fahien visited Sarnath.

Hiuen-tsang (629-645 A.D.)

Hiuen-tsang visited India during the reign of Harshavardhan and lived in India for approximately 15 years. His memories are found in *Si-yu-ki*. It is believed that Hiuen-tsang himself composed it, but there is a more possibility that this memoir was prepared by one of his disciples on the basis of notes.

⁴ In ancient Indian tales, and in the Buddhist tradition in particular, *Mrigajataka* narrates the story of Bodhisattva's birth as a deer, which are considered as sacred and enlightening (Cunningham, 1997; Legge, 1971).

⁵ Tamralipti is the name of an ancient city on the Bay of Bengal believed by scholars to be on the site of Tamluk in modern-day India.

⁶ *Tripitaka* is a Sanskrit word meaning three Baskets. It is the traditional term used by Buddhist traditions to describe their various canons of scriptures.



Figure 1: Icon of Lord Gautama Buddha, Sarnath (Source: Author)

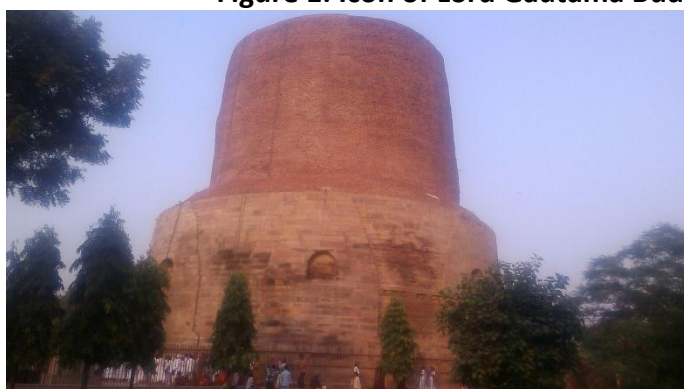


Figure 2: Dhamek Stupa that mark the spot of Deer Park (Rishipattana) in Sarnath (Source: Author)



Figure 3: Lord Buddha in Dharmachakrapravartana Posture (Source: Author)

Besides this, there lay his biography written by one of his disciples *Hui-Li*. This paper is however beyond the scope to describe his biography.

Hiuen-tsang travelled from China through Turpha, Kucha, Samarkand, Gandhar, Peshawar, Taxila, Kashmir, Mathura, Sthaneshwar, Kanyakubja, Ayodhya, Prayag, Kausambi, Sravasti and Kushinagar to reach Varanasi. From here, he went to Vaisali, Pataliputra, Bodhgaya, Tamralipti and opted to visit Srilanka via the sea route to study Hinyaan. However, following the teachings of the Monks he declined the idea of travelling through the sea route and instead travelled through Orissa, Andhra and Telugu Pradesh to reach

Kanchipuram, from where he travelled towards north and through Bhrigukachchha, Vallabhi, Sindh, Multan and returned to live in Nalanda. He visited Kamrup on the invitation of Bhaskarvarman and participated in the meetings organised by Harsha at Kannauj and Prayag. He departed from Kannauj to travel through Jalandhar, Taxila, Nagardwar, Kashgar and Khotan to reach China.

Hiuen-tsang, after travelling 500 Li (322.325 km) from Kushinagar reached Varanasi (Beal, 1980). According to *S-Yu-Ki*, the Kashi region was spread in the area of 400 Li (257.860 km) and the capital Varanasi area spread within the length of 18 Li (11.6 km) and *breadth* of 5-6 Li (3.22-3.88 km) on the western bank of the river

Ganges (Beal, 1980). The city is densely populated with very efficient courteous and sociable people, who revered education and devotion. However, only a part of the population was Buddhist while the rest followed other religions (Beal, 1980). Here, more than 30 Vihars were inhabited by more than 3000 monks of the Sammitiya sect. In addition, there were more than 100 Shaiva temples, who have millions of followers—majority of them are devotees of Lord Shiva—while few of these devotees shave their hairs; few others bear matted hairs; some loiter undraped; few others applies *bhasma* (a type of human ash) on their bodies—all practice penance to achieve salvation from this mortal world (Beal, 1980). According to *Si-Yu-Ki*, there was a 100-foot tall statue in one of the temples of Varanasi (Beal, 1980). Accounts of Hiuen-tsang reveal it clearly that during his visit; the Varanasi town emerged as a significant centre of Shaiva religion.

After Varanasi, Hiuen-Tsang describes Sarnath. In his accounts, there is a 100-foot high stupa made by King Ashok on the western bank of Varuna towards the north-east of the capital (Beal, 1980). He reached monastery Mrigdal, after travelling 100 *Li* (64.46 km) towards north-east of the river Varuna. According to the descriptions, 1500 Buddha monks of Sammitiya branch of Hinyan community lives in sangharam of Mahavihar (monastery) and in the midst of the Vihar there is a large statue of Buddha in the impression of *dharmachakrapravartana* (the wheel of truth) (Beal, 1980). Hiuen-tsang further describes that there is a stone made stupa erected by Ashoka at the place where Lord Buddha delivered his first sermon, in the south-west Monastery. Although, its base is now displaced, however there remains a wall of almost 100-feet, with a pillar of approximate height of 70-feet before this wall. This seems to be scintillating with light. It has been believed that those who pray before it, visualise the good or bad signs according as their prayer (Beal, 1980). Currently, the stupa and the pillar respectively designates the *dharmarajika* stupa and the

Ashoka pillar built in by emperor Ashoka to cherish the relics of Lord Gautama Buddha.

It is believed that Lord Buddha used to meditate nearer to the south of the stupa. This platform is made up of blue stone, which is about 150-feet long and 7-feet high. There lies now the graceful statue of walking Lord Buddha with whirling hairs. Heavenly signs clearly appear upon him, a clear reflection of divinity (Beal, 1980). Further, Hiuen-tsang in his accounts also describe about the deer park (Mrigdal) (please refer to the story of the two deers below) and Rishipattan Vihar, places and events, associated with the Lord Buddha and his life, few of which are noticeable in Sarnath. It contains the stories of attainment of Buddhata (knowledge) by Matreya Buddha, life of Buddha and stories related with former Buddhas. All these tales signify Lord Gautama Buddha's relations with Rishipattan (Sarnath).

According to Hiuen-tsang, in the monastery premises, there is a pond of fresh water circumscribed by 20 foot-steps. Here, Lord Buddha (also referred to as *Tathagat*) sometimes used to take bath. To its west, there is another pond with a circumference of 180 foot-steps, where *Tathagat* used to wash his alms-pot. Towards the north, there is another pond bearing a circumference of 150 foot-steps where *Tathagat* washed his clothes. The waters of these ponds are deep and stagnant (Beal, 1980). At a short distance from these ponds, there is a stupa in a dense forest, which is famous for the two-deer Buddhist story. The story goes as follows: there lived two kings of deers—Devdatta and Bodhisattava—with their respective dynasties of 500-deer. One day, the King of Kashi was on his deer-hunting mission. Bodhisattava went to the King. He told him: *Dear King! you set the forest on fire, and killed my subjects with arrows. I request you to kindly permit me to send one deer everyday so that you may get fresh and pure flesh, which would allow us to live for a little longer.* The King was happy with this proposal and returned to his palace. Accordingly, the sacrifice of one deer per day was being followed. One mrigi (doe) was pregnant in the herd of Devadatta. When

her turn came, she said: *I am ready to die but my unborn child should not be the cause of my death.* The King Devadatta was angry over it and asked what was the price of life of her child? She replied in agony: *O King! to kill the one, who is not born yet won't be humane.* Then he (Devadatta) revealed his dilemma to the King Bodhisattava. The king replied: *This is certainly a matter of grief. Today, I shall go to die on your place.*

Accordingly, when Bodhisattava went to the King of Kashi and narrated the story of the Mrigi, the King of Kashi realised his lack of human qualities of being compassionate and merciful. However, this incident rooted out his callous and brutal qualities—consequently, freed Mrigaraj Bodhisattava and discontinued the event of sacrifice, only to end it. Instead, he created the forest as a sanctuary for deer, only to preserve the mrigas. That is why, the forest was named as Mrigdav (Beal, 1980). Though this story seems merely a didactic story, it relates to the teachings of Buddhist religiosity—a sermon stemming from the teachings of non-violence.

The deliberation of the course of the journey of Hiuen-tsang is vast. Indeed, Hiuen-tsang is the prince of pilgrims (Thakur, 2010). His course of the journey highlights many significant things related to Varanasi and Sarnath. Again, I reiterate that out of these, the growing territory (Singh and Roy, 1986) of the Varanasi city and increasing influence of Shaiva dharma in the city are important (Singh and Roy, 1986). In addition to this, accounts of Hiuen-tsang also describe the decline of the spiritual realm of Buddhism in different parts of India along with Sarnath (Thapar, 2008). There are several theories—both external and internal influences that led to the downfall of Buddhism in India. However, the aim of this paper is only to sketch the religious life in Sarnath.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper is to present a sketch of Sarnath and Varanasi as accounted by the Chinese travellers Fa-hien and Hiuen-tsang in the course of their journey. These accounts can be associated with ancient history as well as

with historical geography, religion and philosophy. While Fa-hien in his journey details had described about the Buddha empire, and that too in very short, Hiuen-tsang had highlighted the civilisation of India, its culture, landscape in an unbiased manner, albeit it has been often accepted by the historians that these accounts of their journeys should be considered as significant only when they are backed by historical evidences. They opine that these travellers were mainly influenced by the Buddha dharma and therefore, their accounts are liable to containing exaggerated journey details. It is true that journey details contain few imaginary instances but these details are mere historical and genuine or authentic in comparison to contemporary Indian literature, although the structure and nature of these details remain religious. The remnants found from various places, mentioned in these journey details, confirm these facts. Further, the accounts of these two travellers corroborates with the discovery of these historical sites by Alexander Cunningham who conducted geographical research in the 19th century. Thus, it can be said that these journey details occupy a significant place in building various aspects of the ancient Indian history.

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Strengthening Rural Decentralisation: A Study on the Role of International Organisations

Dr Sujit Kumar Paul[†]

Abstract

The term 'decentralisation' has generally been used to refer to a variety of institutional reforms. It has sometimes been considered as a change in the organisational framework in which political, social and economic decisions are made and implemented. It is also understood as a mechanism to transfer responsibility and authority. In recent years, decentralisation has received singular attention all over the world. It has been considered as one of the most important elements in development strategy. It is a global and regional phenomenon, and most countries have attempted to implement it as a tool for development, as a political philosophy, and as a mechanism for sharing responsibility at different levels.

Since 1980s, developing countries have increasingly adopted decentralised form of governance. Decentralisation means the transfer of authority and responsibility from central to intermediate and local governments. Although the democratic decentralisation in terms of Panchayati Raj Institutions (village councils) was a post-Independence phenomenon, there has been a legacy and tradition of village panchayats since time immemorial in India. The 73rd and 74th Amendment Act, 1993 of the Constitution of India has made the Panchayat an institution of self-government. As per the constitution, Panchayats shall prepare plan for economic development and social justice at their level. The District Planning Committee shall integrate the plan so prepared with the plans prepared by the local bodies at district level. The success and failure of the Panchayats would depend on planning and implementation. It also depends on maximum people's participation at every stage of planning process, from proposal to implementation. People's participation in local-level development has been exercised through the formulation of the Panchayat-level development plan, project coordination at intermediate and district levels of the Panchayats.

The Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in West Bengal are very strong bodies, which function as real institutions of self-governance. In West Bengal, the planning process of grass-root level has some stages from proposal to implementation. After introduction of 3-tier Panchayat system in 1978, the Government of West Bengal brought about need-based reforms in the system from time to time from the very beginning. Encouraged by the State Government's strong commitment to rural decentralisation, Department for International Development (DFID), Government of UK came forward to support the ongoing rural decentralisation initiatives and upscale the bottom-up planning process. In the present study, an attempt has been made to understand the role of DFID for strengthening decentralisation in rural Bengal.

Key words: decentralisation, planning, implementation, development, rural West Bengal, India

[†] Associate Professor, Department of Lifelong Learning and Extension, Institute of Rural Reconstruction, Visva-Bharati (A Central University), Sriniketan – 731236, Birbhum, West Bengal, India & Vice President, Association for World Education (AWE) - An International NGO with consultative status of the United Nations. Emails: skpaulrd@gmail.com, sujit_kakali@rediffmail.com

Introduction

Decentralisation means the transfer of authority, legislative, judicial or administrative, from central to intermediate and local governments. The term 'decentralisation' has generally been used to refer to a variety of institutional reforms. It is considered as a change in the organisational framework in which political, social and economic decisions are made and implemented. Mahatma Gandhiji's idea on Gram Swaraj seems appropriate and timely in current period. Indeed, his political philosophies on Gram Swaraj have now come into existence in the form of Gram Panchayat, which is an effective instrument of grassroots governance and participative development. Evidences from Indian history suggest that the village panchayats were responsible for local problem solutions within the village level. In the Vedic era, there was "Panch-Ayat", which means a group of five people who were selected by the villagers and they were responsible for local governance. 'Sabha', 'Samiti', and 'Vidath' – these terms are mentioned in the *Rigveda* as local self-units. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata both indicate local self-governance in the Epic era. Terms such as Gram, Maha gram are mentioned in the Ramayana. Kautilya's Arthashastra too states that 'Sabha' and 'Samiti' played a vital role in controlling the decisions of the king. Besides, Neeti Shastra of Shukracharya also mentions village governance during ancient period. During the Sultanate period, the sultans divided their kingdom into provinces like 'Vilayat' and 'Amir'. Village was the smallest unit and had sufficient powers for local self-governance. Panchayats were also prevalent in the villages in the medieval period. According to Maheswari (1985), the beginning of local government can be presumed from 1687, when the Madras City Corporation was established. The British period divided into four timelines, that is, from 1687-1881, local governments were established to share the burden of resources of the central and provincial governments; 1882-1919, local governments were viewed as local self-government; 1920-

1937, local governments were established and people's representatives were controlling the provincial administration, and from 1938-1947, local governments were in the state of rejuvenation and reconstruction (Joshi and Narwani, 2002). After India's independence in 1947, the village panchayats were included in the Indian Constitution. According to Article 40 of the Indian Constitution, "the state should take steps to organise Village Panchayats and endow them with such power and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government." Rajasthan was the first state where Panchayati Raj was established on 2nd October 1959. This followed the establishments of the Panchayati Raj Institution as a unit of local self-governance in every states of India.

The 73rd Amendment Act has made Panchayats an institution of self-government. Article 243G of the Constitution envisaged Panchayats as Institute of Self Governance (ISG), which means they should enjoy functional, financial and administrative autonomy in their working area. As per the Constitution, Panchayats shall prepare plan for economic development and social justice at local level. The District Planning Committee shall integrate the plan so prepared with the plans prepared by the urban local bodies at district level.

The success and failure of the Panchayats would depend on planning and implementation. It also depends on maximum people's participation at every stage of planning process, from proposal to implementation. People's participation in local-level development has been exercised through the formulation of the panchayat-level development plan, project coordination at intermediate and district levels of the panchayats.

In West Bengal, the Gram Panchayats have been given more powers in comparison with powers given to the Block/District Panchayats. They have 14 obligatory and 21 assigned functions, apart from a large number of discretionary functions. The gram panchayats have full power to approve works. The

Panchayat Samities also perform a large variety of functions related to 18 sectors. The Zilla Parishads have a wide range of administrative and financial powers. They are delegated with all the functions of 29 sectors under schedule XI with 17 other items and 24 departmental schemes for implementation.

The State Government has brought about need-based reforms in the panchayat system from time to time from the very beginning. A major reform was creation of Gram Sansad (village parliament with electors regarded as parliamentarians) at village level. Next, the State Government also created Gram Unnayan Samiti (village development committee) elected by the electors of each Gram Sansad (GS) to enhance people's participation and to assist Gram Panchayats to plan, implement and monitor activities for economic development and social justice. Notwithstanding, its planning process was not decentralised until the seventh plan period. In the next section, an attempt has been made to discuss the methodology of decentralised planning.

Methodology of Decentralised Planning in West Bengal

In West Bengal, the planning process of grass-root level has some stages from proposal to implementation. At first, the Gram Unnayan Samiti prepares the local area plans and those plans are then submitted in the Gram Sansad meeting. Following this, all local area plans of all Gram Sansads are taken to the Gram Sabha. The Gram Sabhas are convened to identify the problems of development and the local needs. Special efforts are made to ensure participation of the people. The most important guideline in this matter is to arrange group-wise discussion in each Gram Sabha according to various development sectors. After the identification of the felt needs in the Gram Sabhas, the next step in the planning process is to make an objective assessment of the natural and human resources of the locality. The reports of the Gram Sabha discussion, including list of problems identified are consolidated for each development sector in the panchayat.

After receiving the final plan from Panchayats, the Panchayat Samiti (Block Council) and Zilla Parishad (District Council) starts preparing their annual plans. The plan proposals are consolidated at the district level and integrated with the Municipal plans. The task force constituted by the District Planning Committee (DPC) for the purpose evolves broad strategy for district-level development, the district plan is nothing but only the synthesis of the village plans. Currently, the rules favour the implementation of planned activities by the Zilla Parishad. The DPC forwards the integrated development plan for rural and urban areas of the district to the State. The State Planning Board is the state-level coordinating agency for planning. Next, I discuss the decentralised planning scenario in West Bengal.

Scenario of Decentralised Planning

The state government of West Bengal decided to go for a decentralised planning from the seventh five-year plan period (1985-1989). In the 1980s, the block-level planning and the district-level planning were formulated and implemented. However, the process of implementation and formulation of the district planning committee was reformed after the 73rd and 74th Amendment Act of the Constitution of India, 1993. In order to attract people's participation in large numbers, the Gram Sabha (Village Council meeting) and Gram Sansad (Village Constituency) were also created in the districts. As per the State Cabinet (1999), the Department of Planning and Development released an order (Memo no. 1415/P/2M-6/99-dated 24.05.1999) for allocation of the united fund for implementation of the district plans at the district level. The village-level plans are prepared by the Gram Unnayan Committee (Village Development Committee), which are then finalised in the Gram Sansad Meeting. In addition, in these Gram Sabha meetings the final consolidated plans of the Panchayat level are prepared from all the Sansad-level plans. Action plans prepared by the Gram Panchayats are integrated into Block Plans and again the same is linked into the District Plans and

incorporating therein, the District Sector Scheme and District Plans are formulated. The planning structure of West Bengal, thus bear four levels of consolidation.

The West Bengal government divides the budget for the plans into two segments: State Sector Scheme and District Sector Scheme. The District Planning Committee after discussion with the State Government decides some area for development and planning such as: 1. Area Specific Agricultural Product, 2. Extension of technical services, storage and marketing facilities, 3. Minor irrigation, 4. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 5. Social Forestry, and 6. Animal husbandry, etc.

The PRIs have a significant role to empower as well as develop the rural people. As stated earlier, people's participation play an important role for successful decentralization of planning process. However, in West Bengal the participation of both female and male are very low and remains a key lacuna to decentralisation. Most meetings are compelled to be dissolved due to the lack of coram. In reality, due to very poor level of awareness among the villagers and heavy workload between both men and women of the rural areas, their participation remains extremely low. The Gram Sabha (meeting held twice in a year under Gram Panchayat) has another important role in the decentralised planning process. Gram Panchayat makes final plans in the presence of all adult voters of that panchayat but here too the participation is very poor when compared to the total voters of these two panchayats.

For the decentralised planning to be successful, the local people of the particular Panchayat need to realise their roles and responsibilities. However, it is evident that at the time of Gram Sabha and Gram Sansad meetings people remain engaged in their daily chores. Another observable but important thing is the misinformation that are circulated about the dates and times of the meetings. Apparently, most villagers remain unaware about their roles in planning and implementation processes.

Again, some socially active villagers remain prejudiced to participate in the development process because the plans prepared by them are seldom implemented. Seemingly, politicisation of the entire planning process is further hampering the process of decentralisation because at the time of planning and implementation, priority is mostly given on the basis of political involvement of those areas where the influential persons who can speak and bear oratory skills take the upper hand in the meetings and the common people's opinion tend to be ignored. Middle- and upper-class villagers are simply not interested to attend the meetings because they think that the government programmes are mainly in favour of the marginal or poor community. Evidently, most villagers believe that the PRIs are nothing but ruling party's institutions.

Funds for decentralised planning at district level, block level and panchayat level comes from (i) own income of the local bodies, (ii) funds from the State Government and (iii) various government-sponsored programme on cost sharing between the Central and State Government. To implement the micro-level plan, it is necessary that there is an uninterrupted flow of funds to the gram panchayat. However, the Planning Commission of India is yet to strengthen this system. Moreover, for the process of financial devolution, the panchayats depend on the State Government for funding, the allocation of which is highly insufficient, that is, limited fund to implement any plans and availability of fund mostly at the fag end of the financial year. Wherever the panchayats receive sufficient funds, they fail to utilise the entire fund due to the lack of proper infrastructure, poor quality of plans and limited capacity. The other impediments that stand in the way of plan implementation are administrative and bureaucratic interference, lack of technological know-how, improper budget estimation and non-submission of utilisation certificate in time by the office of the panchayat. Despite these drawbacks, the West Bengal Government remains committed to rural decentralisation. The next section discusses the role of the

Department of International Development (DFID), Government of UK who came forward to support the ongoing rural decentralisation initiatives and upscale the bottom-up planning process.

Intervention of DIFD for Strengthening Decentralization in Rural Bengal

Background & Inception of the Strengthening Rural Decentralisation (SRD) Programme

Here, an attempt has been made to understand the role of DFID in strengthening decentralisation in rural Bengal. As stated above, encouraged by the West Bengal Government's strong commitment to rural decentralisation, DFID came forward to support the ongoing rural decentralisation initiatives and upscale the bottom-up planning process. The Government accepted the offer since the process of decentralisation for good governance, focus on poverty alleviation was already a priority, and the assistance from DFID would expedite the process. However, through a number of studies during design and post-design phase of the programme for Strengthening Rural Decentralisation (SRD) with support from DFID, the State Government identified further areas in PRI functioning, which needed systemic improvements in quality of governance with wider and better participation, greater transparency, accountability and responsiveness towards the poor for economic development with more equity and social justice.

In agreement with DFID, the Programme for Strengthening Rural Decentralisation (SRD) was designed by Panchayats & Rural Development Department, Government of West Bengal (nodal Department for rural decentralisation) in 2003. The representatives of DFID, Govt. of India and the State Government appraised the Programme Design in 2004. The Project Concept Note approved by the appropriate authorities in the UK and India in 2002 had recommended for a support of £150 million; but at the time of appraisal of the Programme Design, DFID reduced the size of the grant to £130 million over seven years. Finally, DFID sanctioned £9 million only for the first two

years' activities, indicating that the remainder of the grant would be available for five more years subject to fulfilment of the targets and attainment of the milestones in the first two years. After clearance from the Government of India in October 2005, the programme was inaugurated on 22nd November 2005 in Kolkata by Honourable Chief Minister of West Bengal. Implementation of the programme was started by Panchayats & Rural Development Department.

The Changing Scenario

As already established, the purpose of the SRD programme is to support the State Government to strengthen and accelerate the ongoing process of rural decentralisation leading to sustainable reduction in poverty in the rural areas of the state. Major thrust was given on institutional strengthening of Gram Panchayats and institutionalisation of participatory planning, implementation and monitoring processes in 304 selected Gram Panchayats in the six districts: Purulia, Malda, Murshidabad, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur and Birbhum. One of the agendas in the initial phase was to create examples of success for other Gram Panchayats to follow and also to reiterate that the programme interventions are worth replication and wide upscaling in the next phase. Following are among the notable changes due to the support of DFID.

Sustainable Institutional (Panchayats) Development

As noted earlier, for the sustainable development of the programme, emphasis was given in strengthening the PRIs. The SRD process resulted in preparation and publication of a draft roadmap for the Panchayats in West Bengal - a Vision Document by Panchayats & Rural Development Department. Since self-assessment and self-monitoring remain the crux for strengthening the institutions, these two have been introduced in the system of PRIs. Panchayats in West Bengal now track their own progress over time, which help them to develop a baseline on the basis of their own appraisal.

Capacity Building

It has been possible to strengthen about 300 Gram Panchayats and 3500 Gram Unnayan Samities in six districts as institutions through specially designed capacity-building interventions (individual, organisational and institutional) as a result of which these institutions are performing more effectively in terms of the constitutional mandate for economic development and social justice. In other words, due to capacity-building interventions and handholding support through the programme, these functionaries of around 300 are now conversant with better financial management including accounting and audit compliance. Computerised accounting system introduced at Gram Panchayat level is being up scaled with the programme support in these six districts.

Training and awareness generation is an important part for capacity building. It has been possible to generate awareness among all the Gram Panchayats across the state about the scope and necessity of enhancement of their own source revenue (both tax and non-tax), as a result of which the quantum of resources to be generated by the Gram Panchayats will increase manifold. With SRD programme support, 294 Gram Panchayats in the six districts have a minimum training infrastructure to cope with the increasing training needs at the community level.

Development of Infrastructure

With SRD programme support, the Extension Training Centres have been established with better training infrastructure to perform more effectively. Entire state has been provided with computers and peripherals among other things for improving their work environment. To facilitate direct training of a large number of Panchayat functionaries, a satellite-based Training and Development Communication Channel Network has been installed. The system has proved to be a very powerful tool of information dissemination, monitoring and capacity building on distance education mode. The SRD programme has taken special initiative for mass awareness and mobilising community

through various strategic campaign interventions including extensive use of the folk media and an interactive radio programme.

Community-Based Plans

Due to intense facilitation with the SRD programme support and intense participation of communities including the poorest and the marginalised sections, it has been possible to install Gram Sansad Plan based on Gram Panchayat planning process in 304 Gram Panchayats and about 4000 Gram Sansads. These plans are community-based, community-owned and community-managed. These Gram Panchayats have been able to demonstrate positive evidence of convergence of initiatives of Gram Panchayats and of the line departments for improved delivery of essential services like development of Anganwadi Centres, improvement of enrolment in Primary Schools, effective functioning of self-help groups, etc.

Around 3500 Gram Unnayan Samitis under these Gram Panchayats are now implementing community-based and community-owned plans, as a part of the Gram Panchayat plans, with focus on low-tech and low-cost activities, ensuring and dovetailing community contributions (around 20% of their total budgets) and Untied Poverty Fund available under the SRD Programme. In order to invoke participation of the community and ensure transparency, accountability and inclusiveness, the Gram Unnayan Samitis shared the summary of their annual plan budgets with each and every household in the respective areas. Most of the Untied Poverty Funds under the SRD programme are utilised by Gram Unnayan Samitis through disadvantaged self-help groups and indigent households, identified at Gram Sansad level, for social development and livelihoods expansion.

The SRD programme has been able to create thousands of evidences of community initiative, participatory democracy, transparency and meeting so-far-unperceived needs of the communities in the areas of public health, education and expansion of livelihoods. The examples of success are significantly

stimulating replication in the neighbouring areas with community initiatives.

Implementation of Various Schemes

The Central and the State Governments in India continue to implement various welfare, development and employment-generation schemes such as Swarnajayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana (SGSY), MGNREGA, through the panchayats. The SRD is managing and supervising the implementation of the work by observing all necessary formalities. The common people and the Gram Panchayat functionaries expressed satisfaction at the quality and quantity of the work done. The Gram Panchayat recognised the SRD-facilitated planning process as an important factor behind the achievement.

Conclusion

Successful planning and implementation of development programmes require adequate funds, appropriate policy framework and effective delivery mechanism with healthy environment for decentralisation. After the 73rd and 74th Amendment, the Government is trying to change in planning process by adopting bottom-up approach. The success has raised immense expectation about replication of the processes statewide on 'SRD mode'. It has been observed that if the process is replicated in the entire state, there will be tangible transformation in institutional practices, enhanced resource mobilisation, improved financial management, participatory planning, social mobilisation and voice, transparency, inclusiveness and accountability – all leading to reduction of poverty. The interventions on SRD mode need to be started in all tiers of PRIs and across all the districts of the state for better outcome out of investments made for rural development.

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Life and Times of Unborn Kamla

K.K. Varma. 2013. New Delhi: Palimpsest Publishers, 131 pages, Kindle Edition: £1.87; Paperback £1.87/₹275

Dr Rituparna Bhattacharyya[†]

“Men cannot do without women. They need a mother to feed them, a sister to play with, in their youth they seek a ladylove for romance, a wife to have a family with.... But they don't want a daughter born to them! These double standards and ingrained hypocrisy have made the girl child more vulnerable – demographically and culturally as well.”

This appalling excerpt from the book portrays that even in the 21st Century, a girl child in India continues to be the victim of grotesque gender inequality—the increasing levels of female foeticide has given rise to the trades of trafficking and bride buying. These inequalities are the result of several cascading factors: cultural values, patriarchy, poverty, illiteracy and unemployment.

Based on real-life stories, the narrative of the book begins with the life of Kammo. Raised in a poverty-stricken family of seven siblings, close to the Nepal border, Kammo, was ‘sold as a bride’ at a meagre amount to a groom, who originally hailed from Punjab but settled in Himachal Pradesh near Shimla. Cajoled by false promises of a happy married and secured life, Kammo's life landed in scourge of miseries—she first became a victim of brutal sexual and domestic exploitation (Bhattacharyya, 2009; 2013a, 2013b, 2014) by her husband and her in-laws, coerced to kill Kamla in her womb, and then pushed into prostitution for failing to deliver a baby boy. The story narrates her escape from prostitution and subsequent challenge to get her life back on track and importantly, to build her own identity as the owner of a small tea stall in Shimla.

The practice of bride buying followed in some states of India: Haryana, Punjab, etc. stems from a skewed gender ratio. According to the Census of India, 2011, Haryana and Daman and Diu, among all the States and Union Territories, count for the lowest sex ratios, 877 and 618 women respectively per 1000 men. In the said context, Dasgupta (2014) argues that though census data reveals that the overall sex ratio of India is improving, however, the child sex ratio is on the decline. That is, between 1991 and 2011, female-male sex ratio, though rose from 927:1,000 to 940:1,000, its child sex ratio declined from 945:1,000 to 914: 1,000 (please see, *Children In India, 2012-A Statistical Appraisal*). Seemingly, Varma argues that in India, female foeticide remains rampant—every 12 seconds a baby girl is aborted, which means 700,000 girls are killed every year. Ironically, sex selective abortion has grown into a ₹100 million-industry. This is despite the Government of India's Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994 that meant to prevent and ban female foeticides. Nevertheless, the asymmetrical sex ratio has paved the way to high levels of trafficking of young women and girls. Evidently, human trafficking is the third largest profitable industry in the world. Varma laments that across India; approximately 200 young women are being forced into prostitution every day. He further bemoans that an estimated 200,000 girls from Nepal are forced to cater to the customers in Mumbai brothels.

Indeed, the struggle for unborn Kamla, a national shame, remains a long-fought battle. Notwithstanding, a silent eco-friendly gender revolution has begun in the Piplantri village of Rajasthan—each time a girl child is born, the villagers welcome the birth of the child by planting 111 trees, thereby, trying to build connection between the environment and gender activism (Singh, 2013). Nonetheless, the grim reality of missing girls continues.

Priced competitively, this comprehensive and interesting read pulls together the unique

[†] Executive Editor, *Journal Space and Culture*, India; Alliance for Community Capacity Building in North East India, UK, Email: rituparna.bhattacharyya@accb.org.uk ©2014 Bhattacharyya. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

insights and challenges of 'bride famine' in India. The book has tremendous potential to accrue benefit to the available literatures on women's studies and gender and development.

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About the Author: Professor K.K. Varma

Prof. K.K. Varma began his career in demographic research at Patna University, India; an alumnus and ex-member of faculty of the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, India. He also has been ex-State Representative of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in India. Professor Varma has spent long years in the social sector-working for research and consultancy organisation, Government of India, international NGOs and the United Nations. He currently holds a key position in Childreach International India.

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