

Socio Economic Status of Bengutia Village, Birbhum District

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ABSTRACT: *Socio economic status of a particular area deals with the local people's knowledge, atmosphere, landscape, society etc. However, Bengutia village is a small village of Birbhum district, which is, consists of santhal pargana and kangkalitala. Kopai River flows along the Bengutia village. Mostly there is clay soil with low eroded zone. Humidity as well as rainfall is very high in the monsoon period. Tropical dry and moist deciduous trees can be seen in that region. Most of the land is cultivated or agricultural (especially rice, vegetables, wheat, mustard etc.) and most of the workers are female. Number of Scheduled tribe population is very high with low literacy rate and most of them are santhali in language. There are some of the problems like electricity, transport & communication and as well as infrastructural problems. In spite of some drawbacks, the cultural landscape of the mouza has been changing owing to its proximity to Bolpur-Shantiniketan town. Therefore, in this research paper an attempt has been made to point out the socio-economic status of the study area to identify its positive and negative impact on the people followed by some findings and conclusions.*

KEYWORDS: *Socio economic status, Bengutia village, Kopai river, Land, Problems.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Bengutia village is a landlocked mouza with a total geographical data of 142.76 sq. kms and situated on the northeastern part of the Bolpur Block of Birbhum District, West Bengal. The mouza lies between 23°42'40" N and 23°43' North latitude & 87°43'20" and 87°43'40" East longitude. According to District Census Handbook of Birbhum, 2001, around 574 people are living in that region and the growth is positive but, as per low qualification, they are economically deprived. People of general village are more conscious about their education, economic activities, health than tribal people. However, through this research paper it can be pointed out physical structure of the study area as well as socio-economic structure followed by cultural and ritual or religious status of both tribal and general people.

OBJECTIVES: Several objectives have been incorporated to fulfill its original dimension:

1. To make an assessment on socio-economic status of Bengutia village.
2. To state physical or geological structure, social and cultural status of the study area.
3. To make a relation between general village and tribal village.
4. To point out the infrastructural condition of the study area.
5. To highlight the problems of the study area followed by some recommended suggestions.

HYPOTHESIS:

- I. People of tribal village are more deprived than people of general village.
- II. People of Bengutia village are very much influenced by socio-economic-physical structure of the study area.
- III. In today's context, young generation of Bengutia village used to go to the schools and colleges to get proper education.
- IV. The main source of income of the people of Bengutia village is basically agriculture.

METHODOLOGY: Any research work can be done based on following methodology:

1. **First phase/ The pre-field work:** Preparation of field study includes collection of topographical map of the study area (no. 73^m/₁₀) from the Survey of India, collection of census data from District Census Hand Book, collection of cadastral map from Directorate of Land and Land Records, Govt. of West Bengal.

1. **Second phase/ The Field work:** The second stage includes field study i.e., personal visit of the study area. The study is based on intensive field of 90 families with the help of structured questionnaire. Besides the data collected from the survey, data from various publications of the central and state government are also considered.
2. **Third phase/ The post-field work and report making:** In this stage after getting all primary and secondary data, various cartographic methods have been incorporated to represent and analyse the same. However, some statistical measurement has also been calculated to make this research paper more scientific.

GEOLOGY: The study area is located in the southeastern part of Birbhum district. The eastern and southeastern parts of the area have more or less flat topography being covered by quaternary sediments with patches of laterite. Bengutia village, the study area is located within this geological formation.

PHYSIOGRAPHY: The study area is located in the Mayurakhi River basin and is underlain by the sediments (composed of older alluvium) brought down by the river. The general slope of the study area is formed southeast to northeast in the northern part and northwest to southeast in the southern part. The altitude of the surrounding area is 40m above mean sea level. But, as Bengutia is located near the Kopai River valley, the average altitude is 38m approximately.

DRAINAGE NETWORK: The study area is located in the Mourakhi River basin and is drained by Kopai River, which is a tributary of the Mourakhi River. In general, the river flows from west to east within the district of Birbhum. Near this particular study area the river takes a bend and flows from southwest to northeast direction. The average width of the river is around 40m and average length is 0.8km.

SOIL PATTERN: The soils of the study area are predominantly older alluvium. Typical clay soil is found mostly in the eastern and northeastern part of the mouza. The sandy soil is found in the middle part of the mouza. On the northwestern part along the course of river Kopai the soils are predominantly silty clay.

- **SOIL FERTILITY:** the soil fertility status of the study area has been determined by the soil testing kits. Nitrogen status of soil in the mouza is satisfactory. The potassium and phosphorus content of the soil ranges from low to moderate.
- **SOIL EROSION:** the factors responsible for soil erosion are-
 1. Very high gradient of the Kopai river banks.
 2. High rainfall in that region.
 3. Low organic matter content.

CLIMATE: The study area experiences a tropical monsoon type of climate.

TABLE: 1 CLIMATIC CONDITION OF THE STUDY AREA

YEAR 2012	MAXIMUM TEMP. (°c)	MINIMUM TEMP. (°c)	AVERAGE TEMP. (°c)	RAINFALL (in cm)	MEAN NO. OF RAINY DAYS
JANUARY	22.9	11.5	17.2	2	1
FEBRUARY	26.8	13.6	20.2	2.7	2
MARCH	30.7	21.8	26.2	2.2	3
APRIL	38.5	25.7	32.1	9.5	4
MAY	39.4	26.6	33	14.5	5
JUNE	36.4	26.4	31.4	84.8	11
JULY	34.3	26.5	30.4	165.9	16
AUGUST	32.4	26.2	29.3	127.1	17
SEPTEMBER	32.2	25.4	29.2	62.3	15
OCTOBER	31.3	18.2	24.75	15.6	8
NOVEMBER	29.8	13.1	21.45	2.9	1
DECEMBER	23.1	12.2	18.1	0.5	1
ANNUAL AVERAGE	31.48	20.6	26.04	40.48	

Source: Meteorological Department, Govt. of India

An oppressive hot and humid summer (Table: 1) followed by the monsoon between JUNE and NOVEMBER and a moderate cold winter characterizes the general climate of the area.

NATURAL VEGETATION: The natural vegetation covers an area of sharing 12% of the total geographical area as per the field study and topographical sheet of the area. There are two types of natural vegetation: (1) The Tropical Dry Deciduous Trees and (2) The Tropical Moist Deciduous Trees. The principle species are Bamboo, Sal trees, Arjun, Guava, Banyan trees, Mango, Palm, Jackfruit trees etc.

LAND USE: Land is the primary resource of people from which they mitigate their economic desire and space.

TABLE: 2 LANDUSE PATTERN

LAND COVER	AREA IN HECTOR	PERCENTAGE
CULTIVATED LAND	75.66	53
FOREST INCLUDING ORCHARD	17.13	12
FALLOW LAND	14.28	10
SETTLEMENT	17.13	12
WATER BODIES	14.28	10
ROAD	4.28	3

Source: Census of India, 2011

Here we can see, the cultivated land covers (Table: 2) most of the area, which is almost 53% of the total area. However, only 3% area covers with road.

ECONOMIC PROFILE: Nearly 52% of the total population of the Bengutia mouza belongs to the worker category.

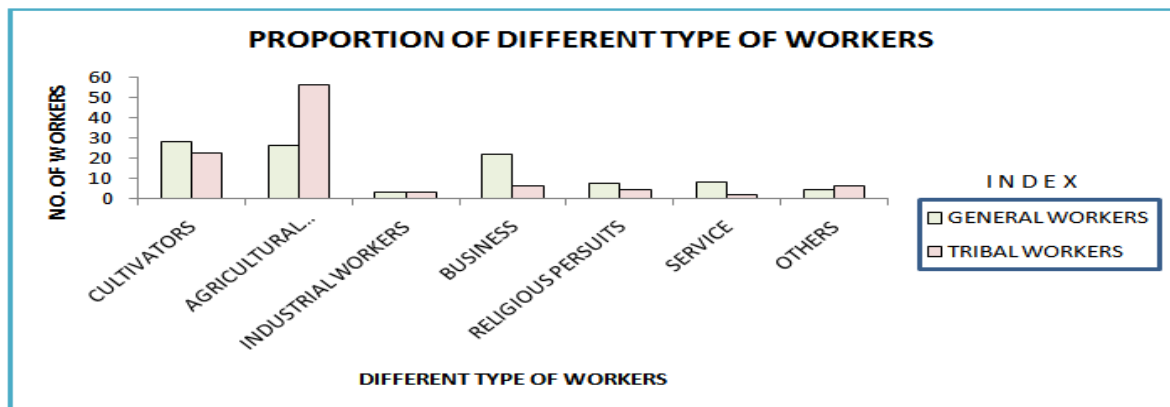


Fig: 1 Source: District Census Handbook, Birbhum, Directorate of Census Operation, Govt. of India, 2001

In the tribal village, most of the workers (Fig: 1) are engaged in agriculture and small number of workers are engaged in service sector. On the other hand, in the general village, most of the workers are cultivator and small number of workers is engaged in household industrial sector.

AGRICULTURAL PATTERN: Agriculture occupies a vital role in the economical Bengutia mouza.

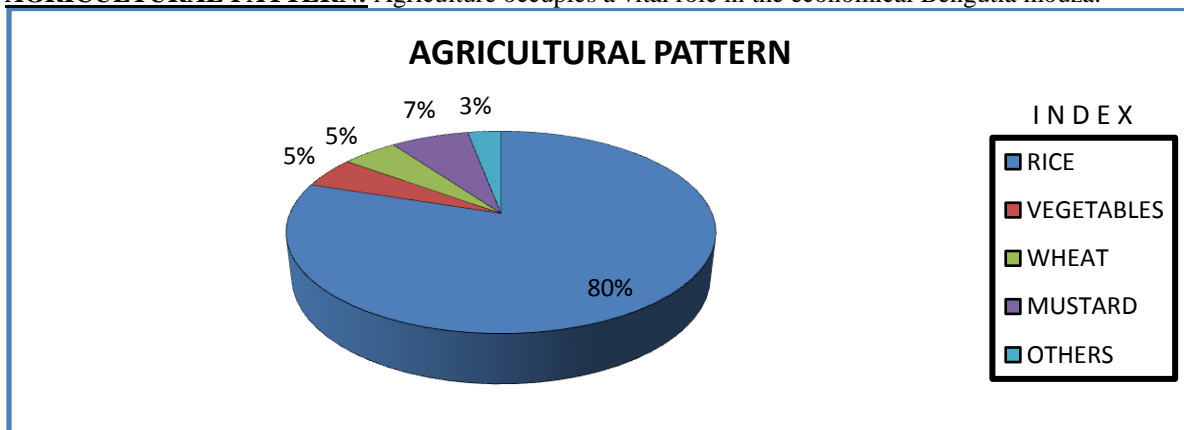


Fig: 2 Source: District Census Handbook, Birbhum, Directorate of Census Operation, Govt. of India, 2001

So, the agricultural pattern of the study (Fig: 2) area is highly controlled by topographic condition, soil and climate. About 75% of the arable land is under cultivation in the rainy season. However, only 40% of the agricultural land is cultivated during winter and summer.

DEMOGRAPHIC STATUS: The population of the Bengutia Mouza has been growing steadily from 284 in 1971 to 574 in 2001. Therefore, the population growth is positive.

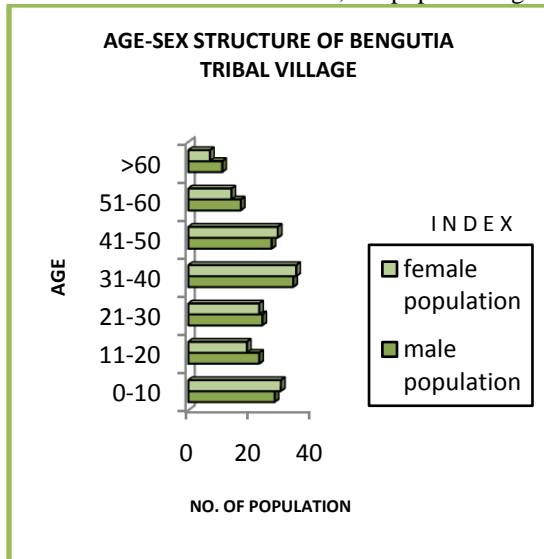


Fig: 3

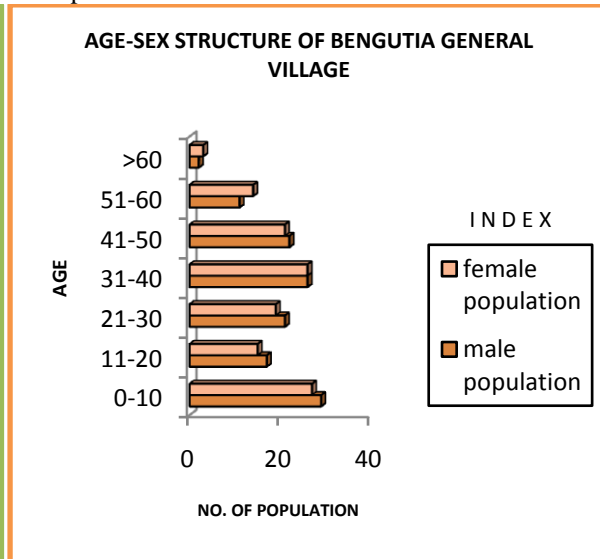


Fig: 4

Source: Primary Data, 2013

Here, we can see, in tribal village (Fig: 3) total population is very high as well as female population is quite high rather than male population. However, in general village (Fig: 4), number of male population is rather high than female population. On the other hand, scheduled caste and scheduled tribe contributes 10.57% and 54.75 of the total population respectively.

LITERACY STATUS: The area under study is a purely rural one where high level of literacy is not expected. Average literacy rate of the mouza is 25.96%.

TABLE 3: LITERACY STATUS OF BOTH GENERAL AND TRIBAL VILLAGE

GENERAL VILLAGE			TRIBAL VILLAGE		
SEX	LITERATES	PERCENTAGE	SEX	LITERATES	PERCENTAGE
MALE	43	33.59	MALE	55	33.54
FEMALE	23	18.4	FEMALE	29	18.47
TOTAL	66	51.99	TOTAL	84	52.01

Source: District Census Handbook, Birbhum, Directorate of Census Operation, Govt. of India, 2001

Nearly 20% of literates of the general village and 45% literates of the tribal village of the Bengutia mouza have had their education till primary level (Table: 3). Field survey revealed that nearly 35% literates of both the villages have secondary education. Compared to the tribal village, the general village shows high percentage of higher secondary level education. Data shows that, 15% literates of the general village take the advantage of graduate level education and the proportion of the tribal village is only 5%.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STATUS:

The poverty dividing the population below and above the poverty line is based on the working population data collected from field survey. The working class population (Table: 4) is considered to be above poverty line and the non-working class population is considered to be below the poverty line.

TABLE : 4 STATUS OF POVERTY LINE

VILLAGE	BELOW POVERTY LINE		ABOVE POVERTY LINE	
	PERSONS	PERCENTAGE	PERSONS	PERCENTAGE
TRIBAL VILLAGE	155	55.95	166	55.89
GENERAL VILLAGE	122	44.05	131	44.11

Source: District Census Handbook, Birbhum, Directorate of Census Operation, Govt. of India, 2001

- ✚ It is observed that, maximum number of houses have a family of 4 to 8 persons in both the General and Tribal village. Large families more than 8 persons are more predominant.
- ✚ Single-family unit is the principle characteristic feature of the general village of Bengutia mouza comprising 55.56%. On the other hand, Tribal village shows a greater proportion of houses with joint families (78.4%).
- ✚ In the study area, there languages and dialects (Table: 5) are spoken. These languages are Bengali, Hindi, Santhali.

TABLE : 5 LANGUAGE PATTERN

VILLAGE	BENGALI		HINDI		SANTHALI	
	PERSON S	PERCENTAGE	PERSON S	PERCENTAGE	PERSON S	PERCENTAGE
TRIBAL	66	20.56	4	1.25	251	78.19
GENERAL	202	79.84	5	1.98	46	18.18

Source: District Census Handbook, Birbhum, Directorate of Census Operation, Govt. of India, 2001

SETTLEMENT: The settlements are mainly located on the plain land and moderately rolling land. The distribution of settlement is mainly controlled by the location of water bodies and local road networks. According to field survey, out of 125 numbers of total houses, 36 houses can be seen in the general village and rest of all houses can be seen in the tribal village.

MARKET PATTERN: Kangkali Temple located in the western part of the Bengutia village is the main factor for the growth of shops and markets along the roads. This is mainly a small market complex.

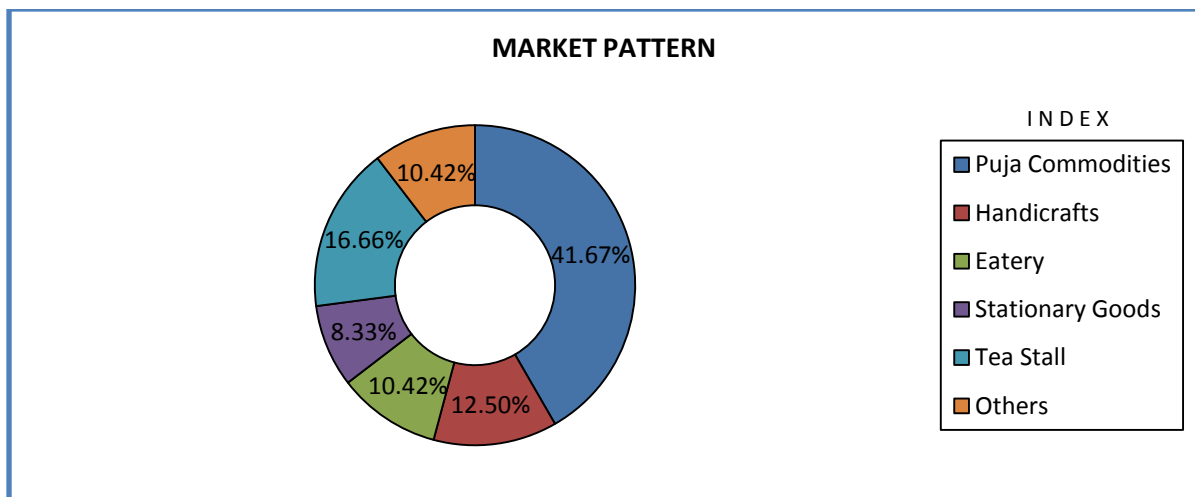


Fig: 5

Source: Primary Data, 2013

From the above figure (Fig: 5), we can say that, most of the shops sell puja commodities and a small number of shops sell stationary goods.

TOURISM: Kangkali temple is regarded as one of the ‘Sati Pith’ of India. Therefore, the temple attracts large number of tourist and religious minded communities from all over the world for long. Maximum number of tourist visits this place from West Bengal (around 60%). From other states, tourist comprises about 30% and rest represents foreigners.

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION:

- Bolpur and Prantik are the nearest rail station of the study area. These are nearly 6 km and 3 km away from the study area.
- The area is linked with Bolpur by Bolpur-Labhpur road running through western part of the village. This route is of great importance for the movement of goods and passengers.
- There is only one pakka road from Bolpur-Labhpur link road to Kangkali Temple in the village. Most of the village roads are non-metalled. These roads are generally narrow.

INFRASTRUCTURE: The area is moderately developed as per as the infrastructural facilities are concerned.

- ⊙ The health facilities are satisfactory in the study area. There is a hospital within 4 km of the mouza.
- ⊙ Supply of drinking water is very well.
- ⊙ Bolpur has undergraduate colleges both technical and non-technical. Viswabharati University, located at Shantiniketan is only 7km from the area.
- ⊙ Nearly 70% of the household of the mouza have electric connections,
- ⊙ The mouza lacks in financial institutions. Only one bank is located at Prantik. The people of the study area have to go to Bolpur for their financial needs.

PROBLEMS: The problems are mainly due to the underdeveloped of both natural and human resources.

- ❖ There is limited scope for extension of agriculture due to infertile soil and less rainfall as well as seasonal rivers.
- ❖ Scope of local employment is limited due to the absence of household industry.
- ❖ Unplanned growth of settlement creates different problems like water logging, uneven development of communication system for the villagers.
- ❖ There is only one primary school in the study area. Therefore, the students have to travel long distances to gain access of higher education facilities.
- ❖ Traditional pattern of cultivation, lack of general awareness, non application of improved agricultural tools, manure, pesticides, lack of irrigation facilities etc. contribute to the overall low productivity of agricultural lands.

II. SUGGESTIONS:

Some suggestions have incorporated to improve the present condition of the mouza:

- ✓ Roads, settlement should be constructed at appropriate sites.
- ✓ Setting up of household and cottage industries and forest product based economy would strengthen the economic situation of the mouza.
- ✓ The establishment of high schools and technical institutions will improve the quality of human resources.
- ✓ The establishment of health care center within the mouza is urgently needed.
- ✓ Emphasis should be given to increase the gross cropped area by adopting scientific agricultural techniques.
- ✓ Establishment of tourist lodges and hotels and other beautification program will attract more tourists.

III. CONCLUSION:

There is a unique correlation between the physical and cultural landscapes in Bengutia. The lifestyle of the villagers and economic sector of the mouza are always influenced by the elements of physical environment. The economic development is to some extent hampered due to lack of some infrastructural facilities.

Integrated development of the village can be achieved by careful planning and application of modern science and technology in various economic sectors. Sustainable use of natural resource may help the development of rural community of the area.

In spite of some drawbacks, the cultural landscape of the mouza is rapidly changing owing to its proximity to Bolpur-Shantiniketan town. The development of tourism of Bengutia gives impetus to its growth.

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