

Socio Economic Change of Barasat: A Case Study Berunanpukuria

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Abstract: *Berunanpukuria is the largest mouza in the Icchapur Nilganj Gram Panchayet of Barasat-I Block in North 24 parganas in West Bengal. Berunanpukuria is situated on the middle of Barrackpur-Barasat highway in the vicinity of Barasat town. The village is large with an area of 152.92 sq.km. It has a population of 2162(according to 2001 census.) In the past(before 10 years) time the village was fully dependent on agriculture and fishery. But after the education institutions were set up the village become a developed village and in future it will become educational hub as well as an urban area. Here the study mainly focuses on the identification of socio-economic and cultural transformation of the village due to set up of education institution (W.B.S.U & Kingston Educational institute). When the Kingston Educational Institute (Technical engineering college) was set up in 2004 the transformation started and then after 2009 when the West Bengal State University was established a huge change is seen in transportation facilities, income level, change in land use, social amenities of study area, as well as density of population per sq-km, increase of total population, house construction, employment both male and female, health care facilities, increase of literacy, change of food habit, dress patterns, house amenities, nutrition distribution, bank account, etc. Therefore an attempt has been made here to identify the socio-economic and cultural transformation of the village and its benefit.*

KeyWords: *Transformation, Socio Economic Structure, Strengthening.*

I. Introduction

Socio-economic development refers to ability to produce an adequate and growing supply of goods, service productivity and efficiency to accumulate capital and to distribute the fruit of productivity in a relatively equitable manner. The gap between rich and poor, development and under development, first and third world nation reflects variations in these socio-economic capacities. Social change is usually regarded as a constant, ongoing process affecting many areas of life, whereas development is used to denote more specific, empirically measurable form of change. Most 19th-century and some 20th-century approaches aimed to provide models for the evolution of human kind as a whole, arguing that different societies are at different stages of social development. The most comprehensive attempt to develop a general theory of social evolution centering on the development of socio-cultural systems was done by Talcott Parsons on a scale which included a theory of world-history. Another attempt both on a less systematic scale was attempted by World System approach. Many of the more recent 20th-century approaches focus on changes specific to individual societies and reject the idea of directional change, or social progress. Most archaeologists and cultural anthropologists work within the framework of modern theories of socio-cultural evolution. Modern approaches to socio-cultural evolution include the theory of modernization and the theory of post-industrial society. The district of north 24 parganas comprises 5 sub-divisions. Barasat-I CD Block falls within the Barasat Sadar Subdivision, Barasat-I consist of rural areas with 9 gram Panchyets and 1 census town. The Icchapur, Nilganj Gram Panchyets forms the western limit of the Block and consists of 18 Mouzas. I have studied Berunanpukuria Mouza which is the largest census village of Icchapur, Nilganj Gram Panchyets of Barasat-I Block. The entire Berunanpukuria is within 79 B number topographical map published by the Survey of India. It has a population of 2162(according to 2001 census). The total no. of male is 1128 and total no. of female population is 1034(according to 2001 census). The Mouza consists mainly two religion communities- of Muslim and Hindus. In the previous time the Berunanpukuria was covered vegetation and wet land when people were fully dependent on agriculture and fishery. So then the mouza was not so developed, but after the establishment of Kingston(2004) and West Bengal State University(2009) and other institutions and industries, the income level of the people, road condition, mode of transport, living standard and awareness have improved. It has changed the life style, food habit, dress-pattern, house amenities, education, no. Of literates etc .

II. Methodology

Field survey includes with pre-field survey, post field survey also. Pre-field survey refers the collection of the secondary data, theoretical materials collection about the study area. To know well about the climatic condition, physical constraints or physical topography, changing socio-economic and cultural condition of the study area is important. If we have proper pre-field knowledge about any perception about the socio-economic and cultural condition of the study area, then it is very helpful for preparing questionnaire which is an important pre-field work. The pre-field has been done covering - literature to be acquainted with the study area since similar types of report, articles will be very helpful to evaluate the changing pattern, preparing the list of collected data and collection of maps, and other relevant documents etc. In the study area of Berunanpukuria, the change in socio-economic and cultural aspect due to educational institute set up mainly the W.B.S.U and Kingston technical engineering college has been observed. The field survey includes- This process relates to primary data collection methods for example questionnaire as a set of questions used mainly in direct interview and to gather data from a respondent. The subject of research mainly being on change in economy, transport, education, land use, house types, household amenities, communication network, dress & language code, different types of schemes etc, due to set up of W.B.S.U and Kingston technical engineering college. Sometimes it includes quantitative data also. For this sample survey with the help of structured questionnaire has helped to interpret the socio-economic, cultural and demographic data in quantitative and qualitative way. Secondary data are also important for example the mouza map as a base map and also pre field background information of the area. Collection of secondary data from different sources like the census, village directory, the gram Panchayet office, block development office has been incorporated. Post Field work consists of Analysis of the data collected, preparation of final maps, tables and report writing.

III. Objectives

- To identify the socio-economic and cultural change of the people due to set up of W.B.S.U and Kingston.
- To study the various socio-economic and cultural problems by institution setup.
- To analysis any change in occupational pattern of the study area.
- To find out any change in the pattern of land utilization.
- To identify the change of transportation and communication network.
- To find out any change in demographic pattern such as sex ratio, age structure, family size, family structure etc.
- To estimate the changing pattern of literacy among the people and find out the awareness about education.

IV. The Study Area

Berunanpukuria is the largest mouza of Ichchapur Nilganj Gram Panchayat of Barasat-I Block in North 24 parganas. District of West Bengal in India. Berunanpukuria is situated on the middle of Barrackpur-Barasat highway in the vicinity of Barasat town. Berunanpukuria is located at 22-43'41" N to 88-27-13" E. The village is with an area of 152.92 sq.km. It has a population of 2162(according to census handbook).

V. Condition Of Berunanpukuria

The population characteristics have been analysed by taking into account the gender, religion, the population composition and the age and sex structure of the inhabitants. Here the population characteristics have been analysed on the basis of the data collected by primary survey. The development of the area is associated with the different population characteristics, the male female ratio, their religion, age –sex status and here the population composition have been shown with the help of different statistical diagrams. Gender is a social construct referring to range of characteristics of femininity and masculinity. In Berunanpukuria the share of female population is more or less same to the male population. According to 2001 census the no. female population 1034(48) in compared to 1128(52%) male population and according to primary data present % of total male are 51% and % of total female are 49%. The male are mainly associated with the economic activities like, agriculture, manufacture, business etc. the female population in the village are associated with household activities, works as agricultural workers etc.

The population composition is shown in the percentage of population under different caste category. The composite bar diagram above showing the percentage of population under different castes. It is evident that the share of the general caste population is high which is about 84% . Then the share of schedule caste and schedule tribe population is negligible which is about 7% and 9%. The General caste population are contributing

the main share of population. The development work for the betterment of the SC & ST by the government should be improved here of these categories.

Occupational prestige as one component of socio economic status encompasses both income and educational attainment. The measures of social position is by describing job characteristics, decision making ability and control, and psychological demands on the job. The village has different types of occupation pattern. The occupational structure of the Berunanpukuria mouza is composed of workers, non-workers and marginal workers. The people belonging to the worker category are high in no. who works in the tertiary sector which is about 46% and the workers associated with primary and secondary sector are about 24% and 30% (according to primary data) The no. of female marginal workers is few, here the females are associated with the domestic works and working in the agricultural fields.

The overall level of education in the region is low. Mainly the large portion of male and female are only educated up to the level of primary standard which. The male have higher literacy rate than the female in spite of the fact that the no. of male who have passed is relatively lower. In the village total educated persons are 929 of which 57% are male and 43% are female and total illiterate persons of the village are 1233 of which male population are 49% and female are 51% (2001 census). According to primary data 86% are literate and only 14% are illiterate. The maximum no of aged people are illiterate there including both male and female

Religion has been defined by various scholars. William James called religion as “the enthusiastic temper of espousal”. The food habits, clothing, shelter and higher needs of peoples are also closely influenced by religious beliefs. The religious composition of the population is an important cultural element of the region. The main religion in this village is Islam and Hinduism. The maximum share of population is Muslim. The 57% of population having Muslim religion and the share of Hindu religious people is about 43%. Thus we can consider the Berunanpukuria village as a Muslim dominant area.

VI. Major Findings and Analysis

Population is an important demographic element. In my study area sex ratio changing through the time. From the diagram it is shown that in 1961 the % of total male were 59% and female were 41%, in 1971 the % of male were 58% and female were 42 %, in 1981 the % of total male were 55% and female were 45%, in 1991 the % of total male were 57% and female were 43% and in 2001, the % of total male were 52 % and female were 48% (according to census). According to primary data, at present the % of total female are 51% and female are 49%. Hence it is clear that the % of total male and female becomes more or less the same from 2001 to 2013. The sex ratio is 967 female per 1000 male. So it can be concluded that through the educational setup in the area not only the development occurred but also the ignorance of female child is also reduced which reflects the more or less same sex ratio. Without development and awareness it could not have happened. (Table 1 & Table 2)

The socio – economic status include the following parameters like the level of education, the occupational structure, the monthly income of the family. Through the primary data collected the transformation of above parameters has been assessed with the help of different statistical diagram.

The level of education is an important parameter to analyse the socio – economic status of the region. The overall level of education in the region was very low in past. Mainly the large portion of male and female are only educated up to the level of primary standard. The male have higher literacy rate than the female in spite of the fact that the number of male who have passed secondary, or graduation was relatively lower. The maximum number of aged people are illiterate there including both male and female. The low literacy level is an important cause for the low economic development of the region. But through the development due to establishment of few educational institute after 2004 the educational status of village become improve. From the diagram it is clear that illiteracy has reduced which was 57% and literate population was 43%. At present, according to respondents 86% people are literate and only 14% of people are illiterate most which include the aged population. Not only the total literacy rate increased but also the female literacy also has increased which is about 38% compare to the male literacy rate of about 43%. Hence the educational discrimination is diminishing and through this educational transformation the village soon get better development because education is the base of income as well as development of any region. (Table 3)

The occupational structure of a society is the mix of different types of occupations. It also describes the distribution of people among those occupations, which gives some sense of which types of work predominate the society. Occupational structure is sociologically important because of its effects on social class and other forms of social inequality. The occupational structure of the Berunanpukuria mouza is composed of workers, non-workers and marginal workers. According to respondents before 10 years ago, the people belonged to the worker category was high in no. who works in the agricultural large fields which was about 28% and then the workers associated with trade and labour were moderate which was about 20% and 16% and people belonged to industrial sector, transport sector, service and construction sector was lowest which was about 8%, 8%, 8% and

4%(primary data). these occupational structure is further changed through the development of the village and now according to respondents the people belonging to industrial and trade are high in % which is about 20% and 28% then, service, transport, agriculture and labourers are moderate in no. and people belongs to construction sector is low which is about 4%. Some people are now engaged in educational institute as employee and to meet the needs of a large no of students there are built a no of mess as newly established educational institute can still not provide the hostel facilities. Besides, various food Stoll, tea Stoll, hotel and stationary also seen which appears mainly from 2004 . The no. Hence, in this mouza primary base occupation is losing its important through the time and secondary and tertiary based activity get priority which is a indicator of development toward urbanisation which is mainly influenced by the educational and small scale industrial set up in the mouza. Here the females were associated with the domestic works and agricultural work in previous time but now females are involve in various rural schemes.(Table 4)

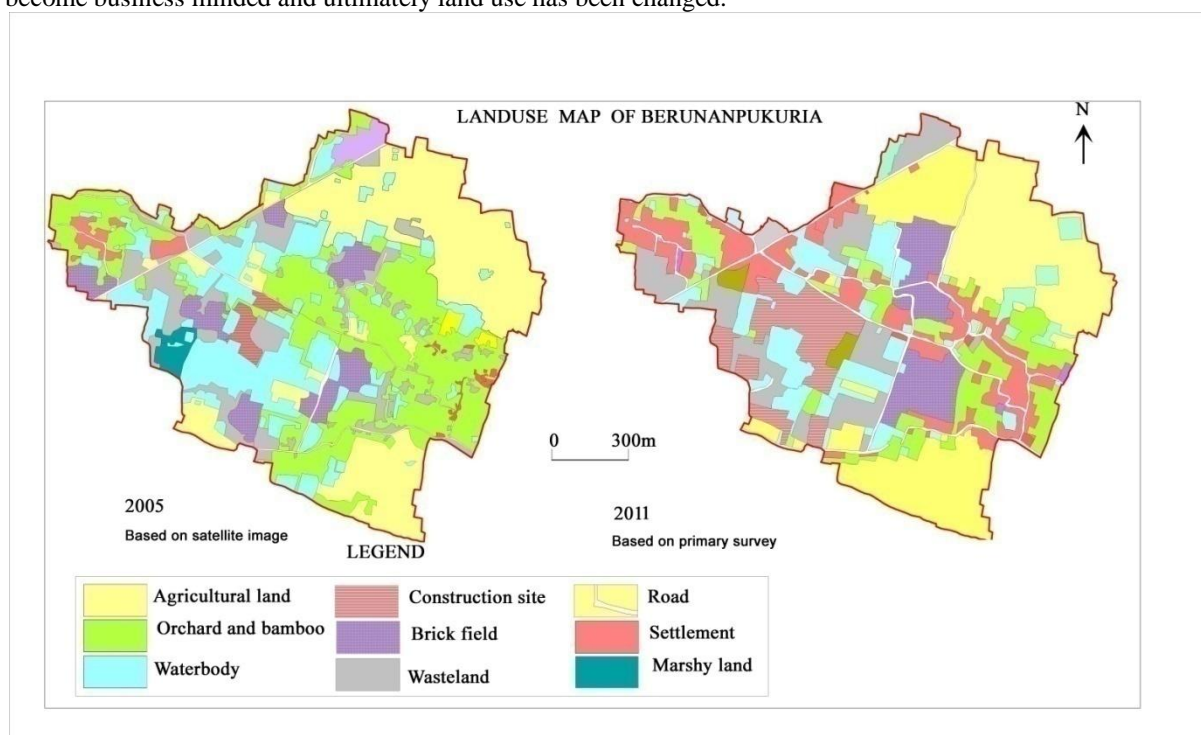
The house hold income of the village changed widely after generating various source of income which are created by the educational set up . From the diagram the transformation of household income can be compared . Earlier in the village the household income of the people of was relatively low. On the basis of the data collected in the primary survey the income level of the people is divided into five classes ranging from less than <2000, 2000-4000, 4000-6000, 6000-8000 and above 8000 Rs. The maximum share of people had income level in between 4000-6000 and next highest portion of people fall in the income level 2000-4000 . The no. of people in the two income level that is more than >8000 and 2000 is very less in number . At present the maximum share of people income level in between 5000-10000 and the next highest portion of people fall in the income level 10000-15000 and 15000-20000 . The no of people in the two income level that is more than 20000 and less than 5000. Almost all people have bank account for savings. This comparison reflects the improvement of economic standard of maximum respondents in village. Thus, maximum people who were low income group in earlier become middle income group according to income level.. Thus there is need of job generation by Government organisation and also providing financial aid to the needy people to more development of the village. Transportation system, network and mode of transport are most important for socio economic development. The exchange of goods and service is a central features of economic activity. It is directly related to the network and mode of transportation. The daily migration of labour force, students and the intensity of economic activity is directly correlated to the transportation facility. So in this point of view the transport availed and the mode of transport is important from the diagram, it is seen that before 10 years ago, the availability of mode of transport was very poor as the road network was not adequate. More than 60 % of respondent used to go on foot and more than 40% of respondents used van for transportation. But the picture has changed with the development of the area. As various educational institute established in the village, a large number of students becomes daily commuters so the road network compare to the past and the mode of transport also increased. Now, more than 40% respondents used van and engine van, more than 40% use own bikes and 20% used bicycle which reflects the development of transportation of Berunanpukuria. Recently in this year university bus is available only for students but local people cannot get bus facility in this village. Only one bus C.S.T.C. provide facility of bus of local people for two times in a day. Although they get the facility through the vicinity of Barrackpore-Barasat highway which is also influenced the development of mode of transportation.

House type indicates the living standard of the people of any area. The diagram shows that before 10 years ago in Berunanpukuria, according to primary survey, about 52% of respondents had mud house, about 36% of respondents had semi concrete house and only about 12 % of respondents had concrete house. The scene has been changed after setup of WBSU and Kingston Educational Institute. Now there are no mud houses in the village, more than 32% of respondents have semi concrete(semi-pucca) house and more than 68% of respondents have concrete house.

Socio economic status is closely related to household amenities. When the socio economic development appears in an area, the household amenities usually improve in the area. In the village Berunanpukuria, household amenities improved widely after 2004 when electricity became available in the village. Before 2004 only about 60% of people had the facility of electricity then more than about 56% of people had not the facility of household amenities, about 40% people had electric fans, about 36% of people had TV and about 60% of people had radio. But now almost all respondents have modern household amenities such as mobile phone, refrigerator, computer, laptop etc. More than 88% of respondents have TV, 28% of respondents have refrigerator, 12% of respondents have computer and 4% of respondents have laptop in the village. This comparison depicts the development of the socio economic condition of the village. It has already mentioned that various educational institute have been established in the village. So a large number of students come from outside daily and some of the students stay in mess in the village. Besides students, teachers and other people who are employed in WBSU and Kingston Educational Institute come to this village. These students and outsiders almost come from urban areas. So their language influences the local people and local people now try to use urban language. According to primary survey, about 80% of respondents now use urban &

local language, about 12% of respondents use urban language and about 8% of respondents uses local language. It is clear that outsiders have an important role in changing language pattern. Traditional customs are an important and sensitive element of cultural aspect of rural areas which sometime disrupts the development of the area because some development destroy traditional customs. The same picture is seen in my study area through the development process. Some of the students stay in mess in the village some of whom are addicted to alcohol, drugs and their life style sometime affect the traditional customs. According to 80% of respondents the development does not destroy the traditional customs and according to 20% of respondents the development destroys the traditional customs. Hence it can be said that most of the local people support the development of the village

The concept of land varies with time and individuals. In the early phase of human civilization when the earth science did not develop as such the vast land as well as the diversified physical phenomena on the earth surface was merely treated as the aesthetic one. But during the course of development the value of land is being appreciated progressively with time as it is the only means for the span of human life. The increasing pressure of population on the land has compelled the contemporary geographers to think about the land afresh. In the changing situation, the vertical expansion of land use is suggested rather than horizontal expansion. Vink (1975) defines land use as the ability of human beings to manage their ecosystem in order to produce some of his needs. This indicates the ability of man to preserve or destroy land. Nature of land use of any area depends upon the physiographic nature, demographic structure and socio-economic composition of an area. Thus the land use scenario is a composition of these three factors. Land use can be changed through development of an area which is seen in Berunanpukuria village. The land use of the village has mainly changed due to setting up of the educational institutes in the village causing high land price. Now land price is 4 to 5 lakh/bigha which was previously 20000 to 25000. Hence most of people who previously involved in agriculture and other occupation become business minded and ultimately land use has been changed.



Source: Field Survey

From the above land use map, land use transformation through the time can be described. In 2005 the village was almost covered by orchard and bamboo, waste land, water body, agricultural land and marshy land which started to change from 2005 when Kingston Educational Institute was established (2004) and then in 2009 when West Bengal State University was set up the land use changed more rapidly. From the land use map it is seen that most of orchard and bamboo covered areas have been transformed into settlement area, a portion of water body transferred into construction site. Marshy land also converted into construction site. In 2005 there were 8 brick fields in the village which is converted into various land uses. Some became waste land, some are transformed as construction site and settlement purpose and now only 3 brick fields prevail in the village. Most of waste land used for settlement, orchard and construction purpose. Now where the West Bengal State University is situated there were a large water body and a brick field. Hence it is clear that through the time waste land, brick field, orchard and bamboo water body are mainly reduced and that land is mainly converted

into urban land use. Although agricultural land use is not much transformed but in future it will be transformed as most of the people have become business minded according to most of the respondents of the village. Road network has also increased through the time. All the land use change indicates a trend of urbanisation in the village.

VII. Major Problems

The mouza berunanpukuria, which is surveyed is one of the developing mouza under Ichhapur Nilganj Gram panchayet at Barasat-I in north 24 pgs in west Bengal. Through the survey of the mouza I have come to know that the mouza has some problem as mentioned as below

Educational Problem: Though the people of Berunanpukuria become more aware of education compare to the previous time yet, the literacy rate of the mouza is quite low. The education level of women is very low. There is no high school, only a primary school and other institution such as WBSU and Kingston educational institutions are mainly for higher education where most of the students are outsiders. Most of the residents of this area have primary and secondary level of education. According to the 2001-census total number of illiterate was 1148 out of which the number of female was 646 (56.27%) and male (43.73%) and the literate persons of the mouza are 1014.

Economic Problem: Due to educational institute the economic condition of Berunanpukuria has recently become better through increasing employment opportunities as well as increasing level of income but the incidence of poverty tended to be marginally higher still in the area. Though the income level has increased but it is not sufficient to meet the needs of maximum people in the area. Besides, women are not habituated to engage themselves in different economic activities such as SHG or any household industry to earn the money, eventually the economic condition is not equally developed.

Unemployment: Unemployment mainly among youth is a major problem in the area due to lack of literacy. Though migration from the village for income purpose has reduced but it has not totally stopped from the village. Some people have to go outside the village for income as the income opportunities are not sufficient. Most of the people are engaged in small scale industry and agricultural field or in brick field.

Communication System: The communication system inside the mouza is not well developed which would be an important indicator of development of an area. The road which links with the Barasat-Barrackpur road towards the WBSU is in a bad condition and the repairing works of these road is not undertaken. The mode of transport is not sufficient for the large no. of students of WBSU and Kingston Educational Institution and the villagers. Hence, it creates problems in communication system of the area.

Agriculture Problems: After establishment of the WBSU and Kingston Educational Institute the agricultural production reduced because most of the people have become business minded. Most of people have a tendency to establish shop, mess, restaurant, fast food stall, tea stall etc which is become more profitable than agricultural production. Hence, some agricultural plot near WBSU and Kingston Educational Institute are transformed for business purpose. According to respondent they have to buy some crops and vegetables which was available before 10 years ago. So it is clear that agricultural production reduced by the set up of education institute.

Social Problems: In the village proper Sanitation facilities, source of safe drinking water is not so developed. Even the source of safe drinking water in the educational institute sometimes becomes disrupted. The electricity facility is not in good condition. Health care is another problem in this area. In Subhasnagar, a new Primary Health Centre (PHC) has been established but the infrastructure is very poor and no facilities for deliveries. So in any serious condition of health the people have to go to Barasat Municipality Hospital. There is also not sufficient good private practitioner and pharmacy. Another problem is the people of the area are not fully engaged with any rural development scheme to get facilities (Self Help Group, MGNREGA, ASHA, BANDHAN etc) as the facilities are not so active in the area.

Cultural Problem: After the set up of the Educational Institutes the area is facing some problems which affected their traditional customs. Some of the boys who stay in the area for study purpose in mess or in rent house have a habit of drug, smoking, alcohol which affected the young generation of the area and their traditional customs.

Environmental Problem: There are no proper drainage and sewerage systems in the area. It is one of the cause of environment pollution and the other cause is the presence of nearby brick fields and due to the set up of WBSU some natural wet lands have been destroyed which has a negative impact of wet land ecosystem.

VIII. Concluding Remarks

The village survey reveals how demographic and socio-economic condition change appears through development of the village and how these changes effect the poor villager's life. It also reveals the relations between the village culture, economy and livelihood . The area is now well connected by road ways. Service sector and Industrial sector should be more developed in this area. In the handicraft sectors more financial help to be given. It cannot be denied that there are many problems that need to be addressed quickly and firmly to harness the full potential of any village. Proper measures are to be taken to solve the problems of this village. Such as dependence not only the infrastructure development, communication network development, better health delivery facilities, better drinking water facilities, better agriculture scenario, better community organisation and better governmental performance, it also depends on the approach of people who live in the village.

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LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: population transformation(1961-2001)

| YEARS | 1961 | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 |
|--------|------|------|------|------|------|
| MALE | 59% | 58% | 55% | 57% | 52% |
| FEMALE | 41% | 42% | 45% | 43% | 48% |

Source:Primary Data

Table 2: distribution of present population

| POPULATION | PERCENTAGE |
|------------|------------|
| MALE | 51% |
| FEMALE | 49% |

Source:Primary Data

Table 3: Distribution of literate and illiterate population

| YEARS | 1961 | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 |
|------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| LITERATE | 20% | 85% | 90% | 71% | 57% |
| ILLITERATE | 80% | 15% | 10% | 29% | 43% |

Source: Census

Table 4: Distribution of occupational structure

| NAME OF OCCUPATION | AGRICULTURE | LABOUR | INDUSTRY | TRADE | SERVICE | TRANSPORT | CONSTRUCTION |
|-----------------------|-------------|--------|----------|-------|---------|-----------|--------------|
| EARLIER(10 YEARS AGO) | 28% | 16% | 8% | 20% | 8% | 8% | 4% |
| PRESENT | 12% | 12% | 20% | 28% | 14% | 16% | 4% |

Source: Census,2011