

Marginalisation and Development of Women in Fishing Community: A Case Study of Jelepara

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Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

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SIKKIM UNIVERSITY

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Date:

DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled “**Marginalisation and Development of Women in Fishing Community: A Case Study of Jelepara**” submitted to Sikkim University in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**, is my original work. This thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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“Marginalisation and Development of Women in Fishing Community: A Case Study of Jelepara”

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Abbreviations

AAJ	Annapurna Anna Yojana
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AY	Antodaya Yojana
AYUSH	Department of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturotherapy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy
BENFISH	West Bengal State Fishermen's Cooperative Federation Limited
BPL	Below Poverty Line
BSUP	Basic Services for Urban Poor
BSUP	Basic Services for Urban Poor
CAA	Constitutional Amendment Act
CBCS	Community Based Convergent Services
CBPPI	Community Based Pro Poor Initiative Programme
CEDAW	Convention for Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CFC	Community Fishery Centre
CHC	Community Health Centre
CSR	Child Sex Ratio
CSR D	Centre for the Study of Regional Development
DAW	Division for the Advancement of Women

DAW	Division for the Advancement of Women
DESD	Decade of Education Sustainable Development
DHDR	District Human Development Report
DPCs	District Planning Communities
DPEP	District Primary Education Programme
DWACRA	Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas
DWCUA	Development of Women and Children in Urban Areas
EAS	Employment Assurance Scheme
EGs	Education Guarantee Schemes
EIUS	Environmental Improvement of Urban Slums
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FFDA	Fish Farmer's Development Agency
FFW	Food for Work
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
HCM	Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality
HDI	Human Development Index
HDRC	Human Development Resource Centre
HUDCO	Housing and Urban Development Corporation Limited
IAP	Indoor Air Pollution
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services

ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IGNDPS	Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme
IGNOPS	Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme
IGNWPS	Indira Gandhi National Widows Pension Scheme
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INSTRAW	International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
IRDP	Integrated Rural Development Programme
JGSY	Jawahar Gram Samridh Yojana
JnNURM	Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission
JSY	Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY)
LCS	Low Cost Sanitation
LED	Local Economic Development
MAS	Mahila Arogya Samiti
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MKSP	Mahila Kisan Sanskritikaran Pariyojana
MPC	Metropolitan Planning Communities
NABARD	National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
NCW	National Commission for Women

NFFWP	National Food for Work Program
NFHS	National Family Health Survey
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NHUM	National Urban Health Mission
NIPFP	National Institute of Public Finance and Policy
NITI Aayog	National Institution for Transformation of India
NPNSE	National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education
NRHM	National Rural Health Mission
NRY	Nehru Rozgar Yojna
NSDP	National Slum Development Programme
NSDP	National State Domestic Product
NSS	National Sample Survey
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSAGI	Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues
PACS	Primary Agricultural Credit Society
PFCs	Propagation of the Indigenous Local Fish Species
PHC	Public Health Centre
PIL	Public Interest Litigation
PMIUPEP	Prime Minister's Integrated Urban Poverty Eradication Programme

PMRY	Pradhan Manti Rozgar Yojna
PRIs	Panchayat Raj Institutions
REGP	Rural Employment Generation Programme
RKVY	Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna
SD	Sustainable Development
SEWA	Self Employed Women's Association
SFDC	State Fisheries Development Corporation
SGRY	Sampurna Gramin Rozgar Yojana
SGSY	Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojna
SHG	Self Help Group
SJSRY	Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojna
SSK	Shishu Shiksha Kendra
SSPD	Shelter and Sanitation for Pavement Dwellers
STCP	Short Term Credit Programme
STEP	Program of Skill Training and Employment
T B	Tuberculosis
UBSP	Urban Basic Services for the Poor
UHDR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
ULB	Urban Local Bodies
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO	United Nation
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Education Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNSOD	United Nations World Summit Outcome Document
USHA	Urban Statistics for the HR and Assessment for Urban Poor Settlements
WBFC	West Bengal Fisheries Corporation
WBSEDCL	West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company Ltd.
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WDCs	Women’s Development Commissions
WID	Women in Development
WSSD	World Summit for Sustainable Development

Glossary

Aarataaar – Whole seller

Aaya – A woman taking care of patients, children and elderly people; get wages on a per day basis

Ardhanarishvara – A body which is half of male and half of female

Banchuni – Female dry fish sorter

Bepari – Businessmen

Bhadra – A Bengali calendar month starting from mid August

Bidi – Handmade Indian cigarette made up of Tendu leaves

Boisakh – Bengali calendar month starting from mid April

Bramhacharya – Life of celibacy till the age of twenty five

Charak Puja – Celebration for worshiping Lord Shiva, a male Hindu God

Charak Shankranti – Last day of every Bengali calendar year

Dal – Lentils

Devatas- Male God

Dingi - Boat

Dorma – A mat made up of dried date, palm or bamboo leaves and sticks

Durga Puja – Worship of Hindu Goddess Devi Durga, goddess of strength and destroyer of evil

Ferki – Basket filled with trashed fish

Gher – Chamber for storing sea water

Ghone – Shrimp Fry

Handy – Aluminum Pot

Hakim – Medical practitioner following Unani System for treatment

Ilish – Hilsa Fish

Jaishtha – A Bengali calendar month starting from mid May

Janamashtami – Celebration of the incarnation day of Lord Krishna

Jele – A person who is catching fish and allied with fishing related activities

Juar – High Tide

Kaittain – Bamboo knives used for dry fish sorting

Khunti – Place where dry fish are sorted

Lord Shiva – Male Hindu God

Mache – *Bhate Bangali* – It is a Bengali proverb denoting the food habits of a Bengali person. The meaning of the proverb is rice and fish makes a real Bengali person

Macher Aarat – A wholesale fish market

Nar – Man

Nari – Woman

Para – A small place reside

Phitkari – Alum

Rui – A fish of the Carp family

Shakti – Goddess of Power and Strength

Shaowla – Algae

Shivaratri – Worship of Lord Shiva for a whole night

Streedhan – Wealth of women

Vaidya – Medical practitioner following Charak and Shushruta Samhita for treatment

Yajna - Holy ritual by offering sacred things to the fire

Yajnopavit – A holy ritual after which a sacred thread is worn by the person for who the ritual is performed.

Chapter 1

1.1. Introduction:

Marginalisation and Development are two emerging concepts in social sciences and the two sides of the same coin as well. The concept of marginalisation can be defined as some sort of powerlessness and exclusion experienced by a group, resulting from an inequality of control of 'resources and power structures' within society. However, it is with the advent of Marxist theory, the roots of social inequality has been unpacked and analysed. Marx, Engels, Adam Smith and other thinkers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries identified material resources like land, labour and capital as the basis for social contention and stratification. The term marginalization has emerged in the late 20th century as a key concept among the analysts and policy makers.

Marginalisation is a broad term when one thinks about marginalisation, multiple and various images appears such as violence, levels of poverty, poor health structure, poor educational structure, etc.

Marginalisation as a process is conceptualised as cumulatively acquired and spatially related phenomena of social, economic cultural and political denials and deprivations, in – securities and uncertainty, hierarchy and domination which get legitimized and reproduces by the functioning of several normative and societal arrangements to relegate several sections of the population at the social margin despite their protests and resistance¹. Women are included in these sections of the population who are deprived for living a qualitative life in their whole lifespan.

The process of marginalisation of women can be analysed at various levels i.e., in family, society, workplace and almost all spheres of life. The Indian women are subjected to patriarchal rule, as the women from other nations of the world, receiving the respect in society through marriage and motherhood, both of which valued a high level of chastity.

¹Singharoy, Debal K., (2010), ' Marginalisation and the Marginalised: Reflections on the Relational-Cumulative Dynamics' in Debal K. Singharoy (eds.), *Surviving Against Odds The Marginalised in a Globalizing World*, Manohar Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 48.

The position of women also concern with political changes as in times of uncertainty, they regressed (socially depreciated) and during stability they developed. As men always remain in the higher position of political and economic power, they (women) are always lagging behind in the possession of political and economic power and thus these precarious scenarios forced them towards the status of 'Marginalised' and 'Excluded'.

The process of exclusion, discrimination and marginalisation takes place both in individual and collective plane. Moreover, the degree of exclusion and discrimination has different dimensions in different societies. They adopt and change themselves according to the changing social reality. Feminist scholars argue that women are marginalised due to the patriarchal structure of society. In Indian society, sexuality, reproduction and social production are regulated by patriarchal values expressed through specific cultural metaphors. Patriarchy limits women's control on property and other resources, including the products of their own labour. Poverty and patriarchy are the two issues which pushes women towards marginalisation and exploitation. Situations are more critical in the case of the women in the marginalized communities such as the fishing communities. Human dignity, self respect, mental and emotional security and the assurance of being valued by others are all immensely important to women's lives, but there is no easy way to quantify them except enhancing their capabilities and this can be possible through the process of development.

Development is a universal phenomenon; it is a worldwide concept which means about freedom of thought and speech, freedom to participate in decision – making, and freedom to work without social bondage.

Development means improving the conditions of life. In development, all the modern advances in science, technology, democracy, values, ethics, and social organisation fit into the single humanitarian project of producing a far better world. In its strong sense, development means using the productive resources of society to improve the living conditions of the poorest people. Development means more of everything for everyone in the context of a lot more for a few.

Development can be understood in terms of empowerment as well. Empowerment can be designed as “recognizing the capacities of such groups (the marginalized and oppressed) to take action and to play an active role in development initiatives”².

Development of women, safeguarding their interest is to ensure that they are brought into the mainstream to take advantage of the general development activities. The various efforts and activities for the development of women are based on the empowerment strategy that is increasing the capacity of the women. A women’s level of empowerment will vary, sometimes enormously, according to other criteria such as her class or caste, ethnicity, relative wealth, age family position etc.

Some concerns that arises are that whether freedom and equality mean anything to women in India, whether they exercise their right to live with dignity, whether they have the freedom to develop their potentials and choose what they should do or be, if they have the capability to acquire knowledge, be creative and productive and to live long and healthy lives, if they are protected from the major sources of restrictions of freedom – from violence, discrimination, want, fear and injustice and if they enjoy the same chances and choices as men, equally and on the same terms. Situations are more critical in the case of the women in the marginalized communities such as the fishing communities. Human dignity, self respect, mental and emotional security and the assurance of being valued by others are all immensely important to women’s lives, but there is no easy way to quantify them.

1.1.1. Women of Fishing Communities in West Bengal:

Fishing communities in India are quite widespread. Fishing communities adjacent to coastal areas are facing different kinds of problems than those who are located and working in inland waters. Security issues are problematic for coastal fishing communities whereas receding up of rivers are the main problems for inland fishing communities. Because of versatile problems that they encounter in everyday life, the fishing communities located in various parts of India faces lots of challenges. In fact, many a

²Siwal, B.R. (2010) ‘Empowerment of Women: Conceptual Framework’ in Archana Sinha ed *Sustaining Communities Strategies for Sustainable Community Development*, Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, 202.

times, they are forced to leave their occupation and find some other livelihood alternatives. Conditions of their female counterparts are more vulnerable and precarious in most of the times. Due to nature of their work with low income, women are forced to look for alternative source for livelihood, apart from helping their male counterparts in fishing.

The state of West Bengal ranks second in fish production in the country after Andhra Pradesh. The growth rate of the marine sector in West Bengal is less than inland sector. Average fish production of inland water in India is 4.29% which is less than average fish production of inland water in the state around 5%. People demand inland water fish more than marine water fish.

In the context of women in fishing communities of West Bengal, they have to participate in income generating activities which have created a kind of triple burden for them. As a women in general, as a helping hand within the four walls of the home and as a women from the marginalised community such as women from fishing communities who is forced to look for alternative source of livelihood due to her poor and vulnerable status. Patriarchal structure of society also reinforces marginalisation of women in all spheres of social, economic, political and environmental arena.

For the people of West Bengal, fish is an important component in the regular diet and is a cheap source of protein for the peoples of West Bengal. The 90% people of the state are basically regular fish eaters. It is consumed in its fresh form as well as in the dried variation with the nutritional value intact in it. West Bengal is the only state in India, where fish is cultivated in every kind of water bodies like brackish water, sweet water, sewage water and marine water as well. Fish is consumed in different forms in the state as fresh water fish, marine fish, dried fish, fish seed and shrimp.

Fish drying is very common in all the coastal areas of India, especially West Bengal, where this practice is prevalent in North and South 24 Paraganas and East Midnapur districts. There is a great demand of dried fish in national and International markets. Practice of drying fish plays an important role in generating employment of coastal poor people in which women play a vital role. In this process and production chain, people add

relatively more values and getting very low profit due to lack of awareness, interruption of middlemen, lack of knowledge and technical skills, lack of market access, etc.

Fishery sector, which has a large potential for employment generation for women, an all out effort has to be fuelled to enact schemes related to women. If women are uplifted, then children will, by their noble actions, glorify the name, culture, knowledge, power and devotion of the country. Empowering of marginalized communities through extension so that farmers including women could be equipped with technology, political administrative linkages and community based management.

Although women's contribution is great in the fishing economy which is a part of our country, still they are not in the limelight. They are underestimated that relegates to lower payment and lower jobs. Even they are not counted as fisher women because fishing related tasks are itself gender biased and the persons who are involved in that particular tasks called 'fishermen'. However Department of Fisheries, Government of West Bengal, has taken up many initiatives for the upliftment of the fishing communities but there are a few programmes for the upliftment of the women fisher folk. There are lack of access to capital resources, leadership positions, decision making, technical training and formal education to women. While they are afraid of being victimised by unscrupulous middlemen, this weakness exploits them in the community.

Women of fishing communities who are residing under urban municipal areas are excluded from the policies of the department. There are some limitations for which the small fishing clans under municipal areas are missing out. Women are still quite behind of their men counterparts in the area of education and economic empowerment in West Bengal in particular and in fishing clans in Hooghly District in specific. They usually have less access to medical care, property ownership, credit training, awareness programmes and in employment. They are far less likely to be politically active and far more likely to be victims of domestic violence compared to men.

The Quality of life is fast eroding in fishing communities. Poor sanitation, non availability and quality of potable water, poor ventilation with firewood usage, lower sex ratio, violence against women, lacking of state support in health and education impacts

on health totally, though massive amount of money has been invested on population control programme, TB, Leprosy and AIDS control programme. Epidemics and gynecological problems are common.

The present study tries to bridge the gaps by focusing on one of the small fishing clans, named Jelepara located at the bank of river Hooghly under Hooghly-Chinsurah municipality in Hooghly District of West Bengal, the objective is to examine the marginalisation of women in fishing clan of Hooghly district viz a viz the development discourse. An attempt has been made in this study to examine the condition of women in Jelepara under Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality of Hooghly district through case study and mixed participatory observation method to know the level of marginalization and the role of public action in eradicating the exclusion and marginalisation of women in society. The study aims to build a strong support of Govt. and society towards women from fishing communities for removing their marginalised status and poverty, which would be applicable to all over India in general and Jelepara in specific. An effort has been made to identify challenges and present possible measures to overcome the problems for sustainable bright future.

1.2. Review of Literature:

The literature on marginalization, social exclusion and development covers a wide variety of theories and issues. This review would focus on broad three themes which are a) Linkages between Marginalisation and Development from a theoretical perspective, b) Determinants of Marginalisation and Development of women in fishing communities, c) Experiences of Marginalisation and Development of women in fishing communities in West Bengal. Although the literature engages these themes in different purposes and contexts, this research will use the theoretical and practical orientations of these themes in the context of marginalization and development of women in fishing communities.

1.2.1. Linkages between Marginalisation and Development: A Theoretical Perspective:

Déry et. al., (2012), finds out that Dickie Clark in 1966 introduced the term 'Marginal Situation' and moved the discussion from the personality of the marginalised to a more

pointed by sociological reference point. According to Clark, Marginalisation was more complex, multidimensional and nuanced concept than had been assumed.

Singhoroy (2010), defines marginalisation as a process which is conceptualised as cumulatively acquired and spatially related phenomena of social, economic cultural and political denials and deprivations, in – securities and uncertainty, hierarchy and domination which get legitimized and reproduces by the functioning of several normative and societal arrangements to relegate several sections of the population at the social margin despite their protests and resistance.

Leimgruber (2004) identifies some systems which have inherent forces creating inequalities, systems in which privileged groups are favoured in the distribution of goods and services, in the allocation of political roles, irrespective of the individual's competence in systemic marginalisation. Processual marginality is the result of a process, intentional or not, in a system of production. He concludes marginalisation in a three forms that were: geometrical, systemic and processual.

Batliwala (2010) finds that Michel Foucault located the forms of oppression – such as mental health status and gender – that were not necessarily related to material conditions. This focused awareness of the role of ideology and discourse in upholding unequal power and status.

Lenoir (1974) identified socially excluded groups and defined social exclusion as a rupture of social bonds. It is the process that excludes individuals, groups and aggregates from full participation in the society in which they live.

Silver (1995), included livelihood, secure permanent employment, earnings, property, credit or land, minimal or prevailing consumption levels, education, skills, and cultural capital, the welfare state, citizenship and legal equality, democratic participation, public goods, the nation or the dominant race, family and sociability, humanity, respect, fulfillment and understanding in exclusion and inclusion.

Sen (2000), defined that exclusion from social relations can lead to other deprivations that further limit our living opportunities. It can thus be constitutively a part of capability deprivation as well as instrumentally a cause of diverse capabilities failures.

Nussbaum (2000) developed capability approach for evaluating social status in terms of human well being. It emphasizes functional capabilities, these are constructed in terms of the substantive freedoms people have reason to value, instead of utility or access to resources, someone could be deprived of such capabilities in many ways, like by ignorance, government oppression, lack of financial resources, or false consciousness.

Kabeer (2000) explained that social exclusion revolves around social identities of people or groups and reflects the cultural devaluation of people based on their identities like caste, ethnicity, religion and gender.

Thorat and Newman (2007), pointed out exclusion prevails in institutions that discriminate, isolate, shame and deprive subordinate groups on the basis of identities like caste, religion and gender. Babajanian and Jessica (2012), explained social exclusion as a framework that can help to situate social protection within the specific economic, social and institutional context that affects people's well-being and identify how policies and programmes address different dimensions of deprivation and their underlying causes.

Ziyauddin (2009), has developed his ideas on exclusion that emphasizes very strongly on the social factors concerns such as housing, health, employment and education. In which certain communities and groups are excluded from interaction and access to social resources through social arrangements, normative value systems and customs.

Louis (2003), defined social exclusion as complex and multi-dimensional concept. These dimensions are interwoven. It revolves the societal interventions and institutions that exclude, discriminate, isolate and deprive women on the basis of gender identity. Discrimination and exclusion marginalizes women from full participation in the social, economic, political and cultural life.

Arjan (1999), emphasized social exclusion with two main characteristics. First is multidimensional that people are often deprived of different things at the same time.

Second one focused on the relations and processes that cause deprivation. People can be excluded by many different sorts of groups, often at the same time, landlords exclude people from access to land or housing, elite political groups exclude others from legal rights, priests in India may exclude scheduled castes from access to temples, minorities may be excluded from expressing their identity, labour markets, but also some trade unions exclude people (non-members) from getting jobs, and so on.

Weber (1968), provided a perspective on social stratification that emphasized the enduring importance of status groups within capitalist societies, communities that enjoy different amounts of social honour. Status groups may encompass racial, ethnic, or religious groups but can also involve social strata such as 'the educated classes', or castes. Communities that constitute status groups share a certain style of life and maintain their solidarity through shared tastes and social activities on the one hand, and through social closure on the other, reducing their intercourse with social inferiors.

Fukuda – Parr (2003) analyses Sen's theory of development as an expansion of capabilities is the starting point for the human development approach: the idea that the purpose of development is to improve human lives by expanding the range of things that a person can be and do, such as to be healthy and well nourished, to be knowledgeable, and to participate in community life. Development is about removing the obstacles to what a person can do in life, obstacles such as illiteracy, ill health, lack of access to resources, or lack of civil and political freedoms.

Kabeer (1994), subscribes development as not so much to 'power over' but to 'power within' that needs to be strengthened. Power within needs recognition by experience and analysis of the subordination of women.

Choudhury and Naoremi, (2015), discusses the causes of marginalization of women which are the existing discrimination and inequality between men and women, and which are the most crucial and the cardinal disparity in Indian societies.

Sen, and Kumar (2001), describes development as freedom of thought and speech, freedom to participate in decision – making, and freedom to work without social bondage. It also demands equality of opportunity, that is, equal access to economic,

social, political, and cultural opportunities to all citizens. It is different from the conventional economic model of equating progress and development with per capita income or growth in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). While income and economic growth are necessary conditions, for improving the quality of people's lives, they are not always sufficient. It is also important to focus on the condition of women and their share of equity viz a viz men.

Siwal (2010), discusses development in terms of empowerment. Empowerment can be understood by “recognizing the capacities of such groups (the marginalized and oppressed) to take action and to play an active role in development initiatives”.

Peet and Hartwick (2005), opines that development theories differ according to the political positions of their adherent, their philosophical origins, and their place and time of construction. They differ also according to scientific orientation, that is, whether predominantly economic, sociological, anthropological, historical, or geographical.

1.2.2. Determinants of Marginalisation and Development of women in fishing community:

The Asian Development Bank (2014), recognized that gender equity, women's empowerment and financial inclusion are essential for poverty reduction, inclusive growth in the Asia and Pacific region, sustainable development and accelerated progress towards Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) attainment. Facilitating finance for micro, small and medium – sized enterprises (MSMEs) is an important approach to accelerate both gender equity and financial inclusion. With appropriate support, there is great potential in scaling up women's informal business into more competitive and production formal MSMEs.

United Nations Environment Programme (2005), emphasized on artisanal fishing sector and explained that it is some of the poorest and most underdeveloped communities on earth and it is little wonder that the development policies of many governments and intergovernmental organisations are focused on the artisanal fishing sector. A key goal within the current WTO negotiations must be ensure that new fisheries subsidies rules do not prevent governments from investing in the improvement of their underdeveloped

artisanal fishing communities. Inappropriate subsidy policies can pose a real threat to the health of artisanal fisheries.

FAO (2008), estimated the number of people directly employed in fishing and aquaculture to be 43.5 million. Ninety percent of them are small-scale fishers dependent on coastal and inland fishery resources for their livelihood. Fishing and fish farming activities made up the primary sector depended on activities in the secondary sector, including post-harvesting activities like processing, transportation, marketing and distribution and pre-harvesting activities such as net and gear making, boat building, fuel supply, engine repair and so on. For each person employed in the primary sector, there could be four employed in the secondary sector, which would put the total employment in the fisheries at about 170 million. When families are factored in, it is estimated that about 520 million people are dependent on the sector, or nearly 8 percent of the world population. Most fishers and fish farmers (86 percent) live in Asia, mainly in China, India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam.

Cottrell and Ghai (2011), recognised that a considerable number of countries committed to the achievement of Millennium Development Goals are also involved because of past conflicts or as a result of other types of political transition to constitutional change. In that change, the place of human right is almost always central. The work argues that such countries can link their MDG commitment to their constitutional development through rights, especially through economic, social and cultural rights.

Nussbaum and Glover (1995), examined women's quality of life and addressed questions which have a particular urgency. An account of gender justice and women's equality is proposed in various areas in which quality of life is measured.

Siwal (2010), identifies five key uses of the term empowerment in development studies. These are: empowerment as participation, empowerment as democratization, empowerment as capacity building, empowerment as capacity building, empowerment through economic improvement and empowerment at the individual level

Ashaletha (2002), focused on projects designed by development agencies which are often not suitable to specific locations. As in any other low income group, the infrastructure

facilities are also not satisfactory. Even the basic amenities like drinking water facility, toilets, rest rooms etc. are not provided in the work places. Through NGOs take some effort for promoting small – scale entrepreneurial development in culture fisheries, they are not receiving proper attention. Spending their lifetime as peeling workers women are not still included under the category of fisherwomen by the governments and are not provided with benefit of any of the welfare measures.

Gasalla (2002), discussed the connection between female empowerment and sustainable development in fisheries. Social recognition and upgrading of the women's roles are proposed as important elements for the transition from crisis to sustainable development in the south eastern Brazilian fisheries. The lack of fisher's organisation, integration and confidence to present institutions do not often allow community members to believe that somebody could do something for them in terms of development, rights, dignity or citizenship. The fact is that fisher's organisational structure even though old is not well developed, perhaps because it was originally based in authoritarian and corporativism.

Béné and Friend (2009), pointed out that the fish farmers in majority are poor, small scale fishers and their poverty encompasses more than just income, it includes lack of land ownership, high degrees of indebtedness, poor access to health, education, financial capital, political and geographical marginalisation.

Darity and Deshpande (2003), have analysed that in India and neighbouring countries fishing stated as 'unclean' occupation. In most of these nations, groups at the bottom of the stratification order have either won or have been granted rights of equal citizenship.

Williams, et.al. (2002), pointed out significant change over the last couple of decades in India. State policy has been directed at increasing exploitation of fish resource through the use of large mechanized craft and gear combinations, leading to the centralization of fisheries and the absence of state policy of mechanized fishing activities in inshore waters. This has resulted in the marginalization of traditional fishing communities who either sale their labour in fishing vessels owned by others or moved to non-fishing related occupations. As men from the fishing communities in the region moved from being producers to labourers, women also began to be displaced from their traditional

occupations as post harvest workers and processors which lead them towards deprivation of knowledge with respect to fishing technology.

Kurien (1985), examined few areas of concern regarding social and cultural dimensions of fisheries in Kerala. These need to be situated in the background of a particular modern history of fisheries development in the region.

Faruque and Ahsaan (2013), examined that in Bangladesh only lowest caste of the Hindu community was engaged in fishing sector. Among the Hindus, the hereditary fishing communities called Majhi, Jele or Halder. Hindus halder or Jele live in the place are called Majhipara or Jelepara.

Biswas (2011), revealed the research on women in the fisheries which shows outstanding amount of work that women do in the sector and the various forces that shape the conditions under which this work is done. This stands in direct contrast to the widespread invisibility of women. Halim (2004), addressed women as a great contributor to the fishing economy, either directly by harvesting, processing and marketing or indirectly by providing vital extra income, food crops and a lot of supporting activities that ensure the well being of the family. In spite of being all of these there is a great lack of proper health care facilities. Unequal power relationships between men and women hinder women to get access to whatever health service is available.

Ijff (1999), analysed the status of fishing communities residing in villages located at the bank of Imo and Benin river in Nigeria and pointed out that the water supply in the villages is a big problem. There are Very few wells in the villages and the water from these wells is of a bad quality and cannot be used for drinking or cooking. For these purposes women have to paddle one or one and half hour each way from Okoroete settlement to Okoroete village where there is a little stream with 'good' water.

Sen and Kumar (2001), explained that for the majority of Indian women their home is the primary workplace. Lack of space, lack of proper ventilation, electricity, toilet facilities make the home a far from ideal working environment for poor women in both urban and rural areas. In addition many women are constantly at the mercy of their husbands, in-laws, landlords and municipal authorities. However, there is very little data on women's

occupational health and safety. Good health is not just about doctors and drugs. A clean living environment with access to safe drinking water and sanitation, adequate nutrition, protection from disease and a decent standard of living are the basics of good health. National Women Commission (1998), found women in the unorganised sector in India, are more vulnerable to sexual harassment than women in the organised sector.

Kabir (1998), noted that in Bangladesh, a girl child is socialised into the context of a subordinate position to men in society. The rate of malnutrition for girls is 13.3 per cent while for boys, it is 11.9 percent. The average age of marriage for girls is 17.9 while for men it is 24.9.

Rastogi (2004), indicates some markers for measuring the status of women in society namely education, health, survival, participation in public/private decision making and safety.

Martins (2007) explains that the development is about removing the obstacles to what a person can do in life, obstacles such as illiteracy, ill health, lack of access to resources, or lack of civil and political freedoms.

Sinha (2005) explains the condition of women regarding ownership of land, where women do not enjoy equal rights, particularly in the developing countries where most of the production, processing, storage and preparation of food is carried out by the women. Bringing water from far off wells and rivers and gathering fuel wood from forests are also part of their daily duties. Such enormous waste of human energy is unnecessary in this technological age. Not only that under the hegemony of a pervasive patriarchy women's role in subsistence economy been substantially ignored.

1.2.3. Experiences of Marginalisation and Development of women in fishing community in West Bengal:

West Bengal Human Development Report (2004), shows Gender discrimination as an important feature of economic and social processes in the state. However, it is more evident in economic variables and in literacy than in the longevity data, which indicate improving health position of women relative to men. This comes out very clearly in the

calculations of the Gender Development Index. But very low “Income index” component of the GDI essentially reflects the low workforce participation of women in West Bengal, which turn suggests a combination of greater restrictions on women’s economic agency as well as social lack of recognition of women’s unpaid work. Both of these suggest a major undercurrent of gender discrimination in society.

District Human Development Report, Hooghly (2011) finds that the sex ratio (defined as the number of females per 1000 males) is an important indicator of health, nutrition and survival status of women. The existence of gender disparity is indicated through the low number of women per thousand of men, which may be caused by female foeticide (girl child is less desired), dowry deaths, lack of proper maternal health care, nutrition etc. There is a wide variation in sex ratio across various blocks and municipalities of the district.

Papola (2012), pointed out that Gender-based discrimination and exclusion is found to be a common phenomenon across the globe. He commented upon in its various dimensions including historical sexual division of work, discrimination in hiring, placements, promotions and differences in wages and earnings between women and men.

Mohsin (2005), pointed out that the gendered state, through its very institutions and processes, marginalises women and contributes to their insecurity. It not only marginalises and excludes women but also privileges and strengthens the masculine notion of state. While the men fought on the fronts for livelihood, the women fought both inside and outside their homes, holding on to keep them secured for their men and children. Thus social security and national security are not only interlinked but the former sustains the latter.

Dagar (1998) discusses about women’s demands that women world over, are still demanding for equality and justice because of the widespread discrimination they face in all walks of life.

Kilmartin (2007), analysed the men’s violence against women in many forms such as rape, intimate partner violence and sexual harassment and stated that only in the past few

decades have legislations, educators, activists and researchers directed concerted efforts attending this scourge of victimisation that undermines women's quality of life.

Choudhury (2013), explained about the phenomenon of women's inequality which is universal, its magnitude and severity vary from one country to another, even within a country, from one region to another and from one community to another community. Women have been subjected to a number of humiliation, harassments and ill-treatment even today. Women continue to be the most helpless beings in the society. It is important to highlight this, because women's issue should be dealt with carefully and their needs to be addressed in policy planning and implementation.

Chakravorty (2014), analysed the health status of women in West Bengal. 62.4% of the mothers had 3 or more antenatal care visits for their last birth. In the state, percentage of institutional birth is 43.1 compared to 90.4 in Tamil Nadu and 99.5% in Kerala. The percentage of fully immunised children (12-23 months) is 64.3 in West Bengal, 80.8 in Tamil Nadu and 75.3 in Kerala. In West Bengal, the huge rural –urban gap observed in the case of antenatal care and institutional birth is of moderate level for immunisation.

Chakravorty (2015) discusses the health condition of women in fishing communities in West Bengal and explains that every social group in the world has specific traditional cultural practices and beliefs, some of which are beneficial to all members, while others are harmful to a specific group, such as women in fishing communities. These harmful traditional practices include forced feeding of women; early marriage; the various taboos or practices which prevent women from controlling their own fertility; nutritional taboos including lacking of proper food, traditional birth practices with preferring home delivery ; son preference and its implications for the status of the girl child; female infanticide; early pregnancy; unhygienic sanitary system and dowry price. These traditional cultural practices, harmful health practices are harming not only the individuals but also the society. However, it seems impossible to change the harmful practice as it takes on an aura of morality in the eyes of those practicing them.

Kumar (2007), explains that the decline in catch has negatively impacted the livelihoods of a large number of traditional fishing communities. However, the fishery sector has an important place in the socio economic development of the country.

Braun (2015), points out that Since post harvest activities provide a direct range of livelihood opportunities to poorer women that might disappear if fish production decrease, their access to both money and food is restricted. With their limited resources and control over resources (knowledge, cash and tools), women, especially, female – headed families have only limited capacity to cope and adopt alternative climate, resilient food and income – generating activities. Indirectly, decrease of fish production leads to a decrease of the essential vitamins and minerals in the diet of women, who lead to give food priority to their husband and children.

Nayak (2005), analyses that fishing communities in general tend to rank lower in standard indicators of human development and available evidence suggests that they are faced with a deteriorating quality of life, which certainly adds to the burdens of women to sustain life within the household.

Mukherjee et al (2010) points out that in the aquaculture sector in inland fisheries, women play a major role in the feeding and rearing of fish in the ponds in West Bengal. Many women have developed their own pond culture practices and also form small groups or co – operatives. But the major problem faced by them is not having enough money for the practice.

The literatures available in the field of marginalisation of women in fishing communities and to some extent in West Bengal's scenario, indicate that despite availability of large numbers of writings on the subject, it falls short in highlighting the marginalised and development issues of women in fishing communities living in Jelepara of Hooghly district. In a very few of the available literature some aspects of marginalisation of women are touched upon but all the issues are not dealt with in any one of the available literatures. There is complete lack of study in terms of identifying indicators of marginalisation, discrimination and developmnet of women in fishing communities in Jelepara. Therefore, this proposed research work is an endeavour to fill these gaps and

seek strong management system for better position of women in society in general and fishing communities in specific.

1.3. Rationale and Scope of the study:

There are many available works focusing fishing communities from the different parts of the country, depend on marine fisheries and inland fisheries, however, no substantial work has been initiated on marginalisation of women and their inclusion through development in fishing communities of Jelepara in Hooghly District. Though Hooghly is one of the rich city culturally and historically, people of Jelepara, especially the women are not been benefitted from the cultural and historical richness. Such sense of exclusion has motivated to taken up this research.

In spite of women's major contribution in the fishing sector in West Bengal including Jelepara, their contributions are unrecognized. Women contributes substantially in dry fish sorting, peeling shrimps, collecting shrimp seeds, mending nets, vending fish door to door and other secondary activities attached with fisheries. However, their contributions in this sector are consciously neglected and therefore has caught the attention of this research.

The peripheral location and subsequent negligence of government toward Jelepara is another cause for choosing this site. The location has both positive and negative factors for the inhabitants of Jelepara. From the positive side, the river Hooghly provides them livelihood and its yearly flood works as a negative factor for the inhabitants. In this situation they force to fight for their lives and livelihoods. Apart from other reasons, Jelepara has caught attention of this study, due to peripheral location, commonly known as fringe area. The position of the women of this community in this area are marginal within the margins.

Most of the fishing communities who reside in villages under the block level, are covered under the Department of Fisheries, Government of West Bengal. But Jelepara, which is located under the Hooghly – Chinsurah Municipality, as an urban slum, at the bank of river Hooghly, are not in a position to receive any facility from the Department of fisheries, because of the location and jurisdiction under which it is situated.

Jelepara do not get the benefit of the welfare schemes running by the Department of Fisheries, Government of West Bengal. If the Ward Councilor recommends the Chairman for the benefits, only then through the efforts of the Chairman of the municipality, very few people of Jelepara can avail the benefits. In the block level, Fisheries Extension Officer is taking care of fishing related activities. Whereas in the urban slum like Jelepara, where fisher folks are residing, no Fisheries Extension Officer has been employed in Municipality for the benefit of the fisheries and concerned people. This is how they are excluded from the fruits of normal course of the development for fisheries. It is very surprising to know that the state of West Bengal is the second largest fish producer in India, while people of Jelepara are struggling to survive with minimum facilities. These scenarios lead them towards the position of subjugation and deprivation which caught the attention of this research.

Poverty has forced the fishing communities of Jelepara to leave their age old profession which has also caught the attention of this research. Out of the 412³ male population in Jelepara, whose occupation is fishing, 160 people are forcefully shifted their occupation from direct fishing to indirect fishing related activities like selling fish in the market or door to door vending fish or get involve in net making practices with another alternative livelihood options. In this process they also losing their age old practice and the new generation of Jelepara are not inherited and showing interest in this profession. It is an irony that 21009304 people have been employed by the Department of Fisheries, Government of West Bengal, in the year 2014 – 2015⁴ except the fisher folks residing under municipalities including Jelepara.

³ As per the survey conducted by Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality.

⁴Government of West Bengal (2015), Handbook of Fisheries Statistics, 2014 – 2015, Department of Fisheries, Kolkata, 82.

1.4. Objectives of the study:

- To understand the theoretical dimensions of marginalisation from social exclusion and inclusion/development perspective.
- To examine the determinants of marginalisation and development of women in fishing communities.
- To identify the marginalisation and development of women in West Bengal in general and in Jelepara in particular.
- To critically examine, whether women have other alternative livelihood support apart from playing secondary role in fishing.
- To analyse the existing policies and steps taken by the government and Non-governmental organisations to redress marginalisation of women in fishing communities.

1.5. Research Questions:

- What are the theoretical dimensions of marginalisation and development from social exclusion and inclusion perspective?
- What are the determinants of marginalisation and development of women in fishing community?
- How women are marginalised and developed in West Bengal in general and Jelepara in particular?
- Whether they have alternatives livelihood support apart from playing secondary role in fishing?
- What are the policy measures by Government and Non-Governmental organisation to redress the marginalisation of women in fishing community?

1.6. Hypotheses:

- Government and Non - governmental initiatives towards development of fishing communities have not yet been effective in West Bengal in general and Jelepara in particular.

1.7. Research Methodology:

This study is primarily empirical and qualitative in nature and is supported by theoretical understandings. There are three basic areas – the understanding of the theories of marginalisation and development, determinants of marginalisation and development of women in fishing communities in West Bengal and marginalisation and development of women in fishing communities in Jelepara. In the theoretical part, the study deals with the broad sense of the term of marginalisation and development and other relevant areas. It is based on secondary sources which includes books, articles, journals, reports of International/ National organizations, online publications, working papers etc. For the later part, interviews, questionnaires and schedules and Focus Group Discussions are used in local vernacular languages as well as in English.

Except for some government officials, most of the respondents are not much comfortable with English language and so the vernacular language has been used for the communication purpose. Interviews have been conducted with prior consent of the respondents and focus group discussions were also used through the process with maintaining ethical norms for research. The targeted sample includes respondents of three types from the chosen area. Government officials, Chairperson of Municipality and local Ward Counselor are include in the first group, male fisher folk of West Bengal in general and Jelepara in particular are interviewed in the second group and women fisher folk of West Bengal are in the third group. Questionnaires are of mixed pattern of open and close ended nature.

Officials including Director of Fisheries, Additional Director, Joint Director, Assistant Director, Fisheries Extension Officers have been interviewed extensively with prior consent. Focus Group Discussions (FGD) also have been conducted for the study. While conducting this research, ethical norms attached to social science research, were strictly followed.

The women fisher folk have been selected on the basis of their nature of work related to fishing in different major fishing pockets of West Bengal including marine and inland fisheries for the study. Such as dry fish sorters of Shankarpur, Digha Mohana, Ramnagar,

Contai, and Kanthi of East Midnapur district, women net mendors of Namkhana, Kakdwip and Diamond Harbour of South 24 Paragnas district, women shrimp seed collectors of Sandeshkhali of Sundarbans under South 24 Paragnas district and women from Jelepara (the study area) of Hooghly district who are playing secondary role in fisheries by helping their male counterparts like cleaning and mending nets after fishing, cleaning utensils and vans used for fishing, nurturing and taking care of fingerlings and fish seeds etc. Some interviews have also been taken of the women fish sellers of Mumbai (Maharashtra, Marine Fisheries), Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh, Inland Fisheries) and Japan to understand their status from comparative plane. For availing the statistics about fisher folk many government offices have been visited.

For the better understanding of the marginalisation of women fisher folk in daily lives, participatory observation method through emic and etic approach have been followed. The emic perspective follows in the tradition of psychological studies of folk beliefs and in cultural anthropologists' striving to understand culture from the native's point of view. The etic perspective follows in the tradition of behaviouralists psychology and anthropological approaches that link cultural practices to external, antecedent factors, such as economic or ecological conditions, that may not be salient to cultural insiders. has been followed.

The total population of the study area (Jelepara) were 808 out of which female population were 396. The sample size was 160 amongst them 80 women between the age group of 15 to 60 were chosen to understand the concept of marginalization.

The study however had its own limitations as it was difficult to meet the same sets of respondents round the year due to the nature of their occupation. Lack of significant documentation regarding women fisher folk was again created limits for the study. Due to the ethical issues involved in social science research, many a times it was difficult to generate information from the women respondents. Researcher was viewed as government agent many times and it was very difficult to convince the respondents that it was a genuine research.

1.8. Chapterisation:

Chapter 1. Introduction

This chapter highlights the general overview of the proposed study by introducing the concepts of marginalization and development, focusing on the women in fishing communities, review of literature, rationale and scope of the study, objectives, research questions, hypothesis followed by the detailed methodology which is followed to conduct this research.

Chapter 2. Marginalisation and Development: Theoretical Understanding

This chapter deals with an overview of concepts and theories of marginalisation and development in details. The chapter links marginalisation with development as two sides of a same coin and associate women with the process of marginalisation and development in the past viz a viz the present.

Chapter 3. Determinants of Marginalisation and Development of Women in Fishing Community in India: With Special Reference of West Bengal

The focus of this chapter is on the marginalization and development of women in fishing communities, from the major fishing pockets of West Bengal. Drawing from both ethnographic and statistical sources, the study presents a descriptive profile of women of fishing communities in Indian society in general and West Bengal in Particular. Through case studies, focus group discussions and interviews, the study documents extreme degree of gender inequality among the fishing communities. Findings indicate that, as compared to men fisher folks, women in these groups have far more limited access to the capabilities. The chapter enlists and examines the parameters prescribes by Martha Nussbaum in the local context of West Bengal

Chapter 4. Marginalisation of Women in Fishing community in Jelepara

The chapter highlights the status of women from fishing communities and their disadvantageous position from various perspectives such as health, sanitation, education,

household activities, livelihood issues and alternatives, domestic violence, and ownership of the property.

Chapter 5. Development of Women in Fishing communities in Jelepara

The present chapter deals with the developmental paradigm viz a viz women. Besides, the chapter also highlights the measures taken by various international agencies, Govt. of India and Government of West Bengal initiatives to address the issues of marginalization of women of fishing communities in West Bengal.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

This chapter focuses on the summary of the study. This includes the analysis of the various remedial measures taken by the international bodies and the national bodies for the marginalized fisher folks specially the women and the lacunae in their applicability in the field. The chapter also consists of policy prescriptions for the government and the interested non-governmental bodies to improve the deteriorating conditions of these women.

Chapter 2

Marginalisation and Development: Theoretical Understanding

2.1. Introduction:

This chapter deals with an overview of concepts and theories of marginalisation, social exclusion and development in details. The chapter links marginalisation with development as two sides of a same coin and associate women with the process of marginalisation and development in the past and the present.

Men and women are shaped and reshaped in terms of socio – cultural and economic and political considerations. In India, social inequalities revolve around religion, caste, and gender. These inequalities are rooted in property, income, wealth, and employment relations. The social, economic and political dynamics of marginalisation have remained interlinked to make a vast section of population victims of several forms of denials and deprivation, inequality and injustice, domination and hierarchy. These elements of marginalisation have also been simultaneously cumulatively reproduced over a long period of time to keep these people in the margin of the society.

Marginalisation, as a complex process of specific group(s) of people to the lower or the outer edge of the society, operates as function, as cause and also as a social product. It has been operated and promoted through the practice of discrimination, oppression, subjugation, and domination which gets legitimized and reproduced through the institutional arrangements of society. Marginalisation as a dynamic process has got socially reformulated, reshaped and intellectually redefined with the impact and expansion of capitalism, imperialism, modernisation, industrialisation, globalisation and related processes of social transition and social change.

Marginalisation is both a historical reality and a context specific phenomenon. Structure and variants of marginality indicate a common character of domination of some groups and individuals and weakness and ineffectiveness of a large number of people at a same time. In other words, it shows dominance of a minority of people and subjugation of a

large majority in specific societies. Patterns of injustice and inequality characterize the phenomenon of marginalisation in all over the world.

In the Indian subcontinent and especially within the broad fold of Hindu social orders, the marginalised are designated to be the out- castes represented by the antyajias and the shudras¹ belonging to the social categories of untouchables and others practising unclean ascribed occupations and extra- mural manual activities of various sorts. Within the conventional cultural framework of the varna system² they are provided with stigmatised existence and are considered to be impure and are kept away from varieties of social and cultural interactions with the higher varnas, like the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas .They are conditioned to survive at the margin of society – socially, culturally, politically, economically and even geographically. Traditionally they have remained associated to ascribed occupations compelling them to concentrate on low – paying jobs, or ‘unclean’ occupations to accept exploitative terms and conditions of work and to remain insecure socially and politically. Many of these social and cultural stigmas are also extended to women, tribal and religious minority groups³ .

There is continuous exclusion of women towards men in all sphere of life in the contemporary era. Women’s stereotyped role has manifold and multiplied impacts on their health, nutrition, education and overall development. Gender gaps in access to resources are rooted in social and cultural practices. Women have to bear the tremendous cost for these inequalities but the cost affects harming everyone in the long run of the society. Thus, promotion of the gender equality is the vital part of development strategy.

¹ Lower castes of the Indian society

² In ancient India, society was divided into four classes (varna) with relation to their aptitude and vocation, based on the four duties of human beings and for society, not based on birth. These were the Brahmins, the Priests or Spiritual class, the Kshatriya, the Ruling class, the Vaishya, the Business class and Farmers, and the Shudras, the Servants and ‘Unclean’ occupation holders. This stratification system was called Varna system which has two meanings one is ‘colour’ and another is ‘Veil’. Colour means the colour of human qualities or energies of human nature and a veil in which divine self is hidden in human beings in four different ways. Now a days this system of determining natural aptitude has degenerated into the caste system which prevails now only in form.

³Chakravorty, Tulika (2015) ‘Marginalisation and Women of Fishing Community: An Experience from India’ in Centre for Applied Ethics and Philosophy (ed) *Applied Ethics: Security, Sustainability and Human Flourishing*, Center for Applied Ethics and Philosophy, Hokkaido University, Japan, 51.

In the process of gender equality both women and men have equal access to and control of resources. With gender equality standard of living will increase and will succeed in escaping poverty. But High Economic growth and quality of life are not necessarily matched. It depends upon the distribution of income among different groups of people in the society. India holds a very complex scenario with multiple socio-economic classes with gender differences. The process of conversion of National income into the quality of life depends on the quantity of variable conditions.

It is true that hardships and sufferings experienced by women of all communities cannot be swept under the carpet nor glossed over with the rhetoric of freedom of religion. However, placed in the unenviable position of juxtaposing women's right and minority rights, the demand for legal equality can no longer be limited to a simple and straight forward task of preparing a model draft which ensures uniform rights to women of all communities.

2.2. The Status of Women in India:

Women at various times and places were a majority of the population. But their status was that of an oppressed minority, deprived of the rights men enjoyed. Women have for centuries been excluded from position of power both political and economics. Women generally, played a conservative role as individuals and in their communities, the role of conserving tradition, law, order and the status quo⁴. Women have different positions in different periods. This can be understood through knowing the status of women in Ancient Age and Modern Age as following:

2.2.1. Women in Ancient Times:

This section is divided in three ages including Pre- Historic age, Vedic Age and Later Vedic Age.

⁴ Sreeparvathi, D. and S.R. Jincy (2012) *Gender Studies, Calicut University Central Co –Operative stores Ltd, Calicut, 11.S*

i) Women in Pre – Historic Age:

It is historical fact that in the pre historic age early man was not able to comprehend the phenomenon of birth and death and thought that some mysterious superiority in women enabled them to produce children⁵. In communities that have not yet emerged from barbarism, there hardly exist any checks on the tyranny of man over woman. Ill –usage, underfeeding and overworking are pushed to the greatest limit, compatible with the preservation of the race⁶.

Women were abandoned, sold or killed at the mere whim of men. They forced to carry beasts of burden when the tribe moves from one place to another due to their nomadic nature. The treatment thus meted out to them need not cause any surprise, in primitive life the muscle was an indispensable element in success and the man was stronger in it than the woman⁷. The man fought with the animals and enemies to protect women and children, he chased the big game to feed the family. Physical prowess, bodily vigour and muscular strength thus naturally established man's permanent superiority over woman, who besides lacking these qualities, was periodically in a most helpless condition a few weeks before and after her frequent confinements⁸. There is no any evidence about the opportunities for women's freedom in the Indus Civilisation of Mohenjodaro and Harappa⁹.

It was taken for granted everywhere that women as such can have no rights and privileges. They were inherently inferior to men and therefore must be always subordinate to them. The archaic Roman law granted to the husband the power over the life and the limbs of the wife, and for many centuries matrons with several children

⁵ Altekar, A.S. (1999), ' The position of Women in Hindu Civilisation: Retrospect and Prospect' in Kumkum Roy (ed.) *Women in Early Indian Societies*, Manohar Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 50.

⁶ Ibid, 50.

⁷ Ibid, 50.

⁸ Ibid, 50.

⁹ The civilization of the Indus River at Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa arose at about 2500 BCE and ended with a massive destruction about 1500 BCE. These are the two main cities of Indus Valley Civilisation. Mohenjo daro was discovered in 1922 by R. D. Banerji, an officer of the Archiological Survey of India, two years after major excavations had begun at Harappa, some 590 km to the north. Large scale excavations were carried out at the site under the direction of John Marshall, K. N. Dikshit, Ernest Mackay, and numerous other directors through the 1930s.

continued to be under the tutelage of their male relations. In ancient Palestine the woman was a piece of property to be bought and sold¹⁰.

ii) Women in Vedic Age:

The position which women occupied in Hindu society at the dawn of civilisation during the Vedic age is much better than what we ordinarily expect it to have been. There were some parents in society who would perform special religious rituals for the good luck of getting learned and capable daughters. The position of the wife was an honoured one in the family. The whole community was showing proper concern and respect for women, allowing them considerable freedom in the different activities of the social and political life¹¹.

In the Vedic era, there was no difference among the performance of rituals connected with birth of different sexes. Women had full rights to education which started after the *yajnopavit*¹² or *upanayan* ceremony. They were performing *yajnas*¹³ according to vedic rituals. They were very proficient in the knowledge of mantras. *Aditi, Apala, Gosha, Juher, Dakshina, Ramsha, Lopamudra, Vaganbarini, Visvavara, Saswati, Surya, Indrani, Indrasamisha, Ratri, Godha, Yami, Yamivaivasti, Sachi, Shraddha, Sarpragi, Sikta, Urvasi, Pururava and Sarma*¹⁴ were the eminent female scholar, who composed mantras of Vedas.

Women had independence regarding marriage, they could remain unmarried or marry after *brahmacharya*¹⁵. They could find their husband of their choice. Marriage was based on truth and duty, it had spiritual bond to strengthen the mind, body, life breathe and social aspect of the couple. Women had equal rights as a partner.

¹⁰ Altekar, A.S. (1999), 'The position of Women in Hindu Civilisation: Retrospect and Prospect' in Kumkum Roy (ed.) *Women in Early Indian Societies*, Manohar Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 50.

¹¹ Ibid, 50.

¹² A holy ritual after that a sacred thread worn by the person.

¹³ Holy ritual by offering sacred things to the fire.

¹⁴ Mishra, Bhaskar (1995) *Shiksha Evam Sanskriti- NainSandarbh* (Hindi), Bhavana Prakashan, Delhi, 67, 70, 73.

¹⁵ Life of celibacy till the age of 25.

A woman was considered a symbol of good fortune in the husband's home. She could perform *yajnyas* herself or along with her husband. The bonds of marriage were not hard but comfortable to live with. Motherhood was recognised as a fundamental right of a woman. Widow remarriage was not banned and indications of it exist in the Rigveda itself. As far as the tasks of the woman and her employment were concerned, she was supposed to be educated in astrology, geography and veterinary sciences and even the martial arts. There are instances of women taking part in wars and fights¹⁶.

In Indian civilisation, it is customary to trace everything to Vedic thought. In Vedic philosophic thought, man has been given the most powerful anthropomorphic form. All powerful natural phenomenon which the Aryans dreaded or revered most, like thunder, wind, fire, water and sun, were converted into male Gods – like *Indra*¹⁷, *Vayu*¹⁸, *Agni*¹⁹, *Varuna*²⁰ and *Surya*²¹. The word *nari* appears frequently in the Rigveda and is supposed to be the origin of *nar* (man) and *nari* (woman)²². The word *nari* is also used for bravery, working alongside man, giver of equity and leadership. *Nari* was worshiped as *Aditi*, the mother of *devatas* or male Gods. The discovery of a number of seals in Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, showing plants emerging out of women, seems to indicate the reverence for women as fertility Goddesses. This assumption appears to be correct, as mother Goddesses, worshiped as presiding over fertility, was revered all over the world at that time²³.

The principle of patriarchy was strengthened in later Vedic thought through the emergence of an all – powerful trinity of Gods – *Brahma* representing creation, *Vishnu* the nurturing aspect, and *Shiva* the destroyer of evil and upholder of righteousness. All three of them are mentioned in the *Rigveda* but not in as powerful a form as they were to become later²⁴. An original explanation of the process of creation is explained in the

¹⁶ Seth, 2001, *Women and Development The Indian Experience*, Sage Publication, New Delhi, 18

¹⁷ As the thunder

¹⁸ As the wind

¹⁹ As the fire

²⁰ As the water

²¹ As the sun

²² Sharma, K.L. (2011), *Culture, Stratification and Development*, Rawat Publication, Jaipur, 2-106.

²³ Seth, Mira (2001), *Women and Development The Indian Experience*, Sage Publication, New Delhi, 10.

²⁴ Ibid,11.

*Shiva Purana*²⁵ which describes *Brahma*'s creation of *Shiva* through his mind. *Shiva* emerged from the mind of *Brahma* as a ball of fire in an androgynous form, half man and half woman. He created woman out of himself. In his androgynous form as *Ardhanarishvara*²⁶, *Shiva* gets the credit for establishing gender equality²⁷. Thus according to Indian mythology, men and women are complimentary to each other and incomplete in themselves, if alone. Women represented sexuality, sensuality and energy of creation while man, represented power.

iii) Women in Later Vedic Age:

In later Vedic ages, a few indications to show that brides were sometimes sold in marriage or even carried away by force. But the better conscience of society had already begun to assert itself, and condemn these practices as unholy and unworthy. The old tradition that the wife was the property of the husband had not yet completely died down, the famous hymn about gambling that sometimes confirmed gamblers would take away their wives to their opponents²⁸.

A drastic change had been occurred during the time of *Manu*, the law giver. In his text women started to called upon 'Unfit' for independence. According to *Manusmriti*²⁹,

“Her father protects (her) in childhood,

Her husband protects (her) in youth,

And her sons protect (her) in old age;

A woman is never fit for independence³⁰.”

According to *Manu* a devoted wife should serve even a bad and adulterous husband as a God or *Devata*. She was not expect to marry after her widowhood whereas the husband

²⁵ A Hindu holy text.

²⁶ A body which is half of male and half of female

²⁷ Seth, Mira (2001), *Women and Development The Indian Experience*, Sage Publication, New Delhi, 11.

²⁸ Altekar, A.S. (1999), 'The position of Women in Hindu Civilisation: Retrospect and Prospect' in Kumkum Roy (ed.) *Women in Early Indian Societies*, Manohar Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 50.

²⁹ An ancient text of law.

³⁰ Sastri, Margovind, (1997), 'The Manusmriti' (Hindi), 5th edition, in Gopal Sastri Nene (ed.) *The Manusmriti*, Chaubhamba Sankrit Sansthan, Varanasi, Chapter ix, shloka 3, 457.

could marry, after the wife died, after performing her last rites³¹. After saying all this, Manu may be credited with painting the role of women as entitled to respect and protection as propagator of the race. He clearly states that a society cannot prosper where women are not happy and no family can thrive if their women members are unhappy and cursed³². This was the concept which suited the needs of contemporary society. Unfortunately, this text effected most the condition of women, in early medieval times, hardly any woman overcame this concept to live their lives independently.

Gradual and continuous deterioration took place in the women's position as a whole after Vedic period. There was a gradual decline in female education as the period advanced. The system of sending out girls to famous teachers or centres of education came to be discouraged, only father, brother or uncle can teach them at home. Women had ceased to attend public meetings.

The discontinuity of *upanayana*, the neglect of education and the lowering down of the marriage age, produced disastrous consequences upon the position and status of women. Early marriage put an effective impediment in the higher education of girls. Brides being too young and inexperienced, ceased to have any effective voice in the settlement of their marriages. Child wives with no education could not command respect from their husbands³³.

In child marriage marital faithlessness on the part of the husband became more common. Early marriage was naturally followed by early maternity, which increased the mortality among women between the ages of 14 and 22. Young widowers of 25 or 30 were more eager to follow the rule of Manu, which allowed an immediate remarriage, they could get brides of 9 or 10 only. This enormous disparity between the ages helped the spread of concubinage in society³⁴.

³¹ Sastri, Hargovind (1997), 'The Manusmriti' (*Hindi*), in Gopal Sastri Nene (ed.) *The Manusmriti*, Chaubhamba Sankrit Sansthan, Varanasi, Chapter 1, shloka 32, 14.

³² Seth, Mira (2001), *Women and Development The Indian Experience*, Sage Publication, New Delhi, 26.

³³ Altekar, A.S. (1999), 'The position of Women in Hindu Civilisation: Retrospect and Prospect' in Kumkum Roy (ed.) *Women in Early Indian Societies*, Manohar Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 58.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 58.

As the time passes the notion regard women as fragile and of a weak moral fiber was getting stronger. Thus Women gradually excluded from the common plane of the society. The only thing which improved women's position as proprietary rights, otherwise she continued to lose all along the line. The right of the widow to inherit the share of her husband came to be eventually recognised all over the country by 1200 A.D. In Bengal, the position was further improved by conceding her this right even when her husband had not separated from the joint family at the time of his death according to the *Dayabhaga*³⁵ school. The scope of the *stridhana*³⁶ was further extended by the *Mitaksara*³⁷ school by including in it, the property acquired even by inheritance and partition³⁸.

2.2.2. Women in Modern Age

In the nineteenth century, the position of women suffered in a drastic way with the share of education declining towards nothing. Girls attendance is not mentioned in the widespread elementary and higher educational institutions, commented upon by the foreign observers.

The initiative of the government in the field of education came in the form of commissioning Adam to study the problem of education for girls in Bengal as early as 1835. According to his report on the state of education in Bengal in 1836, the main impediment to girls' education in Bengal was the superstitious belief that the education of girls would lead to their early widowhood³⁹.

³⁵ Dayabhaga is a gist of whole Smritis (holy texts), written by Jimutvahana. This is a school of law govern the law of succession of Hindu undivided family under Indian law. This school of law is observed in Bengal and Assam.

³⁶The literary meaning of Stridhan is Wealth of a woman. Generally inherited precious ornaments are known as stridhan.

³⁷Mitakshara is a commentary on one Smriti (holy text) called Yajnavalkya Smriti, written by Vijnaneswara., this is a school of law govern the law of succession of Hindu undivided family under Indian law. This school of law is observed in all other parts of India except Bengal and Assam.

³⁸Altekar, A.S. (1999), 'The position of Women in Hindu Civilisation: Retrospect and Prospect' in Kumkum Roy (ed.) *Women in Early Indian Societies*, Manohar Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 61.

³⁹ Kaur, Manmohan (1985), *Women in India's Freedom Struggle*, Sterling Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi, 24.

The main social reform movement was initiated with Indian men, supported by their women and liberal English women. Raja Rammohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Behramji Malabari, Dr. Karve, Justice Govind Ranade, Venkat Ratnam Naidu were the social reformers. They fought against of *sati system*, early marriage, child widowhood, polygamy, *devdasi*⁴⁰ *system* and different types of social illusion prevailing against women in the contemporary society and favoured of women' s education, widow remarriage, monogamy, restoration of Vedic position of women through the slogan of *back to the Vedas*⁴¹ and opening of training institutions.

An idealized demarcation of domains followed –men negotiated the outside colonial world whereas women were seen as the custodians of the middle class moral values at home. There were many confronting problems as far as social reforms regarding women were concerned, but the overwhelming emphasis was on Sati, widowhood, child marriage, and education of women. Such an emphasis was not without reason, as during the colonial rule women and Brahmanic scripture became interlocking grounds for the – articulation of tradition and women became emblematic of tradition⁴².In spite of being so many reform movements for the development of the status of women in the society, it has been revealed that women are still marginalised and excluded from all spheres of life.

Through the analysis of Indian history it has been revealed that the Indian women are subjected to patriarchal rule, as the women from other nations of the world, receiving the respect in society through marriage and motherhood, both of which valued a high level of chastity. The position of women also concern with political changes as in times of uncertainty, they regressed (socially depreciated) and during stability they developed. As men always remain in the higher position of political and economic power, they (women) are always lagging behind in the possession of political and economic power and thus these precarious scenarios forced them towards the status of 'Marginalised' and 'Excluded'.

⁴⁰ The devdasi system is a religious practice of south India in which the parents of a girl marry their daughter to a deity or a temple before her puberty. Later on, the girl becomes prostitute for upper caste community members.

⁴¹ Slogan given by Swami Dayanand Saraswati.

⁴² Lata, M. (1989) 'Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India', in K. Sangari and S. Vaid (eds.), *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History*, Kali for Women, New Delhi, 88 – 126.

This chapter focuses on the theories of Marginalisation and Social Exclusion and the theories of Development in the context of women's development and empowerment.

i) Theories of Marginalisation and Social Exclusion

ii) Marginalisation as a form of Structural Violence

2.3. Evaluation of the theories of Marginalisation:

Ancient philosophers such as Kautilya, Lao-tzu, Plato, Aristotle and Manu, for instance, developed their own theories and justification – for the way of power, privileges and resources were distributed. The great prophets and founders of modern religions- Moses, Zarathustra, the Buddha, Confucious, Mahavira, Jesus and Mohammed – were also concerned with social injustice. Developed philosopher as well as new norms and laws to govern human conduct and social interaction European social theorists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries such as Rousseau, Montesquieu, Locke and Adam Smith advanced early secular and religious frameworks to address the huge shifts in power that occurred as a result of the decay of feudalism, the rise of the industrial revolution and the growth of imperialism and colonial empires. However, it is with the advent of Marxist theory perhaps, that it has been seen a period – more than a century long of major theoretical advances in our ability to unpack and analyse the roots of social inequality⁴³.

Marx, Engels, Adam Smith and other thinkers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries focused mainly on the material basis of social hierarchy – they identified material resources like land, labour and capital as the basis for social stratification and hierarchy⁴⁴. The anti colonial struggles were greatly influenced by these theories, but only political and economic freedom alone would not eradicate the unique forms of injustice that existed in our societies, based on caste, gender or religion.

While looking at the specific theories on marginalisation, it has been found that several authors wrote on marginalisation directly and partially. Marginalisation appeared as a concept in the scientific community in the first half of the 20th century. In 1928, Robert

⁴³ Batliwala, Srilatha (2010) *Feminist Leadership for social transformation: clearing the conceptual cloud*, CREA, New Delhi, 16.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Park identified immigrants as marginal due to their disparities⁴⁵ while, in 1937, Edwin Stone Quist noted that ‘the marginal person dragged between two or more social worlds, and that the harmonic and attractive, repellent and complicated aspects existing in both of the two worlds, caused different reflections in the spirit of the individual’⁴⁶. This notion of marginalisation lasted until Dickie Clark (1966) introduced the term ‘Marginal Situation’ and moved the discussion from the personality of the marginalised to a more pointed by sociological reference point. According to Clark, Marginalisation was more complex, multidimensional and nuanced concept than had been assumed⁴⁷.

For the studies of inequalities, Marginalisation have been researched extensively, especially during the 1960’s and 1970’s within the context of rapid urbanisation in Latin America, mostly to try to find out who is marginal and who is not. Power relations, perspectives in considering marginalisation are the common factors and the very basis of the process of marginalisation. Marginalisation is an extremely broad term. When one thinks about marginalisation, multiple and various images come in front of the eyes like violence, poverty, health structure, education structure, etc. All these phenomena are the precondition of marginalisation and people who are the sufferers of these situations are called marginalised.

The debate over the marginalisation theory during the 1960’s, 1970’s and later on, was mostly confined with the ‘case’ or ‘situation’ studies. Later on, Michel Foucault located the forms of oppression – such as mental health status and gender – that were not necessarily related to material conditions. This focused awareness of the role of ideology and discourse in upholding unequal power and status⁴⁸.

⁴⁵ Park, R.E., (1928) ‘Human Migration and the Marginal Man’ in *American Journal of Sociology* (33), 881-893.

⁴⁶ Nabavi, S.A.H. (2009) ‘Migrant, Marginalisation and Subordination: A conceptual framework’ in *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 9 (2), 351.

⁴⁷ Déry, Steve, Walter Leimgruber and Walter Zsilincsar (2012) ‘Understanding Marginality: Recent Insights from a Geographical Perspective,’ in A Review *Preledni članak, HRVATSKI GEOGRAFSKI GLASNIK* 74/1, 8.

⁴⁸ Batliwala, Srilatha (2010) *Feminist Leadership for social transformation: clearing the conceptual cloud*, CREA, New Delhi, 16.

In the recent studies Leimgruber concluded marginalisation in a three forms that were: geometrical, systemic and processual⁴⁹. Geometrical marginality is similar to peripherality and refers to Von Thünen's Model⁵⁰ where 'marginal is the point where profit turns into loss – marginal regions reduce themselves to a geometric line. None of the land use rings is marginal because each is logically denied.' In systemic marginalisation some systems have inherent forces creating inequalities, systems in which privileged groups are favoured in the distribution of goods and services, in the allocation of political roles, irrespective of the individual's competence. Processual marginality is the result of a process, intentional or not, in a system of production⁵¹.

In this context Mehrutu and his colleague added 'contingent marginality' which is produced by market forces and competition, which creates marginal people, region or countries⁵². Furthermore, Leimgruber underlines three aspects of marginalisation on which one can build the concept. First, he considers that observations on marginalisation are valid only at certain scale at which marginalisation can be studied; second, marginalisation is the question of point of view, third, clear demarcation between marginalised and non marginalised people.

A smallest common denominator to the marginalisation process is a significant change in the power relations, that is how the relation of some individuals or a group within a given system are changing or when these people are integrating into new systems in which the adaptation appears problematic⁵³. An individual is situated depends to a large extent on

⁴⁹ Leimgruber, W. (2004) *Between Global and Local, Marginality and Marginal Regions in the Context of Globalisation and Deregulation*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 56.

⁵⁰ Von Thünen, an amateur economist, had given a model on rural land use that governed by natural laws, is the best way for farmers of different goods to locate their farms within an isolated state so that they maximised their profits, according to him.

⁵¹ Leimgruber, W. (2004) *Between Global and Local, Marginality and Marginal Regions in the Context of Globalisation and Deregulation*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 61.

⁵² Ibid, 62.

⁵³ Déry, Steve, Walter Leimgruber and Walter Zsilincsar (2012) 'Understanding Marginality: Recent Insights from a Geographical Perspective,' in A Review *Preledni članak, HRVATSKI GEOGRAFSKI GLASNIK* 74/1, 8.

his or overall possession of and capacity to mobilize not only economic resources, but also social, cultural and symbolic resources⁵⁴.

Marginalisation as a process is conceptualised as cumulatively acquired and spatially related phenomena of social, economic cultural and political denials and deprivations, in – securities and uncertainty, hierarchy and domination which get legitimized and reproduces by the functioning of several normative and societal arrangements to relegate several sections of the population at the social margin despite their protests and resistance⁵⁵. Women are included in these sections of the population who are deprived for living a qualitative life in their whole lifespan.

2.3.1. Concept of Social Exclusion:

French philosopher and politician Rene Lenoir first used the term ‘social exclusion’ in 1974, when he was Minister for Social Action in the French Government led by Jacques Chirac. He used the term to refer to the significant percentage of French citizens who were unable to access government services on account of particular forms of vulnerability, discrimination or obstacles - in other words, due to the specific ways in which they were socially excluded. The groups he identified as being thus excluded are very important, because they shared characteristics that were not necessarily based on economic status:

“... the mentally and physically handicapped, suicidal people, aged invalids, substance abusers, delinquents, single parents, abused children, multi-problem households, marginal, a social persons and other social ‘misfits’”. Although the concept of social exclusion is a relatively new approach to poverty, inequality and justice, it has proved very useful in understanding the persistent nature of certain forms of discrimination and oppression, particularly those formed on the basis of identity. At its simplest, social exclusion may be defined as “the process by which individuals and

⁵⁴ Moller, I. H. (1998), *Understanding Integration and Differentiation: Inclusion, Marginalisation and Exclusion*. <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2002-06-21-moller-en.html>.

⁵⁵ Singharoy, Debal K., (2010), ‘ Marginalisation and the Marginalised: Reflections on the Relational-Cumulative Dynamics’ in Debal K. Singharoy (eds.), *Surviving Against Odds The Marginalised in a Globalizing World*, Manohar Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 48.

groups are wholly or partly excluded from full participation in the society within which they live”.⁵⁶

Hilary Silver identified some scales on which people are excluded and included these are livelihood, secure permanent employment, earnings, property, credit or land, minimal or prevailing consumption levels, education, skills, and cultural capital, the welfare state, citizenship and legal equality, democratic participation, public goods, the nation or the dominant race, family and sociability, humanity, respect, fulfillment and understanding in exclusion and inclusion⁵⁷. Barnes’s concepts on these indicators are quite similar. He covers seven dimensions of social exclusion: financial situation, ownership of durable goods, the quality of housing, neighbourhood perception, personal social relationships, and physical health and psychological well – being⁵⁸.

Pulin Nayak defined social exclusion at different dimensions. As exclusion from education, exclusion from housing, exclusion from property ownership, exclusion from democratic participation, exclusion from access to health services, exclusion from public goods, gender based exclusion, exclusion of the old and infirm, exclusion of widows, and exclusion of the physically handicapped⁵⁹.

Sukhadeo Thorat defines social exclusion as the process of denial of equal opportunities, which is imposed by certain groups of society upon others which leads to the inability of an individual to participate in the basic political, economic and social functioning of the society. Two defining characteristics of exclusion are particularly relevant here, namely, first, the deprivation caused through exclusion (or denial of equal opportunity) in multiple spheres, showing its multi – dimensionality. The second feature is that, it is embedded in the social relations and societal institutions⁶⁰ – the process through which

⁵⁶ Batliwala, Srilatha (2010) *Feminist Leadership for social transformation: clearing the conceptual cloud*, CREA, New Delhi, 18.

⁵⁷ Silver, Hilary (1994/5/6), ‘Social exclusion and social solidarity: Three paradigms,’ in *International Labour review*, Vol.133, pp. 531-578.

⁵⁸ Silver, Hilary (2011) *The process of Social Exclusion The Dynamics of an Evolving Concept*, Critical Quest, New Delhi,12.

⁵⁹ Nayak, Pulin (2012) *Economic Development and Social Exclusion in India*, Critical Quest, New Delhi, 6-7.

⁶⁰ Thorat, S.K. (2013) *Caste Social Exclusion and Poverty Concept, Measurement and Empirical Evidence*, Critical Quest, New Delhi, 3-4.

individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society in which they live⁶¹.

Naila Kabeer, explains, social exclusion revolves around social identities of people or groups and reflects the cultural devaluation of people based on their identities like Caste, ethnicity, religion and gender⁶². By this process of exclusion women remain marginalised in all their lives.

Arjan De Haan emphasized social exclusion with two main characteristics. First is multidimensional that people are often deprived of different things at the same time. Second one focused on the relations and processes that cause deprivation. People can be excluded by many different sorts of groups, often at the same time, landlords exclude people from access to land or housing, elite political groups exclude others from legal rights, priests in India may exclude scheduled castes from access to temples, minorities may be excluded from expressing their identity, labour markets, but also some trade unions exclude people (non-members) from getting jobs, and so on⁶³.

Max Weber provided a perspective on social stratification that emphasized the enduring importance of status groups within capitalist societies, communities that enjoy different amounts of social honour. Status groups may encompass racial, ethnic, or religious groups but can also involve social strata such as ‘the educated classes’, or castes. Communities that constitute status groups share a certain style of life and maintain their solidarity through shared tastes and social activities on the one hand, and through social closure on the other, reducing their intercourse with social inferiors⁶⁴.

In the context of globalisation, marginality has been widely used to describe the social categories which have remained only partly integrated or remained excluded from the

⁶¹ De Haan, Arjan (1997), *Poverty and Social Exclusion: A Comparison of Debates on Deprivation*, Working Paper No. 2, Poverty Research Unit at Sussex, Brighton, University of Sussex.3.

⁶² Kabeer, Naila (2000) ‘Social Exclusion, Poverty and Discrimination: Towards an analytical Framework’, *IDS Bulletin*, 31(4):83-97.

⁶³ De Haan, Arjan (1999) ‘Social Exclusion: Towards An Holistic Understanding of Deprivation’ *World Development Report Forum on Inclusion, Justice, and Poverty Reduction*, 2-3, retrieved from [webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk>files, sdd9socex.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/files/sdd9socex.pdf), accessed on 28.8.15.

⁶⁴ Weber, Max (1968), *Economy and Society*, Bedminster Press, New York, 241.

‘mainstream’ of society⁶⁵. Within these wide spectrum sociologically marginality is understood in a societal context in terms of ‘non – participation’, ‘non- integration’ and also in ‘reference to exclusion’ of groups or sections of population including gender from several of the key activities of society.

Exclusion and Inclusion are simultaneous processes that cannot be overlooked in understanding the process of exclusion. This simultaneity is central to caste societies, wherein, ‘the idea of purity and pollution that lend to creation of mutually exclusive communities provides a ritual scheme that enables interaction between the two interdependent blocks. Several tasks that are defiling and physically excruciating are performed by the touchable castes on which the caste economy and its purity itself is based – be it labour, scavenging or leather work or some other unclean occupations. The outcastes on the other hand are dependent on the caste communities for their very survival. It is within this material context that the norms of purity are rigid and insurmountable, while in the ritual and the sexual domain, the norms are frequently inverted and transgression ensures the hegemony of the caste communities’⁶⁶.

Social Exclusion and Marginalisation can be understood in many ways. Firstly, exclusion can be practiced through severe impediments in induction into labour market while hiring, in capital market through the denial of access to capital, in agricultural land market through the denial of access to capital, in agricultural land market through the denial of sale and purchase or leasing of lands, in input market through the denial of sale and purchase of factor inputs, and consumer market by denying sale and purchase of commodities and consumer goods⁶⁷.

Secondly, discrimination can occur through what Sen describes as ‘unfavourable inclusion’, namely through differential treatment in terms and conditions, of contract, one of them would reflect in discrimination in the prices charged and received by

⁶⁵ UNDP (1996) *Human Development Report (1996)*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

⁶⁶ Vijaisri, Priyadarshini (2008) ‘Untouchable During the Day and Touchable at Night: Sex and Pollution in a Hindu Regional Tradition’ in Sanjukta Dasgupta and Rajsekhar Basu (eds) *Narratives of the Excluded: Caste Issues in Colonial India*, Bagchi, Delhi.

⁶⁷ Thorat, S. K. (2001) ‘Caste, Untouchability and Economic and Market Discrimination : Theory, Concept and Consequences’, *Artha Vigyan, Journal of Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economic*, Vol. XLIII, Nos. 1-2.

discriminated groups including women. Discriminated groups can get lower prices for the goods that they sell, and could pay higher prices for the goods they buy, compared with the market price or the price paid by other groups⁶⁸. Thirdly, exclusion and discrimination can occur in terms of access to social needs supplied by the government or public institutions, or by private institutions in education, housing and healthcare, including common property resources like water bodies, grazing land, and other land of common use⁶⁹. Fourthly, a group may face discrimination from participation in certain categories of jobs, like a women who works as a dry fish sorter, never allowed for household based jobs, because of the notion of purity and pollution of occupations, and engagements in so – called unclean occupations.

In India, one of the commonality shared in terms of quotidian experience by the marginalised communities is discrimination grounded on caste, religion, ethnicity and gender conditioned by status, hierarchy and privileges. Majority of them continue to be marginalised from the mainstream societal developmental processes and frameworks. Marginality as a subject brings the voices of the margins and oppressed by the dominant cultures. It is a radical concept which enables a critical analysis of the hierarchical social structures and hegemonic social, cultural and political understanding prevalent in the society.

The term social inclusion, an antonym of social exclusion, is defined by the European Union as a process ‘whereby individuals gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living and well – being that is considered normal in the society in which they have greater participation in decision making which affects their lives and access to their fundamental rights.

Different framework analysing exclusion and inclusion have drawn from Durkheim, Marx and Rousseau in accordance to the regional political contexts and with marked intellectual influences.

⁶⁸ Vijaisri, P., Rao, Chinna Y. And Sudhakara Karakoti (2015) ‘Social Exclusion and Discrimination of Scheduled Castes’ in Yagati Chinna Rao nd Sudhakara Karakoti (eds) *Dimensions of Social Exclusion: Caste, Class and Gender*, Meena Book Publications, Delhi, 28 – 29.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 29.

Kothari lays bare the gross violation of its cherished goals, that ‘while such elusive progress in fact conceited lures has over the decades produced a very novel political polemic, domestic crass liberalism that has survived on protracted phases of repression and administering periodically constitutional tranquilizers’ in the later age with increasing social violence, as newer hegemonies emerge with centralising tendencies of capitalism, perpetuate a doctrine of exclusion, wherein, ‘entire populations are looked upon as undesirable and unwanted.’ This is accompanied by stigmatisation of such communities as ‘parasitic and burdensome’ to national growth. Yet the sheer inevitability of such populace in terms of labour both for the rural and urban economy necessitates a more accommodative policy, which, if implemented properly, is sufficient enough to defuse the mounting social tension⁷⁰.

Social Exclusion involves two crucial dimensions, namely the ‘societal institutions’ (of exclusion), and their ‘outcomes’ (in terms of deprivation). To understand the dimensions of exclusion, it is necessary to explore the societal inter – relations and institutions, which lead to the exclusion of certain groups and deprivation in multiple spheres – civil, cultural, political, and economic. Thus, for a broader understanding of the concept of exclusion, the insights into the societal processes and institutions of exclusions are as important as the outcome in terms of deprivation for certain groups. In India, exclusion is embedded in societal interrelations and institutions that discriminate, isolate, and deprive some groups on the basis of their identities like caste, ethnicity, occupation and gender. The rules of segregation or social exclusion based on caste, ethnicity, occupation and gender violate human rights and it continues to orient socio cultural life in the contemporary society.

The fundamental characteristics of the caste system such as fixed civil, cultural, and economic rights for each caste, with restrictions for change imply ‘forced exclusion’ of one caste from the rights of other castes, or from undertaking the occupations of other castes. Exclusion and discrimination in civil, cultural, and particularly in economic spheres such as occupation and employment, is therefore internal to the system, and a

⁷⁰ Kothari, Rajani (1990) *State against Democracy: In Search of Humane Governance*, Ajantha Publications, Delhi, 5.

necessary outcome of its governing principles and create manifold forms of exclusion and marginalisation. Social exclusion, in simple words, captures the experience of certain groups who are ‘set apart’ or ‘locked out’ of participation in social life⁷¹.

The presence of social exclusion can be seen at each level of society. Group formation is a fundamental characteristic of human society, and this is accompanied by exclusion of others. The concept takes us beyond mere descriptions of deprivation, and focuses attention on social relations, the processes and institutions that underlie and are part and parcel of deprivation⁷².

2.3.2. Marginalisation as a form of Structural Violence:

Besides all these evolutionary theories we can understand Marginalisation as ‘Structural Violence’ prevailing in the society. Johan Galtung (1969) introduced the term ‘Structural Violence’ as hunger, poverty, repression and social alienation constitute another way to the creation of the situations causing human misery. Quality of life is reduced by denial of educational opportunities, free speech and freedom of association. These conditions are associated with uneven life chances, inequitable distribution of resources and unequal decision-making power. Given its indirect and insidious nature, structural violence most often works slowly in eroding human values and shortening life spans. It is typically built into the very structure of society and cultural institutions⁷³.

In repressive and discriminatory practices can be imposed on individuals or groups in systematic and organised ways by political institutions⁷⁴. Throughout in human history structural violence are maintained by the means of oppression in every social system. Oppression is embedded in a ‘situation in which one person exploits another person or hinders his or her pursuit of her pursuit of self – affirmation as a responsible person. Such a situation in itself constitutes violence, even when sweetened by false generosity,

⁷¹ Kabeer, Naila (2000) ‘Social exclusion, poverty and discrimination: Towards an analytical framework’, in *IDS Bulletin*, Vol 31, no. 4, p. 1.

⁷² Sen, Amartya (2000) ‘Social Exclusion: Concept, Application and Scrutiny’ in *Social Development Papers*, No 1, Asian Development Bank, p.1.

⁷³ Galtung, J. (1969), ‘Violence, Peace and Peace Research’, *Journal of Peace Research*, vol.6, no. 3, 166-92.

⁷⁴ Wenden, A. (1995), ‘Defining Peace: Perspectives from Peace Research’, in Schäffner and A. Wenden (eds.), *Language and Peace*, Dartmouth, Aldershot, 3.

because it interferes with the individual's ontological and historical vocation to be more fully human⁷⁵. Thus oppression, as a form of structural violence, can be maintained by manipulation of relations⁷⁶.

The gross violation of human rights and dignity prevents the optimum development of each human being. The lack of an opportunity for self- fulfillment can be based on race, religion, gender, sexual preference, economic status or age. If a young female's need for education is not provided adequately because of gender differences, it constitutes inequitable life conditions⁷⁷. This situation leads a society towards Structural violence.

Certain types of economic structure perpetuate a situation where most basic standards necessary for staying alive are not met. According to some statistics, the loss of life attributed to malnutrition and starvation exceeds the number of people who have been killed by war⁷⁸. In many societies, some people are dying from a lack of protein or health care while a few enjoy a luxurious way of life. Obviously, death by starvation is no better than being killed by a gun. Social stability based on law and order without providing the means for survival is regarded as only a privilege for a select few. If human beings are denied education, housing, an opportunity to work and freedom to express themselves, they become marginalised⁷⁹.

The absence of direct violence does not necessarily mean the satisfaction of conditions for maintaining decent human life. The concept of structural violence helps us understand deep causes of conflict ingrained in political oppression and economic despair. Given that gross social injustice can be maintained by personal violence, structural violence is more easily noticed in a society that is governed by fear and repression⁸⁰.

⁷⁵ Freire, P. (1998), *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Continuum, New York, 37.

⁷⁶ Jeong, Ho – Won (2000) *Peace and Conflict Studies An Introduction*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 21.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 21.

⁷⁸ Fischer, D. (1993), *Nonmilitary Aspects of Security: A systems Approach*, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in association with Dartmouth, Aldershot, 7.

⁷⁹ Jeong, Ho – Won (2000) *Peace and Conflict Studies An Introduction*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 21.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 22.

In this context the concept of social exclusion is the most recent advancement in our understanding of social inequality, power hierarchy, gender differences and builds on both material and non material theories in a new way.

2.4. Women and Marginalisation:

The nature of formation of Indian society reflects the structure of inequalities or equalities in different domains of social life. Prior to independence, the colonial/ feudal formation structured social relations and positions. A challenge to such a structuring emanated from India's Independence in the form of values of equality and democracy⁸¹. Social stratification refers to the structure and process of allocation and distribution of resources, and to the rationale of decision – making about structuring of high and low positions⁸² including gender.

India has been a 'just society' or not – is a debatable question particularly in the case of women. A 'just society' provides equal access to different occupations and positions and also equal shares of resources⁸³. And such a society does not ignore the special contributions of some members on the one hand, and goodness of the worst off sections of the society on the other.

The main questions regarding women's subjugation are: Why women are continually seen as 'Objects'? What makes society to see them as such? Why reproduction, sexuality and socialisation of children are considered as obligations and duties of women? What are the visible and invisible aspects in everyday life of a woman which make her subordinate to a man? What is the real and imagined nature of man – woman relations? Why reforms, legislations and movements have not produced desired results?⁸⁴

Answers to these and many other questions lie in history, culture, economy, polity and social formation of Indian society and in understanding of the functionality of the gendering in the social fabric properly. Men decide what women do because of the

⁸¹ Sharma, K.L. (2011), *Culture, Stratification and Development*, Rawat Publication, Jaipur, 2.

⁸² Ibid, 2.

⁸³ Rawls, John (1999), *A Theory of Justice* (Rev edn.), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 3 – 5.

⁸⁴ Sharma, K.L. (2011), *Culture, Stratification and Development*, Rawat Publication, Jaipur, 105-6.

subordination of the women in the society. Women's identity is that of her Father, of her Husband and of her Son. The ritual of *Kanyadan*⁸⁵ in Hindu Marriage is one of the instance that shows the status of women as object.

Status inequality is reinforced between man and woman through institutions of patriarchy, marriage, dowry, property and inheritance, subordination and gendered division of labour. Patriarchy runs through all walks of life, and it has not got lessened in the wake of development in contemporary India. The new forms of subordination and gender asymmetry have superseded the old, leaving patriarchal control undisturbed in India⁸⁶. The complex stratification system in India give rise to a multiplicity of social categories which often obscure the relative status of women and men within the more disadvantaged segments of the population⁸⁷.

The phenomena of non- participation may arise several conditions and get operationalised through several processes. The dominated groups may not be provided with adequate social, economic and political opportunities in acquiring the desired potential for full participation in decision – making, having access to the source of power, and in sharing of societal, economic and other resources. Hence, the marginalised may have the desire for full participation but lack the opportunities for the same⁸⁸. As most of the Indian women are apart from main course of the societal life after having desire of taking participation.

In the Indian context⁸⁹ the following are the excluded and marginalised persons: Social Groups: Dalits/untouchables/lower castes, Tribals/Adivasis/Indigenous Peoples, religious

⁸⁵ The bride being gifted to groom along with other goods.

⁸⁶ Mazumdar, Vina and Kumud Sharma, (1990), "Sexual Division of Labour and the Subordination of Women: A Reappraisal from India", in Tinker Irene (ed.), *Persistent Inequalities: Women and World Development*, Oxford University Press, New York, 185-97.

⁸⁷ Dunn, Dana (1993), 'Gender inequality in education and employment in the scheduled caste and tribes of India', in *Population Research and Policy Review*, Volume-12, No- 1, Springer, Netherland, 53 – 77.

⁸⁸ Germani, G. (1980), *Marginality*, New Jersey: Transaction Books.

⁸⁹ Louis, Prakash (2007), 'Social Exclusion: A Conceptual and theoretical framework,' Paper presented at National Conference on *What it takes to eradicate poverty*, PACS Programme, New Delhi, accessed on 4.5.2014 <http://www.pacsindia.org/news-articles/social-exclusion-paper>, 1-12.

and linguistic minorities, the most backward castes, especially women and children among these social groups.

Sectoral Groups: agricultural labourers, marginalised farmers, child labourers, domestic workers, informal workers/unorganised sector workers, contract workers, plantation workers, fisher communities, manual scavengers, rural and forest based communities, vernacular speaking social groups, people with disability etc.

As in above lines it has been indicated that women from lower castes and some communities like fishing communities are marginalised. So we can imagine the condition of women who belong to lower caste in stratified society like in India and fishing communities as well. As fishing communities itself is a marginalised group, the position of women of this community is more vulnerable than their male counterparts.

The efforts are used to assess their roles in relation to men, while putting forth the discussion on women's status. There are two other dimensions have been emerged over the years. According to Veena Mazumdar, it is classified as:

- i. The extent of actual control enjoyed by women over their own lives.
- ii. The extent to which they have access to decision- making processes and are effective in positions of power and authority.

One major contribution of feminist scholars has been to draw attention to the importance of power followed by control that determines the subordinate position of women. Stated differently; this notion of power or control best manifests in the patriarchal ideology which exists in all societies⁹⁰. Powerlessness is the basis of women's doubts about their own power and control to shape their lives. The socio – cultural beliefs regarding the rights and duties ascribed to men and women are strongly built in the society which considers men as having the right to control women's lives. Men are essential for the well –being of the relationship. This clearly depicts the subordination of women to men and

⁹⁰ Nanda, Bikram and Anjana Mangalgiri (1985) 'Patriarchal Ideology and Women's Oppression' in Susheela Kaushik (ed) *Women's Oppression: Patterns and Perspectives*, Shakti Books, New Delhi, p. 11 – 22.

acts as the central lever to their powerlessness, which in turn is crucial for strengthening their status in the society as well as in the family⁹¹.

Based on gender, the roles are assigned differently between a man and women in spite of the fact that they both are social entities. Man and woman both grow within the family as a social institution. There is a clear demarcation on the roles to be fulfilled by a man and a woman and it often leaves the woman with lesser 'value' in all the ways and fields in comparison to the man in the family or in the society at large⁹².

Women should be provided with the needed encouragement, support, opportunities and facilities both within and outside their homes in order to properly handle their roles as mothers, and socially productive individuals with dignity and respect. Greater social participation of women in the decision – making process is assumed to erode the existing stereotypical social attitudes and values that exclude women⁹³.

Discrimination and inequality between men and women is the most crucial and the cardinal disparity in Indian societies⁹⁴. Looking at women as second class citizens through gendered lens reveals the inequality that persists between men and women irrespective of class, caste, religion, region and occupation. Women are too often treated as an instrument for others to meet their desires and needs rather than treating them as ends in their own right – persons with dignity who deserve respect from laws and institutions⁹⁵. As noted by Shrivastava “Women, in short, lack essential support for leading lives that are fully human. This lack of support is frequently caused by their being

⁹¹ Jaya Conger and N. Rabindra Kanungo (1988), 'The Empowerment Process: Integrating Theory and Practice' in *The Academy of Management Review*, July 13 (3), p. 471 – 82.

⁹² Choudhury, Sanghamitra and Naorem Arunibala Debi (2015) 'Gender Discrimination and Social Exclusion : The Assam and Manipur Experience' in Yagati Chinna Rao and Sudhakara Karakoti (eds.) *Dimensions of Social Exclusion: Caste, Class and Gender*, Meena Book Publications, Delhi, 273 – 274.

⁹³ *Ibid*, 274.

⁹⁴ Dreze Jean and Amartya Sen, (2004) 'Gender, Equality and Women's Agency' in Mohanty Manoranjan (ed). *Caste, Class and Gender*, Sage Publication, New Delhi, p. 339.

⁹⁵ Nussbaum, Martha C. (2001) 'Introduction – Feminism and International Development' in Martha C. Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development – The Capabilities Approach*. U.K., Cambridge University Press.

women. Thus, even when they live in a constitutional democracy such as India, where they are equals in theory, they are second class citizens in reality⁹⁶.

Hirdman, too, talks of hierarchical sex – based power order which is based on two principles: the principle of absolute separation of sexes, the primacy of ‘men’ man as the norm, standard and yardstick for valuation and evaluation of human behaviour and entitlements. In this perspective, men are superior and women are subordinate in terms of power and authority⁹⁷.

Discrimination on the basis of sex often starts from the earliest stages of life. Women has to depend on man from cradle to grave vis a vis in childhood on her father, in youth on her husband and in old age on her sons. Dependency has become a survival mechanism for the female child and for women caring for men becomes a means to strengthen one’s faltering self – esteem⁹⁸. In the right sense, discrimination means ‘treating unfairly’. The concept of discrimination has been widely used in studying the unequal relationship between the sexes and a struggle for ‘power and privilege’⁹⁹. Discrimination leads to social exclusion simply because exclusion is nothing but the deprivation either of resources such as income or of social links to the wider community or society at large.

In examining the intra – household stratification, gender stratification appears to be the prime factor for the differential power equations between men and women. Cynthia has argued that the sexual divide is the most persistent and deepest divide in the world. Boundaries have been marked between men and women in terms of their roles ascribed to them. These are mainly created by ‘cultural entrepreneurs’ who translate concepts into practice¹⁰⁰. The gender divide as a socially created divide could be described as the most basic and resistant to social change. It is very difficult to alter the existing gender norms

⁹⁶ Shrivastava, R. S. (2001) ‘Women Empowerment : Some Critical Issues’, in Abha Awasthi and A. K. Srivastava (eds), *Modernity, Feminism and Women Empowerment*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, p. 33 – 48.

⁹⁷ Berger, Prudence Woodford (2007) ‘Gender Mainstreaming – What is it (about) and should we continue doing it?’ in Andrea Cornwall, Elizabeth Harrison and Ann Whitehead (eds) *Feminism in Development – Contradictions, Contestations and Challenges*, Zed Books, London, p. 128.

⁹⁸ Choudhury, Sanghamitra and Naorem Arunibala Debi (2015) ‘Gender Discrimination and Social Exclusion : The Assam and Manipur Experience’ in Yagati Chinna Rao and Sudhakara Karakoti (eds.) *Dimensions of Social Exclusion: Caste, Class and Gender*, Meena Book Publications, Delhi, 260.

⁹⁹ Marshall, Gordan (2006) *Dictionary of Sociology*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, p. 163.

¹⁰⁰ Fuchs, Cynthia Epstein (2007) ‘Great Divides: The Cultural, Cognitive, and Social Bases of the Global Subordination of Women’ in *American Sociological Review*, Feb, 72 (1), p. 1 – 22.

because it poses a big threat to male superiority, which is primarily manifested in oppression of and discrimination against women¹⁰¹. Nivedita Menon also argues that the present subordination of women arises not from the unchangeable biological difference (sex), but from social and cultural values. Ideologies and institutions that ensure the material and ideological subordination of women (gender), thereby feminists question sex – differentiated work, the sexual division of labour which is understood to be natural and unchangeable for example, biological¹⁰².

Amartya Sen defines social exclusion as constitutively a part of capability deprivation as well as instrumentally a cause of diverse capability failures. Sen investigates social exclusion as an approach to poverty by establishing within the general perspective of poverty as capability failure¹⁰³. Based on this premise, the present study would focus on the existence of exclusion, marginalisation and deprivation among the women of fishing communities, is due to various exclusive measures imposed by the existing structure of the society and state which have led to their capability deprivation.

2.5. Theories of Development concerning Marginalised and Excluded Women:

Development can be seen as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy¹⁰⁴. Growth of the national product, industrialisation, rise in personal incomes, increase in technological advancement are the narrower scales of development but of course these expand the freedom of human being. But the freedoms of access of the basic necessities like facilities for health care, proper education, liberty to participate in public discussion are the basic foundation of a qualitative life. Denial of deprivations and exclusion is the holistic view of development.

¹⁰¹ Choudhury, Sanghamitra and Naorem Arunibala Debi (2015) 'Gender Discrimination and Social Exclusion : The Assam and Manipur Experience' in Yagati Chinna Rao and Sudhakara Karakoti (eds.) *Dimensions of Social Exclusion: Caste, Class and Gender*, Meena Book Publications, Delhi, 261.

¹⁰² Menon, Nivedita, 2008, 'Gender' in, Rajeev Bhargava and Ashok Acharya (eds.) *Political Theory – An Introduction*, Longman, New Delhi, p. 230.

¹⁰³ Mahalingam, M. (2015) 'Social Exclusion, Marginalisation and Indian Plantation Workers: The Experience of Malaysia' in Yagati Chinna Rao and Sudhakara Karakoti (eds.) *Dimensions of Social Exclusion: Caste, Class and Gender*, Meena Book Publications, Delhi, 181.

¹⁰⁴ Sen, Amartya (2000) *Social Exclusion: Concept, Application and Scrutiny*, Working Paper, Social Development Paper No. 1, June, Asian Development Bank, Manila, 3.

In India, while being disadvantaged is multi-faceted, caste and gender are recognised as two key indicators of social stratification. Women and members of lower caste groups experience a range of inequalities: in health and nutrition, education, wages, occupation and ownership and control and access to assets and resources, but perhaps women of low – caste groups are multiply disadvantaged. Low entitlements, social barriers and discrimination alongside changing familial relationships combine to dampen their capabilities and hinder market possibilities. Thus women suffer disproportionate rates of poverty- a situation that is passed by generation to generation¹⁰⁵.

In 1991, the World Development Report of the World Bank draws the goal of development in broad terms:

‘Economic development is defined in this report as a sustainable increase in living standards that encompass material consumption, education, health and environmental protection. Development in a broader sense is understood to include other important and related attributes as well, notably more equality of opportunity, and political freedom and civil liberties. The overall goal of development is therefore to increase the economic, political and civil rights of all people across gender, ethnic groups, religion, races, regions and countries. This goal has not changed substantially since the early 1950s, when most of the developing world emerged from colonialism’¹⁰⁶.

Development differs from economic growth in that it pays attention to the conditions of production, for example, the environments affected by economic activity, and to the social consequences, for example, the environments affected by economic activity, and to the social consequences, for example, income distribution and human welfare. Development entails economic, social, and cultural progress, including in the latter sense, finer ethical ideals and higher moral values. Development means improvement in a complex of linked natural, economic, social, cultural, and political conditions.

¹⁰⁵ Rao, Nitya (2010) ‘Is the New India Bypassing Women? Gendered Implications of India’s Growth’ in Anthony P.D. Costa (ed) *A New India? Critical Reflections in the Long Twentieth Century*, Anthem Press, London, 100.

¹⁰⁶ World Bank (1991) *World Development Report*, Washington 31.

Development theories differ according to the political positions of their adherent, their philosophical origins, and their place and time of construction. They differ also according to scientific orientation, that is, whether predominantly economic, sociological, anthropological, historical, or geographical. Social science looks at the human being as an individual, at the society as a collective of individuals organised into groups, like classes, gender, or races, at the interactions between individuals, and at the world as a natural entity and a system of interacting societies. Societies and human individuals vary greatly from one time and place to another time and place, particularly in the social and economic type of their development process or, more generally, their historical dynamic, and in the consequences development entails in terms of life chances and material circumstances¹⁰⁷.

UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Task Force on Gender Equality has identified gender related goals for the upliftment of the marginal women:

- a) The 'capabilities' domain, refers to the basic human abilities as measured through education, health and nutrition,
- b) The 'access to resources and opportunities' domain which includes access to economic assets (land, property, infrastructure) and resources (income and employment) as well as political opportunity, and
- c) The 'security' domain that seeks to reduce vulnerability to violence and conflict. Collectively, these could create an environment that would enable an expansion of choices for women, particularly marginalised women. Women's interests can perhaps better be served through appropriate and holistic policy measures and mechanisms that create an enabling environment for their participation in the economy, polity and society¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰⁷ Peet, Richard and Elaine Hartwick (2005) *Theories of Development*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 1-7.

¹⁰⁸ Rao, Nitya (2010) 'Is the New India Bypassing Women? Gendered Implications of India's Growth' in Anthony P.D. Costa (ed) *A New India? Critical Reflections in the Long Twentieth Century*, Anthem Press, London, 101-102.

In this segment of the study, theories of Development, which are related to the sustainable growth of the marginalised sections of the society specially women, would be focused. The theories are:-

- i) Human Development Approach
- ii) Capability Approach as a Human Development Approach
- iii) Sustainable Development Approach
- iv) Sustainable Livelihood Approach
- v) Sustainable Community Development Approach
- vi) WID (Women in Development) Approach

2.5.1. Human Development Approach:

Human development approach has been initiated by different people and at different times. The writings of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum on ‘Capability Approach’ provide the philosophical bases of human development. The annual Human Development Report, produced by the United Nations Development Programme, is one of the powerful vehicles of communication for human development. The first report was published in 1990. Today, over the hundred countries are producing their Human Development Report at State and National level. The purpose of these reports is to assess the state of a population from the perspective of people’s quality of life by analysing data regarding health, education, political freedoms, security, environment and many other aspects of lives and helping in raising awareness, generating debate on public issues and concerns which are except from political agenda.

The Human Development Reports were the brain child of Mahbub ul Haq, a Pakistani economist who wanted to see the world’s economic and social progress assessed in a different way, moving away from the usual income and economic growth considerations that had come to characterise the World Bank’s annual World Development Reports¹⁰⁹.

The human development paradigm covers all aspects of development – whether economic growth or international trade, budget deficits or fiscal policy, savings,

¹⁰⁹ Alkire, S.(2002) ‘Dimensions of Human Development’, *World Development*, vol 30, no 2, 181 – 205.

investment or technology, basic social services or safety nets for the poor. No aspect of the development model falls outside its scope, but point of reference remains the widening of people's choices and the enrichment of their lives. All aspects of life – economic, political or cultural – are viewed from that perspective. Economic growth therefore becomes only one subset of the human development paradigm. Thus the purpose of development is to enlarge all human choices and not just income. Human development has four essential pillars: equality, sustainability, productivity and empowerment. It regards economic growth as essential, but emphasizes the need to pay attention to its quality and distribution, analyses at length its link with human lives and questions its long –term sustainability¹¹⁰.

The first Human Development Report in 1990 defined human development as 'both the process of widening people's choices and the level of their achieved well – being'¹¹¹. The purpose of development is to enhance people's range of choices, in the present and in the future, in all areas of their life – economic, social, political participation and cultural.

The human development approach is inherently multi – dimensional and plural. It is about education as much it is about health. It is about culture as much as it is about political participation. It deals with fiscal policy as much as health policy- higher taxes on alcohol and cigarettes could be as effective in giving people opportunities to live long and healthy lives as spending more on healthy services. It deals with agricultural policies as much as it deals with exchange rate policies- the devaluation of a currency may do more to promote exports and provide farmers with greater opportunities to earn a decent income than farm subsidies. It deals with educational policy as much as gender, environmental, industrial or technological policy. Thus human development relates all those aspects which concern with people's lives, including economics¹¹².

Human development has various dimensions of the development process. Mahbub ul Haq have been used four dimensions in apply human development. They are Equity, Efficiency, Participation and Sustainability.

¹¹⁰ Ul Haq, M. (2003) 'The Human Development Paradigm', in S. Fukuda – Parr and A.K. Shiva Kumar (eds), *Readings in Human Development*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 3-16.

¹¹¹ UNDP (1990) *Human Development Report*, Oxford University Press, New York, 9.

¹¹² Alkire, S.(2002) 'Dimensions of human development', *World Development*, vol 30, no 2, 181 – 205.

- i) Equity refers to the concept of justice, impartiality and fairness and incorporates the idea of distributive justice, impartiality and fairness and incorporates the idea of distributive justice, particularly in terms of access to opportunities and outcomes to all human beings. The principle of equity recognises that those who have unequal opportunities due to various disadvantages may require preferential treatment or affirmative action. For example, the poor, differently – disabled, women, ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged sections of the population may need special measures to enable them to have the same level of opportunities¹¹³.
- ii) Efficiency is conventionally defined as the optimal use of existing resources. From a human development perspective, efficiency is defined as the least cost method of reaching goals through optimal use of human, material and institutional resources to maximise opportunities for individuals and communities.
- iii) Participation and empowerment is about processes that lead people to perceive themselves as being entitled to make life decisions. It is about the freedom to make decisions in matters that affect their lives. Whether at the level of policy – making or implementation, this principle implies that people need to be involved at every stage, not merely as beneficiaries but as agents who are able to pursue and realize goals that they value and have reason to value¹¹⁴.
- iv) Sustainability is refers to all spheres of life including social, political, financially and environmentally. Environmental sustainability implies achieving developmental results without jeopardizing the natural resource base and biodiversity of the region and without affecting the resource base for future generations. Financially sustainability refers to the way in which development is financed without having to run into a deficit. Development should not lead countries into debt traps. Social sustainability refers to the way in which social groups and other institutions are involved in ensuring participation and involvement by avoiding disruptive and destructive elements. Cultural liberty and respect for diversity are also important values that can contribute to socially – sustainable development¹¹⁵.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

2.5.2. Capability Approach as Human Development Approach:

The Capability Approach is a conceptual framework developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum for evaluating social states in terms of human well being and quality of life. It emphasizes functional capabilities, which are constructed in terms of the freedom of people to have reason to value, instead of utility or access to resources. Someone could be deprived of such capabilities in many ways, e.g. by government oppression, lack of financial resources, or false consciousness or ignorance¹¹⁶. This approach of human well being emphasizes the importance of freedom of choice, individual heterogeneity and the multi-dimensional nature of welfare¹¹⁷.

The human development approach contains two central themes about People and Development, one is 'evaluative aspect' and another one is 'agency aspect'. The first is concerned with evaluating improvements in human lives as an explicit development objective and using human achievements as key indicators of progress. The second is concerned with what human beings can do to achieve such improvements, particularly through policy and political changes. The human development approach is commonly associated with the evaluative aspect¹¹⁸.

The Human Development Approach provides a more gender – sensitive agenda to public policy than its alternatives. First, gender equity is a central concern of the approach, which emphasizes the importance of expanding the capabilities and functioning of all individuals.

Second, the Human Development approach is sensitive to aspects of discrimination that are particularly important in women's lives, but are unrelated to incomes and economic growth, such as lack of autonomy in decisions about their lives and the ability to influence decision – making within the family, community and nation. Third, the human development approach has the scope to delve into complex issues, such as the unequal

¹¹⁶ Chakravorty, T. (2014), 'Women of India: Social Exclusion Perspective', in *Reyono Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, Vol. 3, Issue 1, Jan 2014, 99.

¹¹⁷ Sen, Amartya (2004), *The quality of life*, New York, Routledge, 30–53.

¹¹⁸ Fukuda-Parr, Sakiko (2003) 'The Human Development Paradigm: Operationalizing Sen's Ideas on Capabilities', *Feminist Economics*, 9 (2-3), 2003, 301-317, Routledge, London, 303-304.

sharing of unpaid work that constrains women's life choices¹¹⁹. The Capability Approach has been used to address the concept of Human Development.

2.5.3. Amartya Sen's Capability Approach:

The Capability Approach was first introduced by in 1979 by Amartya Sen in a lecture titled 'Equality of What?' Sen argues that human well – being should be assessed in terms of human functioning. The notion of human functioning has Aristotelian roots, which have been developed especially by Martha Nussbaum (1988, 1992), but have also been acknowledged by Amartya Sen¹²⁰. Furthermore, the Capability Approach provides a multidimensional perspective on human well – being, it focuses on various human functioning. Thus, capabilities refer to what a human being can be or do¹²¹.

Sen's ideas provide the core principles of a development approach whose flexible framework allows policy – makers to analyse diverse challenges that poor people and poor countries face, rather than imposing a rigid orthodoxy with a set of policy prescriptions¹²². This approach also evolves the gender issues as a core concern and promoting gender involvement in development discourse.

Sen's theory of Development as an expansion of capabilities is the starting point for the human development approach, the idea that the purpose of development is to improve human lives by expanding the range of things that a person can be and do, such as to be healthy and well nourished, to be knowledgeable, and to participate in community life. Development is about removing the obstacles to what a person can do in life, obstacles such as illiteracy, ill health, lack of access to resources, or lack of civil and political freedoms¹²³.

According to Amartya Sen, 'A person's capability to achieve functioning that he or she has reason to value provides a general approach to the evaluation of social arrangements,

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 314.

¹²⁰ Sen Amartya (1999) *Development as Freedom (1st edition)*, Oxford University Press, New York , 289.

¹²¹ Martins, N. (2007) 'Realism, Universalism and Capabilities', *Review of Social Economy*, 65 (3), 253-278.

¹²² Fukuda-Parr, Sakiko (2003) 'The Human Development Paradigm: Operationalizing Sen's Ideas on Capabilities', *Feminist Economics*, 9 (2-3), 2003, 301-317, Routledge, London, 301.

¹²³ Ibid, 302.

and this yields a particular way of viewing the assessment of equality and inequality'¹²⁴. The key idea of the capability approach is that social arrangements should aim to expand people's capabilities – their freedom to promote or achieve valuable beings and doings.

i) **Functioning:** - Functioning are valuable activities and states that make up people's well-being – such as a healthy body, being safe, being educated, having a good job, being able to visit loved ones. They are also related to goods and income but describe what a person is able to do or be with these. For example, when people's basic need for food (a commodity) is met, they enjoy the functioning of being well – nourished. Because functioning are aspects of human fulfilment, some may be basic like being nourished, literate and clothed, while others might be quite complex. Both basic and complex functioning can relate to different dimensions of life. For example, some may be focused on survival, work and material well-being, while others are focused on relationships, empowerment and self-expression.

ii) **Capability:** - 'The various combinations of functioning (beings and doings) that the person can achieve. Capability is, thus, a set of vectors of functioning, reflecting the person's freedom to lead one type of life or another ... to choose from possible livings'¹²⁵. Sen also defines capabilities as the alternative combinations of functioning that are feasible for a person to achieve. Capabilities are a kind of opportunity freedom. Just like a person with a pocket full of coins can buy many different things, a person with many capabilities can enjoy many different activities and pursue a variety of different life paths. Capabilities are thus described as the real and actual possibilities open to a given person. As T.H. Green wrote, 'We do not mean merely freedom from restraint or compulsion... when we speak of freedom as something to be so highly prized, we mean a positive power or capacity of doing or enjoying something worth doing or enjoying'¹²⁶.

As Green's quote implies, capabilities include only possibilities that people really value. Activities or states that people do not value or have reason to value would not be called capabilities. Truly evil or utterly vacuous activities are not capabilities. Sen

¹²⁴ Sen, A., (1992) *Inequality Re-examined*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 5.

¹²⁵ Sen, A. K. (1992) *Inequality Re-examined*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 40.

¹²⁶ Sen, A.K. (2002) *Rationality and Freedom*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 586.

describe capability as ‘a person’s ability to do valuable acts or reach valuable states of being’¹²⁷.

The notion of capability is also closely related to that of freedom. Sen defines freedom as ‘the real opportunity that we have to accomplish what we value’¹²⁸.

iii) **Agency:** - The core concept of the capability approach is agency. Agency refers to a person’s ability to pursue and realize goals that she or he values and has reason to value. An agent is ‘someone who acts and brings about change’¹²⁹. The opposite of a person with agency is someone who is forced, oppressed or passive. The agency aspect is important ‘in assessing what a person can do in line with his or her conception of the good’¹³⁰.

Agency expands the horizons of concern beyond a person’s own well – being to include concerns such as slowing climate change or helping others. Thus, people can be active and creative, with the ability to act on behalf of their aspirations. Agency is related to other approaches that stress self – determination, authentic self –direction, autonomy, self – reliance, self –determination, empowerment, voice and so on. The strong collective desire for agency suggests that development processes should foster participation, public debate and democratic practice¹³¹. In Sen’s view, Agency is exercised with respect to goals the person values and has reason to value. It includes effective power as well as direct control and includes not just individual agency, but what one can do as a member of a group, collectively or political community. The agent’s responsibility for a state of affairs should be incorporated into his or her evaluation of it¹³².

¹²⁷ Sen, A.K.. (1993) ‘Capability and well – being’, in M. Nussbaum and A. Sen (eds) *The Quality of life*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 30.

¹²⁸ Sen, A. K. (1992) *Inequality Re-examined*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 31.

¹²⁹ Sen Amartya (1999) *Development as Freedom (1st edition)*, Oxford University Press, New York ,19.

¹³⁰ Sen, A. (1987) *Commodities and Capabilities*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 206.

¹³¹ Alkire, S., (2008), ‘Concepts and Measures of agency, *OPHI Working Paper 9*, University of Oxford, Oxford, 4-6.

¹³² Sen, A.K., 1985, ‘Well – Being, Agency and Freedom: The Dewey Lectures 1984’, *Journal of Philosophy*, vol 82, no 4, 169 – 221.

Sen's 'capability approach' puts across that an evaluation of an individual or social status should focus on one's real or substantive freedom to lead the life one finds valuable¹³³. Such kind of freedom is defined as an individual's capability. This very notion of having real freedom becomes quite difficult in dealing with the differential power relation between men and women. As highlighted by Hirdman, men are the superior beings and women are subordinates¹³⁴.

2.5.4. Martha Nussbaum's Capability Approach:

In addition to not being a theory of justice, one of the central features of the capability approach is that it refrains from making prescriptions about which valuable capabilities public policy should promote. As noted earlier, the development process should be assessed according to the extent to which it expands the 'capabilities that people have reason to choose and value'. Therefore the choices of relevant capabilities depend upon the underlying social concerns and values within a given society. Public reasoning in each society should determine which capabilities they wish to promote. There is no single method to identify the freedoms that people have reason to choose and value. Thus capability remains fundamentally incomplete. That is what Sen calls the 'fundamental and pragmatic reasons'¹³⁵ for incompleteness.

The philosopher Martha Nussbaum has dealt with the problem of incompleteness by proposing a list of central human capabilities that should constitute the evaluative space for public policy. She argues that, 'just as people can be taught not to want or miss the things their culture has taught them they should not or could not have, so too can (they) be taught not to value certain functioning as constituents of their good living'¹³⁶. She notes that one needs to go beyond the incompleteness of Sen's capability approach so that equal freedom for all can be respected.

¹³³ Iversen, Vegard, 2007, 'Intra – Household Inequality – A Challenge for the Capability Approach ?' in Bina Agarwal (ed) *Capabilities, Freedom, and Equality – Amartya Sen's Work from a Gender Perspective*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, p. 112.

¹³⁴ Berger, Prudence Woodford, 2007, 'Gender Mainstreaming – What is it (about) and should we continue doing it?' in Andrea Cornwall, Elizabeth Harrison (ed) *Feminisms in Development – Contradictions, Contestations and Challenges*, Zed Books, London, p. 128.

¹³⁵ Sen, A. K., 1992, *Inequality Re-examined*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 49.

¹³⁶ Nussbaum, M. (1988), 'Nature, Functioning and Capabilities: Aristotle on Political Distribution', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 6, supplementary volume, Oxford University Press, 175.

She grounds her version of the capability approach on what she calls an ‘internalize essentialist’ position. As human beings are recognised as human, there should be an essentialist basis for any view about what human life properly consists of and what deprives it of its full human character¹³⁷. Her central human capabilities list is as follows:-

Martha Nussbaum frames basic principles in terms of ten capabilities of women, i.e. real opportunities based on personal and social circumstances (Nussbaum, 2000, 78-79). The ten capabilities are-

- i) Being able to live to the end of human life,
- ii) Being able to have good health including good reproductive health, have proper nourishment with adequate food, with adequate shelter,
- iii) Being able to move freely with security against violent assault, sexual assault and domestic assault and child sexual abuse. Have opportunities for sexual satisfaction, having choice in case of reproduction.
- iv) Being able to think, imagine and reason with freedom of choice of religion, literature, music and so forth, having ability to have adequate education, lead a truly human life, being able to search for the ultimate meaning of life in one’s own way, have pleasurable experiences, having ability to avoid unnecessary pain.
- v) Being able to attach oneself to things and people, having ability to love those who love and care , to become sad in their absence, having ability to develop without fear, anxiety, abuse or neglect.
- vi) Being able to form a conception of good with critical reflection, having ability to conscience.
- vii) a) Being able to live towards others and to recognise with showing concern for others, to have the capacity for both justice and friendship.

¹³⁷ Alkire, S., 2016, ‘The Capability Approach and Well – being measurement for public policy’ in M.D. Adler and M. Fleurbaey (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Well- Being and Public Policy*, OUP, 615 – 644.

- b) Having the social bases of self respect, having ability to treat as a dignified being, having protection against discrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, caste, ethnicity, or nationality.
- c) Being able to work as a human being, having meaningful relationship of mutual recognition.
- viii) Having ability to live with other species like animals, plants and the world of nature.
- ix) Being able to laugh, involve in recreational activities and ability to play.
- x) a) Political – Being able to participate effectively in political choices that governs, ability to have political participation, ability to deliver free speech and able to have association.
- b) Material – Being able to hold property on equal basis with others, having the right to find a job on the basis of equality, having freedom from unwarranted search and seizure and right to non discrimination on the basis of sex.

These are the indicators of well being and development, which can help women to drive out from the margins. Women, who would not capable to be fit in these indicators, are forced to be stick on the margins of the core of the society.

2.6. Sustainable Development:

Sustainable Development is a composite area based activity, focusing on marginalised populations and the significance of its multiple components fluctuate according to local conditions, background, development and prevailing policy. Human resource development is the key to successfully achieving sustainable development. The United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development, 2005-2014, is very timely as it provides an indispensable opportunity to boost the concerned efforts at national, regional and global levels and mobilise the necessary resources to comprehensively

respond to the major challenges of education, public awareness and training in achieving sustainable development¹³⁸.

The term sustainable development was widely adopted by mainstream development agencies following the publication of 'Our Common Future' by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), also known as Brundtland Commission (1987). This was the outcome of the UN Summit on Environment at RIO and later on at Copenhagen. This was the initial concern of the idea of environmental protection and development.

Sustainable development is defined as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs'¹³⁹. It further stated that 'even the narrow notion of physical sustainability implies a concern for social equity between generations, a concern that most logically be extended to equality within each generation'¹⁴⁰. Sustainable development is a pattern of resource use that aims to meet not only in the present, but also for future generations. It can be seen that Sustainable Development (SD) ties together concern for the carrying capacity of natural systems with the social challenges facing humanity. An integrated and Holistic approach is needed to achieve the goals and address socio-economic issues.

For preserving natural resources Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), was set up in 1945. Its principle objectives were 'conservation and natural resources, raising levels of nutrition and standard of living, bettering the conditions of rural population, improving the efficiency of production of food and agriculture products and contributing to an expanding world economy.' The achievements of goals were not so successful in spite of praiseworthy objectives.

In the 1970's sustainability was employed to describe an economy in equilibrium with basic ecological support systems. Ecologists have pointed out to the 'limits of growth'

¹³⁸ Sinha, A.(2010) 'Sustainable Community Development' in Archana Sinha (ed) *Sustaining Communities Strategies for Community Development*, Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, 7-11.

¹³⁹ Brundtland Commission (1987), *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future*, UNO, New York, 41-42.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

and presented alternative of a steady state economy in order to address environmental concerns.

The field of sustainable development can be conceptually broken into three constituent parts:

1. Environment sustainability
2. Economic sustainability
3. Socio- political concerns

Sustainable Development does not focus solely on environmental issue. The United Nations 2005 World Summit Outcome Document (UNSOD) refers to the ‘interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars’ of sustainable development as economic development, social development, and environment protection.

The Indigenous people, through various international forums such as the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Convention on Biodiversity, have argued and put forth the fourth pillar as ‘Cultural’. The argument goes ‘...cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature’, it becomes ‘one of the roots of development understood not simply in terms of economic growth, but also as a means to achieve a more satisfactory, intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence’¹⁴¹. In this vision the cultural diversity is the fourth policy area of sustainable development (figure: 2.1.). Act 21 (Agenda 21) proposed by the Brundtland Commission 1987 identified three key building blocks to help development recognizing these interdependent pillars. They are information, integration and participation (figure: 2.2.). In Sustainable development everyone is user and information provider¹⁴². There should be co – ordination and participation into all development processes including decision making processes for achieving sustainable development.

¹⁴¹UNESCO (2001) Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, UNESCO, 4.

¹⁴² Lakra, Christopher (2010), ‘Poverty and Sustainable Development: Concepts, Issues, Concerns and Challenges’ in Archana Sinha (ed) ‘Sustaining Communities Strategies for Sustainable Community Development’, Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, 29 – 38.

Figure: 2.1. Four Pillars of Sustainable Development

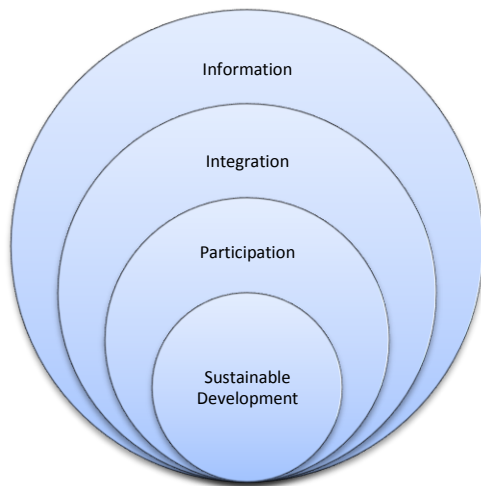


Source: Drawn by researcher on the basis of literature review

In the above figure it has been shown that how sustainable development is possible only when all four interdependent sustainability would be possible.

Sustainable Development can be realized if integration, information and participation can be possible as shown in the following diagram:-

Figure: 2.2. Three Key Building Blocks for Sustainable Development



Source: Developed by researcher on the basis of literature review

The above diagram clearly reveals that the sustainable development can be realised through Information, Integration and Participation.

There are great connection between female empowerment and sustainable development of livelihood in fisheries. Social recognition and upgrading of the women's roles are proposed as important elements for the transition from crisis to sustainable development in fisheries. The lack of fisher's organisation, integration and confidence to present institutions do not often allow community members to believe that somebody could do something for them in terms of development, rights, dignity or citizenship. The fact is that fisher's organisational structure even though old is not well developed, perhaps because it was originally based in authoritarian and corporatism¹⁴³.

2.7. Sustainable Livelihood Approach:

The term "Sustainable Livelihood" was first used as a development concept in the early 1990s. Sustainable Livelihood has been defined as a livelihood comprises people, their capabilities and their means of living including food, income and assets. Tangible assets are resources and stores and intangible assets are claims and access¹⁴⁴. A livelihood is environmentally sustainable when it maintains or enhances the local and global assets in which livelihoods depend and has net beneficial effects on other livelihoods. A livelihood is socially sustainable which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks and provide for future generations. Sustainable livelihood is a way of thinking about the objectives, scope and priorities for development in order to enhance progress in poverty elimination. The activities which are to be selected for Sustainable Livelihood Development are to be finalized through feasibility analysis considering the following components-

¹⁴³ Gasalla, Maria A. (2002), 'Women on the Water? The Participation of Women in Seagoing Fishing off South Eastern Brazil', paper prepared for the International Workshop on *Gender, Fisheries and Aquaculture: Social Capital and Knowledge for the transition towards Sustainable Use of Aquatic Eco – Systems*, European Commission's Directorate General for Research, Brussels 1- 10.

¹⁴⁴ Chambers, Robert and Gordon R. Conway (1991)'Sustainable rural livelihoods: practical concepts for the 21st century,' *IDS Discussion Paper 296*, Brighton, U.K., 1.

Ecological safety:— It should not have any adverse impact on the ecology and disturb the ecological balance.

Economic viability: – The gross input should be less than the gross output and thus it should generate a net profit.

Technical feasibility: – The technology required for the activity should not be very complicated. The local people should have the capacity to implement it as well as take care of their operation and maintenance at local level.

Social acceptability - Finally, the activity which would be selected should be in coherence with the social and cultural practices of the people.

The three concepts of capability, equity and sustainability are linked. Each is also both end and means, that is to say, each is seen as goal in itself, as an end and each is also seen as a means to good ends, to the extent that it can support the others. Linked together, capability, equity and sustainability present a framework or paradigm for development thinking which is both normative and practical.

i) Capability:

Within the generality of Sen's use of capability, there is a subset of livelihood capabilities that include being able to cope with stress and shocks and being able to find and make use of livelihood opportunities.

ii) Equity:

Equity can be measured in terms of relative income distribution. But in this theory Equity implies a less unequal distribution of assets, capabilities and opportunities and especially enhancement of those of the most deprived. It includes an end to discrimination against women, against minorities and against all who are weak, and an end to urban and rural poverty and deprivation.

iii) Sustainability:

Sustainability connotes self – sufficiency and an implicit ideology of long – term self restraint and self – reliance. It is used to refer to life styles which touch the earth lightly, to organic agriculture with low external inputs, to institutions which can raise their own revenue, to processes which are self supporting without subsidy. Socially, in the livelihood context, in the livelihood context, we will use sustainability in a more focused manner to mean the ability to maintain and improve livelihoods while maintaining or enhancing the local and global assets and capabilities on which livelihoods depend¹⁴⁵.

Sustainable Livelihood is an integrating concept which integrates capabilities, equity and sustainability. Capabilities are both an end and means of livelihood, a livelihood provides the support for the enhancement and exercise of capabilities (an end) and capabilities (a means) enable a livelihood to be gained. Equity is both an end and a means of livelihood. Any minimum definition of equity must include adequate and decent livelihoods for all (an end), and equity in assets and access are precondition (means) for gaining adequate and decent livelihoods. Sustainability too is both end and means of livelihood. Sustainable stewardship of resources is a value (or end) in itself, and it provides conditions (a means) for livelihoods to be sustained for future generations¹⁴⁶.

World commission on Environment and Development defined Sustainable livelihood as ‘adequate stocks and flows of food and cash to meet basic needs. Security refers to secure ownerships of, or access to, resources and income – earning activities, including reserves and assets to offset risk, ease shocks and meet contingencies. Sustainable refers to the maintenance or enhancement of resource productivity on a long – term basis. A household may be enabled to gain Sustainable Livelihood security in many ways through ownership of land, livestock or trees, rights to grazing, fishing, hunting or gathering,

¹⁴⁵ Chambers, Robert and Gordon R. Conway (1991) ‘Sustainable rural livelihoods: practical concepts for the 21st century,’ *IDS Discussion Paper 296*, Brighton, U.K.,7.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 8-9.

through stable employment with adequate remuneration, or through varieties of activities'¹⁴⁷.

In this report sustainable livelihood were seen as a means of serving the objectives of both equity and sustainability. Modifying this definition Chambers and Conway (1991), defines Sustainable Livelihood as also provider of the resources and conditions for the enhancement and exercise of capabilities. The definition is as follows:-

*'a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living, a livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide Sustainable Livelihood opportunities for the next generation, and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long term'*¹⁴⁸.

Sustainable Livelihood development approach aims to help people achieve lasting livelihood improvements measured. This, in turn helps to combat exclusion¹⁴⁹. Thus denial of social opportunities can be reduced. This approach recognises that the fishing communities including with other marginalised communities are also involved in other economic activities along with fisheries.

FAO, Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture (2015), frames five basic principles of Sustainable Livelihood, hold poverty focused development activities, are:-

- i. **People-centered:** Sustainable poverty elimination will be achieved only if external support focuses on people's lives, understands the differences between people and work with them in a way that is congruent with their current livelihood strategies, social environments and ability to adapt.

¹⁴⁷ World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) (1987) *Our Common Future*, Oxford University Press, United Kingdom, 2-5.

¹⁴⁸ Chambers, Robert and Gordan R. Conway (1991) 'Sustainable rural livelihoods: practical concepts for the 21st century,' *IDS Discussion Paper 296*, Brighton, U.K., 10.

¹⁴⁹ FAO, 2015, 'The Sustainable Livelihood Approach', *Dept of Fisheries and Aquaculture*, accessed on 06.03.2015, <http://www.fao.org/fishery/topic/14837/en>, 1.

- ii. **Responsive and Participatory:** Poor people themselves must be key actors in identifying and addressing livelihood priorities, and 'outsiders' need to adopt processes that ensure they listen and respond.
- iii. **Multi-level:** The scale of the challenge of poverty elimination is enormous, and can only be achieved by working at multiple levels, ensuring that micro-level activity informs the development of policy and an effective enabling environment and that macro-level structures and processes support people to build upon their own strengths.
- iv. **Conducted in partnership:** Partnership with both the public and the private sector including civil society/ non- governmental organisations.
- v. **Sustainability:** There are four key dimensions to sustainability - economic, institutional, social and environmental sustainability. A balance must be found among them; and dynamic: external support must recognize the dynamic nature of livelihood strategies, respond flexibly to change in people's situation, and develop longer-term commitments of support¹⁵⁰.

Thus, Sustainable Livelihood Approach is very much helpful in combating marginalisation and denial of deprivation as well. As women are the main agents of Development, only they can make the better world. For uplifting the condition of women of vulnerable community, many more successful integrated development process need to be promoted. Political cooperation and commitment, social cooperation and equal opportunities are needed for a Sustainable gender friendly society.

2.8. Sustainable Community Development Approach:

Community development begins in the everyday lives of local people with sustainable change. It is founded on a process of empowerment and participation. Empowerment involves a form of critical education that encourages people to question their reality. This is the basis of collective action and is built on principles of participatory democracy. In a process of action and reflection, community development grows through a diversity of local projects that address issues faced by people in community. Through campaigns,

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 1-2.

networks and alliances, this action develops a local global reach that aims to transform the structures of oppression that diminish local lives¹⁵¹.

The idea of Sustainable Community Development improves the quality of life within communities. Sustainable Communities share common ideas and concerns, that is, economic security, environmental protection and social injustice. Gender justice is an integral to development and building sustainable communities where justice and peace prevail.

Empowerment can be by improving women's situations, by reducing inequality, increasing the power and status of women and by positively interacting with other factors that affect health – improve women's health. Women's education and basic health care are the key factors for overall development which leads the society towards Sustainable Development. Women who feel individually empowered are more likely to participate and take action in their communities and community participation builds community capacity, a core of sustainable community development¹⁵².

Development programmes should cover various aspects of development including social, economical and environmental for Sustainable Communities Development. Primarily, community development aims to promote sustainable living. The term Community development caters to both urban as well as rural population. Under this community-centric process, factors relating to social and economic development are mixed up to support and strengthen ecological, social, cultural and economical wellbeing of communities. Improvement of social condition is focused upon and several economic opportunities are generated in the larger interest of communities¹⁵³.

¹⁵¹ Ledwith, M. (2005) *Community Development A Critical Approach*, Policy Press, UK, 1.

¹⁵² Chhabra, S. (2010) 'Transformative Concept of Women's Health and Empowerment for Community Development' in Archana Sinha (ed) *Sustaining Communities Strategies for Community Development*, Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, 235.

¹⁵³ Sinha, A. (2010) 'Sustainable Community Development' in Archana Sinha (ed) *Sustaining Communities Strategies for Community Development*, Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, 4 -5.

Sustainable Communities are:-

- a) Environmentally Sound:- Decision – making focuses on reducing the impacts of population growth and development on natural resources and the environment.
- b) Economically Productive:- Community members make local capital investments that will sustain local human and natural resources and yield adequate financial returns to those investments.
- c) Socially Just: - Equitable access to resources and decision – making processes foster the distribution of foods and benefits across all sectors to the community¹⁵⁴.

It has been proved that slower population growth and investments in reproductive health, education, women’s empowerment and gender equality reduce poverty. Impoverished people are deprived of services, resources and opportunities, as well as income. Investing in people and empowering individual women and men with education, equal opportunities could create the conditions to allow the poor to come out of the poverty trap¹⁵⁵.

Social justice including Gender justice, Economic Security, Environmental Protection and a commitment to the welfare of future generations are lying at the core of community development. Thus Sustainable Community Development is the process for the denial of deprivation and help to increase in quality of Life.

2.9. Women in Development Approach (WID):

Women empowerment is an important tool for social development and this can be achieved when the society recognises women as one among the social partners, provided

¹⁵⁴ Swisher, M.E. and Monagham, K.N. (2014 c Revised) *Sustainable Community Development, Gainesville*, University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences,1-3, retrieved from <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/cd021>.

¹⁵⁵ Sinha, A.(2010) ‘Sustainable Community Development’ in Archana Sinha (ed) *Sustaining Communities Strategies for Community Development*, Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, 6.

them equal rights, facilitated them with equal education, health and out of all these allow them to participate equally and effectively¹⁵⁶.

A dominant theoretical strand focused on 'Women in Development' (WID). Caroline Moser created one of the most influential frameworks by elevating gender roles and gender needs, as NGOs, planners, international development agencies and governments tried to understand and create the practical mechanisms of change. Moser identified five basic approaches to WID that ultimately relate to female well – being, each one revealing a fundamental assumption about gender, class and social change (adapted from the Royal Tropical Institute 1996). Each approach reflected the gender paradigm of the moment:

- a) **Welfare:** This was the approach in the early days of development (1950-70), when the goal was to help women become better mothers. Females were considered as passive beneficiaries of development in their reproductive role, as recipients of food aid and programme to reduce malnutrition or improve family planning.
- b) **Equity:** This approach triggered by the UN Women's Decade, redefined women as active participants in development. The first WID movement stressed gender equality and equal participation in society and development processes.
- c) **Anti – poverty:** The less threatening second WID approach from 1970 focussed more on women's productivity and less on gender equity. Women's poverty stems in this framework from poverty in general, not from gender subordination or oppression. NGOs like this approach, which emphasizes supporting women in micro – enterprise income generation.
- d) **Efficiency:** This WID approach (from 1980s) has turned the paradigm upside down instead of women benefiting from development; women are seen as directly engineering change through their economic contributions and productivity. Participation means equity and equity means productivity. This model assumed elasticity of women's time – which women would continue to function as full –

¹⁵⁶ Sinha, Debotosh (2005), 'Empowering Women : A Catalyst in Social Development' in Narayana Reddy, V., Vijay Kumar, S. and Nalini, B. (eds) *Women in Development Challenges and Achievements*, Serial Publications, New Delhi, 7 – 18.

time homemakers and mothers without compensatory wages, benefits or support from publicly supported services (e.g. day care).

- e) **Empowerment:** In the most recent approach, articulated by Third World Women, development should empower women through greater self – reliance in the context of gender subordination and colonial and neo – colonial subordination.

The strength of Moser’s framework is that it looks behind technical planning and development strategies to uncover the entrenched assumptions and fundamental conflicts of interest that divide the world’s women¹⁵⁷.

2.10. Conclusion:

Women in Indian society are marginalised and systematically excluded from the main course of the society. Since the dawn of civilisation, the position of the women was decided by the economical, political, social and cultural forces, when the nation is economically developed, politically strong, socially firm and culturally awakened, only then the position of women in society have been positively reversed. Thus the status of women has been decided by the external and internal factors.

Theories of marginalisation have been broadly discussed about the overall scenario of deprivation of human being from the weaker section of the society. Being marginalised in itself is the structural violence of the society. It has been the main cause of agitations, struggles and direct violence. Women are the main sufferer of structural violence that leads her towards socially excluded category, which is the ultimate consequence of marginalisation.

In the present chapter, it has seen that how the position of marginalisation and exclusion are addressed by using the Capability Approach, given by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum. Following this approach, other approaches like Sustainable Development Approach for holistic development, Sustainable Livelihood Approach for livelihood

¹⁵⁷ Fluehr – Lobban, Carolyn and Janet Mancini Billson (2005), ‘A critique of social change theories’ in Billson, Janet Mancini and Carolyn Fluehr (eds) *Female Well – Being Toward a global theory of social change*, Zed Books, London, 59 – 60.

development and Sustainable Community Development Approach for community development and Women in Development Approach can also be used to analyse the for rising human capabilities and reducing the level of marginalisation and exclusion of the chosen communities. It also has been seen that Marginalisation and Development are the two sides of a same coin. Both are the dynamic processes which prevail parallel in the society and create a circle of interdependence.

Chapter 3

Determinants of Marginalisation and Development of Women in Fishing Community in India: with Special Reference to West Bengal

3.1. Introduction:

The present chapter focuses on the determinants of marginalisation and the process of development through which the women of fishing communities are excluded from the society and inclusion in the same. Besides, the chapter also focuses on the marginalised condition of women of fishing communities in different fishing pockets of West Bengal through case studies.

Through the Human Development Index (HDI) 2013, 2015, it has been revealed that women are one of the most excluded and discriminated segments of the population in the society. Patriarchy is at the core of the structural element in discriminating women. Control of women's reproductive abilities and sexuality is placed in men's hands. Patriarchy limits women's ownership and control of property and other economic resources, including the products of their own labour. Women's mobility is constrained, and their access to education and information hindered. Over the years, it has been recognised that the experiences of the majority of women are grounded in both poverty and patriarchy. Both these feed into each other and subject women to exclusion and exploitation¹.

Women are suffering exclusion from social, political, economic and religious realms². Discrimination and exclusion marginalise women from full participation in the social, economic, political and cultural life of the country. Exclusion, discrimination and identity formation are both individual and collective processes. Further, exclusion and discrimination take different form in different societies. Moreover, they adapt and change themselves according to the changing social reality. Hence, to state that in the modern, liberal society and polity, exclusion and discrimination are reduced or eliminated seem to

¹Chakravorty, T. (2014c) 'Women of India : Social Exclusion Perspective', in *Reyono journal of interdisciplinary studies*, Vol.3, Issue 1, 101.

² Chakravorty, T. (2014b), 'Role of Hindu Code Bill between exclusion and inclusion of women in India,' in *Sanshodhan*, Vol. 3, 2013-2014, 130-133.

be not in tune with reality. In the same vein to deny the scope of identity formation of even the most discriminated social group also seems to be unrealistic.

In almost every social category women form a subset that is often disadvantaged, discriminated against and marginalised in most spheres of life as compared to men within the same category. Such marginalisation and subordination is reflected in wide male – female disparities in virtually all aspects of social well – being, at every scale from the local to the national and international³.

In a caste based stratified society in India, with persisting economic backwardness and social inequality, marginalisation of a vast section of population has remained attached to its social structure. Herein the interrelated dynamics of denial, deprivation, insecurities, social hierarchies and political dominations have generated rampant poverty, unemployment. Illiteracy, ill – health, and downward mobility of vast section of population.

Women are the most excluded and discriminated segment of the population. The process of marginalisation and exclusion of women can be seen at various levels i.e., in family, society, workplace and all spheres of life. However, women of fishing communities are found to be more excluded than the other socially excluded groups if analysed from various parameters.

The process of exclusion, discrimination and marginalisation takes place both in individual and collective plane. Moreover, the degree of exclusion and discrimination has different dimensions in different societies. They adopt and change themselves according to the changing social reality. Feminist scholars argue that women are marginalised due to the existing patriarchal structure of society. In Indian society, sexuality, reproduction and social production are regulated by patriarchal values expressed through specific cultural metaphors.

Fishing communities in India are quite widespread. Fishing communities residing in different parts of India are facing lots of problems. The nature of the problem that the

³ Dutta, Anindita, Sinha, Sachidanand (1997), 'Gender Disparities in Social Wellbeing: An Overview', *Indian journal of Gender Studies*, Vol-4, Issue 1, 51-65.

fishing communities who are depended on inland water fisheries face are different from the problem faced by the fishing communities in coastal area.

In the context of women of fishing community in India, they have to participate in income generating activities which has created a kind of triple burden for them. As a women in general, as a helping hand within the four walls of the home and as a women from the marginalised community such as women from fishing community who is forced to look for alternative source of livelihood due to her poor and vulnerable status.

In India, women constitute around 48% of the total population and comprise one-third of the labour force. The socio-economic development of this vast population, therefore, presumes great importance in any developmental strategy.

Most of the women play secondary role in fishing. They mend nets, sell fish door to door, involve in processing fish and assisting their male counterparts in fishing related activities. Women of such community are still quite behind of their men counterparts in the area of education and economic empowerment in India. They usually have less access to medical care, property ownership, credit training, and in employment. They are far less likely to be politically active and far more likely to be victims of domestic violence compared to men. Despite of urbanisation and development women of fishing community is still double marginalised and excluded.

The people belonging to fishing community are, by and large, not only economically weak in terms of earning and availability of work, the majority of them are not able to procure the minimum nourishment and the conditions of their women are worse than their male counterparts. So fishing community is a marginalized community and the women of this community are in margins within it in India.

3.2. Fishing Communities in India:

Fishing is not a new practice in India. Evidence of fishing was found among the prehistoric artefacts⁴. In the artefacts of Harappan and Indus valley civilisation (Bagchi, 1955, 66 and Allchin and Allchin 1982) and 'Ashokan' epigraphical materials (Hora, 1950, 43 and Thapar 1961). Religious texts also mention about fish and fishing⁵.

India has a wide coastline of 8118km, an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 2.02 million sq km along with inland water resources in the form of rivers and canals, reservoirs, lakes, tanks and ponds and with over 2,200 species of indigenous and exotic fish and shell fish thus offering tremendous scope for fish production which contribute significantly to National Gross Domestic Product, Food and nutritional security, livelihood and poverty reduction. These resources are at different levels of utilisation, some are over – fished while certain others are still remained unutilized or underutilized. However, the sector is passing through a difficult transition encompassing biological, environmental, economic and social changes. As consequences of them, some of the fisheries resources particularly coastal, riverine and lake fisheries are now overfished resource. Decline in catch has negatively impacted the livelihoods of a large number of traditional fishing communities. However, the fishery sector has an important place in the socio economic development of the country⁶

The term fishery commonly refers to aspects of harvesting and managing aquatic organisms. It refers specifically to a species being harvested, the methods of harvesting, or the ecosystem from which the animals are harvested. Fisheries are not limited to animals classified as fish but can include marine mammals, crustaceans, molluscs and algae. Marine fisheries are usually managed as stocks, groups considered to be distinct units, typically distinct populations.

⁴ Sarkar, N. K. (1984), 'A Species of *Unicapsula* Davis 1924 (Myxozoa) Infecting a Fish of the Southern Coast of India', *International Journal Academics Ichthyol.*, 5 (1-2), 187.

⁵ Purkayastha, P. and S. Gupta (2012), 'Traditional Fishing Practices, Fishermen and Livelihood – A Case Study of Chatla Flood Plain Area With Special Reference To The Village Irongmara, Barak Valley, Assam' in *IJED*, Volume 9, No. 1 (Jan –June 2012), 119-129.

⁶ Kumar, Dilip (2007), 'Community Empowerment For Fisheries Co-Management', in Umesh C Goswami ed. *Natural and Anthropogenic Hazards on Fish and Fisheries*, Narendra Publishing House, Delhi, 71-75.

Fisheries management refers to the regulation and monitoring of a fishery, including setting harvest limits, developing management plans, and protecting fish habitat. In recent years, fisheries management has been applied broadly by management agencies to include scientific, social, political and economic considerations.

A person who catches fishery organisms is termed a fisher, replacing the traditional term fisherman for increased inclusiveness. Fishers are typically distinguished as commercial (fishing to sell) and recreational (fishing for sport). Subsistence fisher harvest fish for consumption by them and their families or local community. They are often distinguished by the use of customary or traditional fishing practices. The majority of subsistence fishers are members of indigenous groups or inhabitants of developing countries or small island nations.

Smaller communities tend to make better decisions, in the community based management, to sustain fisheries because each person believes they have a vested long term interest in the health of the resources⁷.

Fishery plays an important role in supporting livelihoods worldwide and also forms an important source of diet for over one billion people. In India it is estimated that 12 million people are directly engaged in fishing and about 60 million are exclusively dependent on it for a living⁸. India is the second largest fish producing country after China with the contribution of 5.43% in global fish production⁹.

Fishing communities in India are not homogenous, as they belong to different castes. These communities have their distinct social, cultural governance structures and traditional practices, depending on the coast or river bank, where they inhabit¹⁰. Most

⁷ Beckman, W. Daniel (2013), 'Marine Fisheries: Overharvest and Conservation', in *Marine Environmental Biology and conservation*, Jones & Bartlett learning, Missouri State University, USA, 349-398.

⁸ Gogoi, B., Kachari, A., Dutta, R., A. Darshan and D. N. Das (2015), 'Fishery Based Livelihood Approaches and Management of Fishery Resources in Assam, India' in *IJFAS*. Vol. 2, No. 4, (2015), 327 – 330, retrieved from www.fisheriesjournal.com and accessed on 02.05.16.

⁹ Ghorai, S.K., Bera, S.K., Debanjan Jana and Somnath Mishra (2014) ' Status of the largest dry fish market of East India: A study on Egra Regulated Dry Fish Market, Egra, Purba Medinipur, West Bengal' in *International Journal of Current Research and Academic Review*, Volume 2, No 5 (May 2014), 54, retrieved from www.ijcrar.com accessed on 15.04.16.

¹⁰ ICSF, *Fisheries and fishing communities in India*, retrieved from indianfisheries.icsf.net/en/page/613-Fishing%20Communities.html accessed on 25.02.2016 at 10.00am

communities have evolved their own management systems over time to regulate human interaction with the resource especially when large number of people bank on a limited resource to avoid conflicts. The evolution of traditional management system depended on the resource and the environment in which the resource existed and the interactions between people to extract these resources¹¹. Following are some important fishing castes residing in the major fisheries oriented states (including inland and coastal fisheries) of India:-

Andhra Pradesh: - Jalaris, Pattapu, Gangaputra, Jalkshatriya.

Assam: - Mallah, Kaibarta, Malakar, Nmashudra, Jhalo Malo.

Bihar: - Bind, Dhimar, Godia, Gond, Nishad, and Manjhi.

Goa: - Nayaka

Gujarat: - Bhoi, Kirat, Keer, Kewat.

Kerala: - Meenegara, Manigara, Bhoi, Muleya.

Karnataka: - Ambiga, Bharika, Bhoi, Gangaputra, Kharvi.

Maharashtra: - Bhoi, Dhinwar Bhoi, Mahadevkoli, Malhar, Mauzi.

Orissa: - Jalia, Bhui, Dewar, Kaibarta, Malhar, Mallah.

Tamil Nadu: - Bostha, Paravar, Kulam, Bosthar.

Uttar Pradesh: - Dhimar, Kharwar, Kewat, Nishad

West Bengal: - Gond, Malo, Kevat, Mallah, Kaibarta, Halder¹².

Besides traditional fisheries, they are also involved into various activities such as Boat owner associations, trade Unions, Co operative societies, associations based on gear type, self help groups, etc. There has been significant change over the last couple of decades in

¹¹Kurien, John (1981), 'Socio Economic Conditions of Traditional Fishermen', *CMFRI Bulletin*, 30, 35 – 53.

¹² Retrieved from www.gangaputra.com and accessed on 25.10.2015.

India. State policy has been directed at increasing exploitation of fish resource through the use of large mechanized craft and gear combinations, leading to the centralization of fisheries and the absence of state policy of mechanized fishing activities in inshore waters. This has resulted in the marginalization of traditional fishing communities who either sale their labour in fishing vessels owned by others or moved to non-fishing related occupations. As men from the fishing communities in the region moved from being producers to labourers, women also began to be displaced from their traditional occupations as post harvest workers and processors. Which lead them towards deprivation of knowledge with respect to fishing technology.

The Quality of life is fast eroding in fishing communities. Poor sanitation, non availability and quality of potable water, poor ventilation with firewood usage, lower sex ratio, violence against women, lacking of state support in Health and education impacts on health totally. Though massive amount of money has been invested on population control programme, TB, Leprosy and AIDS control programme. A survey conducted in fishing villages in Rathnagiri, in Maharashtra, showed the occurrence of epidemics and women suffering from gynaecological problems due to unhygienic living conditions¹³.

As Martha Nussbaum mentioned in her Capability Approach that for the overall development of women some parameters should be fulfilled for growing the capabilities of women which lead them towards qualitative life based on real opportunities including personal and social circumstances.

3.3. Women in Fisheries:

*I have only one request,
I do not ask for money, although I have need of it,
I do not ask for meat. I have only one request,
And all I ask is that you remove the road block from my path'*¹⁴

¹³ Mohite, S.A. (2003), 'Role of Fisherwomen in the field of fisheries with special reference to Konkan Coast', Survey Report Conducted by College of Fisheries, Shivgaon, Rathnagiri, Maharashtra.

¹⁴ Samantha, R.K., (1995), 'Improving women farmer's access to extension services', in Samantha, R.K.(ed.), *Women in agriculture – perspective, issues and experiences*, M. D. Publications, New Delhi, 1-23.

The above lines reflect the marginalised condition of the women of fishing communities. This is a plight of a poor women who does not want to have good foods, good clothes. She just wants to remove the hurdles, which restrict her to go ahead for development. Fish and Fisheries are important sector of most of the developing and developed countries of the world. Women play a vital role in fisheries related task. The status of women from a vulnerable section of the society such as fishing community is more precarious than any other community.

In Bangladesh, women are a great contributor to the fishing economy, either directly by harvesting, processing and marketing or indirectly by providing vital extra income, food crops and a lot of supporting activities that ensure the well being of the family. In spite of being all of these there is a great lack of proper health care facilities. Unequal power relationships between men and women hinder women to get access to whatever health service is available¹⁵.

Women's involvement in shrimp cultivation is not a recent phenomenon in Bangladesh. Poor women living in coastal regions of Bangladesh have been traditionally engaged both in fisheries and agriculture for a long time. Women and children do various types of work related to shrimp production. Most women and children of the study area maintain their livelihood by collecting shrimp seeds, preparing *gher* (chambers for storing sea water) as day labourers, clearing the *shaowla* (algae) and working in the processing plant. It is mostly the poor women who are working in the shrimp sector¹⁶.

During peak periods of shrimp seed collection (locally known as *Ghone*), women spend the entire night collecting seeds. Shrimp seed collection starts from the month of *Boishakh* (mid April) and peaks from the month of *Jaishtho* (mid May). This seed collection continues through the month of *Bhadro* (mid September) when the numbers of seed collected start falling. The women and children spend early dawn hours or the late evening catching the shrimp seeds from the rivers, canals, etc. During the full moon the seed availability increases and collectors work any hours that they are available. The

¹⁵ Halim, Sadeka (2004), 'Marginalisation or Empowerment? Women's involvement in shrimp cultivation and shrimp processing plants in Bangladesh', in Kazi Tabarak Hossain (eds.), *Women, Gender and discrimination*, University of Rajshahi, 2.

¹⁶ Ibid, 3.

gher owners prefer women workers to male workers. It is because women could be paid less than the male workers and usually women never resist such exploitation¹⁷.

In Nigeria, fishing communities residing in villages located at the bank of Imo and Benin river, facing the problem of water supply in the villages. There are very few wells in the villages and the water from these wells is of a bad quality and cannot be used for drinking or cooking. For these purposes women have to paddle one or one and half hour each way from Okoroete settlement to Okoroete village where there is a little stream with 'good' water¹⁸.

In south eastern Brazil, social recognition and upgrading of the women's roles are proposed as important elements for the transition from crisis to sustainable development in fisheries. The lack of fisher's organisation, integration and confidence to present institutions do not often allow community members to believe that somebody could do something for them in terms of development, rights, dignity or citizenship. The fact is that fisher's organisational structure even though old is not well developed, perhaps because it was originally based in authoritarian and corporativism¹⁹.

In Africa, it has long been recognized that women are the primary users and potential stewards of many natural resources that provide the means for basic survival. For example, women are charged with 80% of the food security and 90% of the water security in rural and coastal communities in the country. With regard to coastal communities specifically, marine species provide food for billions and jobs for hundreds of millions of people. 92% of the world's fisher folk are small- scale fishers working to feed families and local communities. As in other communities, women are central to food security in fishing villages around the world²⁰. In addition to providing food, women

¹⁷ Ibid, 3 - 4

¹⁸ Ijff, A.M. (1990), 'Socio-Economic conditions in Nigerian fishing communities based on studies along the Benin and Imo river estuaries', in IDAF, Working Paper No. 31,FAO/Danida/Norway.

¹⁹ Gasalla, Maria A. (2002), 'Women on the Water? The Participation of Women in Seagoing Fishing off South Eastern Brazil', paper prepared for the International Workshop on *Gender, Fisheries and Aquaculture: Social Capital and Knowledge for the transition towards Sustainable Use of Aquatic Eco – Systems*, European Commission's Directorate General for Research, Brussels, 1-10.

²⁰ Mathews, Elizabeth et. al (2012), *A Gender Perspective on Securing Livelihoods and Nutrition in Fish – Dependent Coastal Communities*, Report to the Rockefeller foundation from Wildlife Conservation Society, Bronx, New York, 13.

collect fuel for energy in mangroves, rely on plants and herbs for medicine from coastal forests, and use coastal resources to support the economic stability of families and communities from both agriculture and fishing activities. Because their social roles and responsibilities require them to rely heavily on the coastal goods and services that are provided by the natural world, women are disproportionately impacted by fisheries collapse and the degradation of other coastal natural resources. Despite the vital importance of marine life to human well-being and economic development, marine species face a multitude of threats, all of which are derived from human activity²¹.

Despite their reliance on farmland, forests and fisheries for survival and livelihoods, the unique information that women have regarding resource use and management, and the potential stewardship role that they can play, women are not systematically engaged in the planning and implementation of natural resource management and fishing activities. To ensure the sustainability of poverty alleviation and natural resource management efforts in vulnerable rural ecosystems, women must be engaged in planning and implementation and they must share the benefits of management outcomes. The engagement of women is particularly important in coastal communities in all over the world²².

Women represent almost 50% of the total workforce engaged in fisheries around the world, and they have generally been overlooked in marine conservation and fisheries management, particularly in developing countries. In fact, they are often omitted from the conservation and resource management process. While the omission of women from planning, implementing, and monitoring of conservation initiatives is sometimes in accordance with cultural norms, the majority of the time this omission is simple oversight. In instances where cultural norms may appear prohibitive, research and best practices have shown that these cultural norms are usually adaptive and accommodate the needs, ideas, and support of women's engagement in natural resource management²³.

²¹ Ibid,13.

²² Ibid,13.

²³ Ibid, 14.

In India, fishing communities in general tend to rank lower in standard indicators of human development and available evidence suggests that they are faced with a deteriorating quality of life, which certainly adds to the burdens of women to sustain life within the household²⁴.

In all traditional fishing communities in India, the sexual division of labour is very clear cut with the men doing the harvesting and the women doing the post harvesting work. Both men and women are generally involved in the pre harvest activity preparing the nets and tackle for work. Women also prepare the food for long trips beside all the service they render to the men and the family. With this division of labour, women have access to markets and are also in control of cash as it is they who convert the fish into money. This access to markets and the world outside, also gives the women a wider perspective as they relate to the other vendors in markets, but with other kinds of people through consumer interaction. This active and participatory role that women play in traditional communities is rendered invisible as it does not give women a greater say in decision – making either in the home or in the community. These communities have been very patriarchal for several generations in India and the fact that the communities are also very religious, very patriarchal religious norms have governed the social life in the communities²⁵.

In TamilNadu, women engage themselves in seaweed collection in addition to the traditional jobs of fish curing, marketing, net making and prawn seed collection. Salt-pans are another major sector, which employs a lot of women in TamilNadu, where the ratio of women to men is 4:1. In Andhra Pradesh, the main occupation of women include collecting fish, and shells in addition to their contribution in fish drying, curing, marketing, shrimp processing and net making. In Maharashtra women play a major role in fish marketing and control the entire fisheries economy revolving around Mumbai. In Gujarat women mostly do the handling and processing activities. In Lakshadweep,

²⁴ Nayak, Nalini (2005) 'Sharpening the interlinkages: towards feminist perspectives of livelihood in coastal communities', paper presented in a seminar on *Women's Livelihoods in Coastal Communities: Management of the Environment and Natural Resources*, Organised by The Institute of Social Studies Trust (ISST) Economical Resource Centre, United Theological College, Millers Road, Bangalore, June 6, 2005, 2, retrieved from 182.71.188.10:8080/jspui/bitstream/123456789/52/1Bangalore%20%20Coastal%20Communities.pdf, accessed on 10.04.16.

²⁵ Ibid.

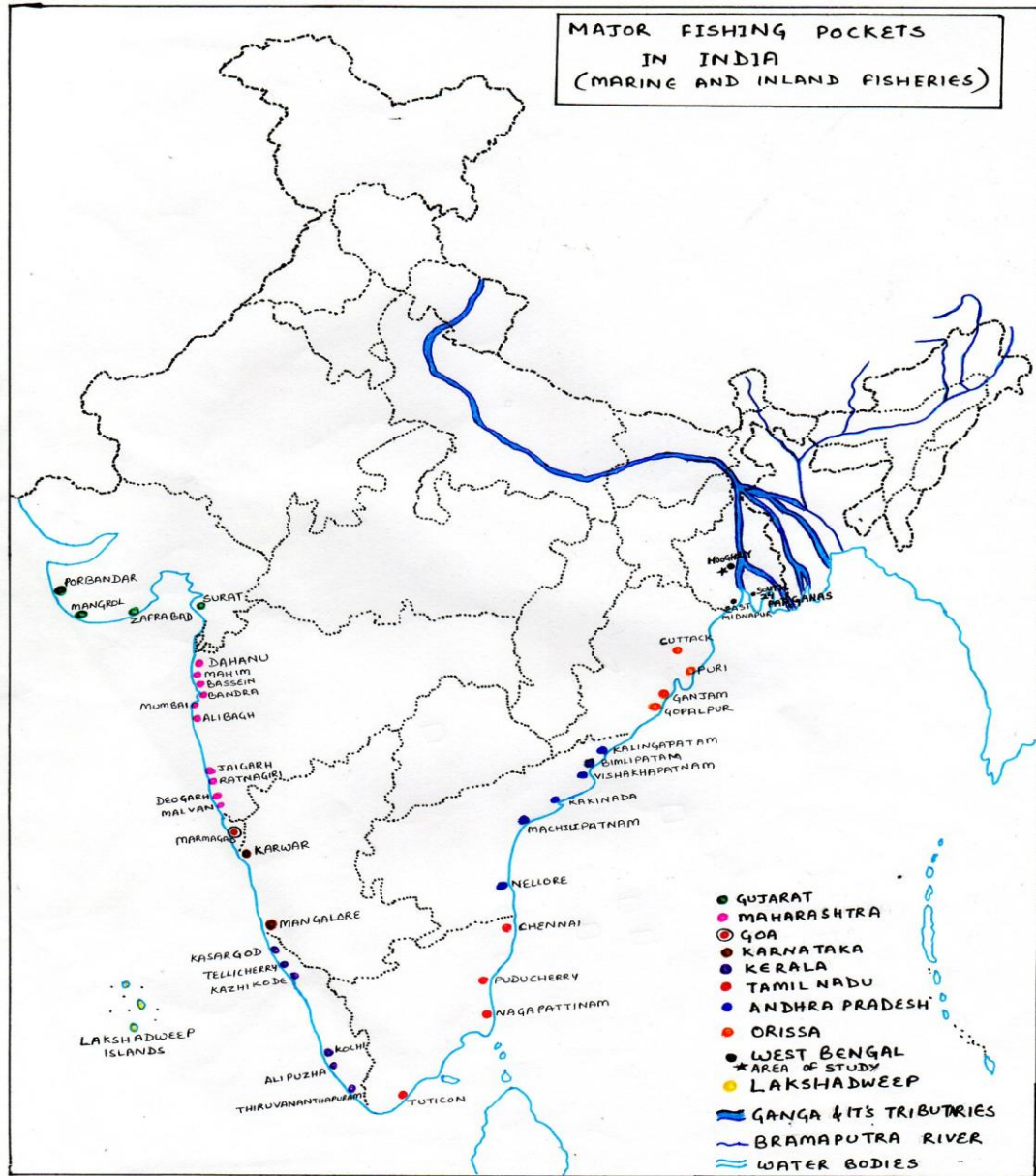
particularly Minicoy, the major fishery products known as masmin, riha, and akru of tuna are produced mainly by women²⁶.

However, the overall structural changes in the marine fisheries sector brought about by mechanization, extensive use of ice in local markets and export oriented development efforts have dislodged a good proportion of women from employment sectors like fish drying, curing, dry fish trade and net making. The scope of providing alternate employment for more women in the sector and thereby invigorating their socio-economic progress as well as the growth of marine fishery sector remains unexplored (ibid).

In India, there are several fishing pockets based on marine and inland fisheries. In the following rough map all major marine fisheries pocket have been shown including the major inland water bodies on which fisher folks are depended for their livelihood. The following rough map has been drawn to introduce the location on the basis of available data.

²⁶ Ashaletha, S. et.al., (2002), 'Changing roles of Fisherwomen of India – Issues and Perspectives', Proceedings of International Conference on *Women in Fisheries*, 1-23, accessed on 12.5.2014 <http://eprints.cmfri.org.in/5646>.

Map: 3.1. Major Fishing Pockets in India



Source: Drawn by researcher on the basis of field visits and website www.mapsofindia.com accessed on 26.07.16.

In the above map the major fishing pockets have been shown which includes marine fisheries based on coastal states of the country and inland fisheries includes fisheries based on river Ganga and its tributaries, which covers the study area located in West Bengal, Hooghly, along with inland fisheries depending on Brahmaputra River.

3.4. Fisheries Profile of West Bengal:

West Bengal is one of the maritime states in the Country located within 21°38'-27° 10' N(Lat.) and 85°38'-89°50'E (Long) with an area of 87, 853sq. km. Bestowed with all types of fisheries resources of immense potentially spread over the State from the south in marine jurisdiction in the Bay of Bengal to the North with the cold water region at the base of the Himalayas. It is considered to be the nature's best boon to provide the scope for development in the sector through different disciplines and directions of the fisheries economic activities. There is about 3.2 million fisher folk in which 1.3 million is female population out of 91.3 million human populations. The state ranks first in fish seed production in the country by producing 16717 million seeds in the year 2014-15. After Andhra Pradesh the state is the second largest fish producer state in the country by producing 16.17 lakh ton fish²⁷.

West Bengal has a coastline of 157.5 km and covers mainly the districts of South and North 24 Parganas and Purba Medinipur²⁸. Purba Medinipur district has the longest coastline of 68 km. The coastal area and the river banks are the home of some of the poorest people, living in some of the least served and remote areas of the state.

There are 1237 marine fishing villages in West Bengal coast. The total marine fisher population of the State as per Marine Census 2010 was 3, 80,138.

There are 7 Fishing Harbours viz. Shankarpur – Phase – 1&II, Petuaghat, Sultanpur, Kakdwip, Mayagolinir Ghat and Freserganj and 78 Landing Centres in the State. About 9800 Fishing Boats (3650 nos Motorised Non – Mechanical, 1696 nos Motorised Mechanical, 4454 nos Non – Motorised) have been registered in West Bengal. Gill Net is the most dominated Gear. Closed season in West Bengal starts from 16th April to 31st

²⁷Government of West Bengal (2016), Handbook of Fisheries Statistics, 2014 – 2015, Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture, Aquatic Resources and Fishing Harbours, Kolkata, 82.

²⁸ Ghorai, S.K., Bera, S.K., Debanjan Jana and Somnath Mishra (2014) ' Status of the largest dry fish market of East India: A study on Egra Regulated Dry Fish Market, Egra, Purba Medinipur, West Bengal' in *International Journal of Current Research and Academic Review*, Volume 2, No 5 (May 2014), 54 – 65, retrieved from www.ijcrar.com accessed on 15.04.16.

May for 47 days. 53 nos of Khunti at two districts viz. South 24 Paragnas and East Midnapur also serves as secondary Fish landing Center and Fish Drying Center²⁹.

Fish is an important part of the regular diet and is a cheap source of protein for the peoples of West Bengal. About 78% of total fish catch is consumed in fresh condition, 6% is used as dry fish and rest is used as frozen fish. Indian dry fish export contributes 8% of all form of fish exports and earned 754 crores during 2012 – 2013. The nutritional quality of dried fish remains intact, sometimes retain higher quality standards compared to fresh fish³⁰. West Bengal, is the only state in India, where fish have been cultivated in every kind of water bodies like brackish water, sweet water, sewage water and marine water as well. Fish are consumed in different forms in the state as fresh water fish, marine fish, dried fish, fish seed and shrimp.

Marine fish drying is very common in the all coastal areas of India. In West Bengal this practice is prevalent in North and South 24 Paraganas and East Midnapur districts. There is a great demand of dried fish in national and International markets. Practice of drying fish plays an important role in generating employment of coastal poor people. In this process and production chain people add relatively more values and getting very low profit due to lack of awareness, interruption of middlemen, lack of knowledge and technical skills, lack of market access, etc.

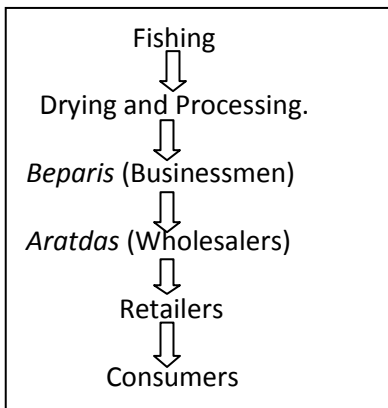
Egra regulated dry fish market, East Medinipur, West Bengal, is the largest regulated dry fish market of West Bengal. Different kinds of dried fish from all dry fish processing area of coastal West Bengal (Digha Mohana, Sankarpur, Jaldakhuti, Saula veri junput, Sagar Island) and Odisha usually come to this market. These dried fish later supplied to different markets such as Assam, Siliguri, Odisha, Bihar and some other parts of India and abroad. The common dry fish traded in this market are patia, lahra, tapra, vola, ruli,

²⁹Government of West Bengal (2012 – 2013), *Annual Report*, Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture, Aquatic Resources and Fishing Harbours,69.

³⁰ Ghorai, S.K., Bera, S.K., Debanjan Jana and Somnath Mishra (2014) ‘ Status of the largest dry fish market of East India: A study on Egra Regulated Dry Fish Market, Egra, Purba Medinipur, West Bengal’ in *International Journal of Current Research and Academic Review*, Volume 2, No 5 (May 2014), 55, retrieved from www.ijcrar.com accessed on 15.04.16.

tauri boi, kagja, mourala, chanda etc.³¹ The dry fish marketing involve a long marketing channel system which is shown clearly in the diagram, starting from fishing and ending with consumers through Drying and Processing, *Beparis* (Businessmen), *Aratdars* (Wholesellers), Retailors and Consumers.

Figure: 3.1. Marketing Channel System



Source: Drawn by researcher on the basis of field

In the above diagram, the dry fish market channel has been shown properly and it has also shown that how fisher folks are far from the consumers and not getting any profit because of the mediocre.

Women play a vital role in fisheries. The contribution of fisherwomen cover all aspect of fisheries including fishing, post harvest handling, preservation, processing and marketing of sea food products. Fisherwomen create a link between producers and consumers by imparting service from top to bottom. Due to Growing complexities in working conditions, the mobility of fisherwomen is limited.

3.5. Women of Fishing Community in West Bengal:

In a caste based stratified society in West Bengal, with persisting economic backwardness and social inequality, marginalisation of a vast section of population has

³¹ Ghorai, S.K., Bera, S.K., Debanjan Jana and Somnath Mishra (2014) ‘ Status of the largest dry fish market of East India: A study on Egra Regulated Dry Fish Market, Egra, Purba Medinipur, West Bengal’ in *International Journal of Current Research and Academic Review*, Volume 2, No 5 (May 2014), 55, retrieved from www.ijcrar.com accessed on 15.04.16.

remained attached to its social structure. Herein the interrelated dynamics of denial, deprivation, insecurities, social hierarchies and political dominations have generated rampant poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, ill – health, and downward mobility of vast section of population³². Women are the most excluded and discriminated segment of the population. The process of marginalisation and exclusion of women can be seen at various societal levels i.e., family, workplace etc. some women are more excluded in society. Feminist scholars argue that women are marginalised due to the patriarchal structure of society.

West Bengal is the fourth most populated state situated in the Eastern Region of India, 91.34 million people stay in the State. It is 2.7% of India's area but about 7.55% of the country's population. This state ranks first in terms of density of 1029 per sq. km as per the 2011 census which is greater than 904 per sq. km in 2001 census. The state holds seventh position in respect of world's population³³. The state consisting 48.63% of female population the boundaries of the state are Nepal, Bhutan and the Sikkim on the North, Goalpara district of Assam and Bangladesh on the East, Orissa and the Bay of Bengal on the South and Bihar on the West.

Fishery is considered as one of the most prosperous industries in India. West Bengal is the second biggest fish producer state in India after Andhra Pradesh³⁴. Among the population of the 91.34 million people of West Bengal³⁵, more than 2.9 million are fisher folk.

Fishing communities in West Bengal are quite widespread. Fishing communities adjacent to coastal areas are facing different kinds of problems rather than those who are located and working in inland waters. Security issues are problematic for coastal fishing communities whereas receding up of rivers are the main problems for inland fishing

³²Singharoy, Debal K., (2010), ' Marginalisation and the Marginalised: Reflections on the Relational-Cumulative Dynamics' in Debal K. Singharoy (eds.), *Surviving Against Odds The Marginalised in a Globalizing World*, Manohar Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 51.

³³Retrieved from www.mapsofindia.com accessed on 27.10.16.

³⁴Government of West Bengal (2015) Handbook of Fisheries Statistics 2013-2014, Department of Fisheries, 2015, 67.

³⁵Government of India (2011), *Census of India*, Registrar General of Population, New Delhi.

communities. Because of versatile problems that they encounter in everyday life, the fishing communities located in various parts of West Bengal faces lots of challenges.

In fact, many a times, they are forced to leave their occupation and find some other livelihood alternatives. Conditions of their female counterparts are more poor and precarious in most of the times. Due to nature of their work with low income, women are forced to look for alternative source for livelihood, apart from helping their male counterparts in fishing. They have to participate in income generating activities which has created a kind of triple burden for them. As a women in general, as a helping hand of their husbands for running their families and as a women from the marginalised community such as women from fishing community who is forced to look for alternative source of livelihood due to her poor and vulnerable status. Women in these underprivileged groups are doubly disadvantaged their minority group status interacts with India's patriarchal culture to produce deplorable living conditions.

In West Bengal total fisher folk population is 2945941 (in lakh) including male and female. Out of which 1295836 (in lakh) is the female population. The sex ratio of the population is 880 (census, 2011) which is lower than 894 according to the census 2001. The given figures show how the female population in fishing community is decreasing in West Bengal. The root cause of this declining figure is marginalisation as exclusion from proper health facilities, proper education, proper awareness, proper social activities and poverty.

In India, the female work participation rate registered an increase from 22.3 percent in 1991 to 25.6 percent in 2011. While women's work share in organised sector is only 14.7 percent rather than men's 45.1 percent: whereas in unorganised sector women's participation is 11 percent and men's 6.6 percent (Census of India, 2011). That shows female work participation in unorganised sector is more than men. But fishing is that occupation in unorganised sector that have not any strong data regarding women's participation in fishing based activities in West Bengal. So, women of this community

are quite marginalised in West Bengal. While, it is said that ‘unorganized sector in India is the women’s sector’³⁶.

Most of the women play secondary role in fishing. They mend nets, selling fish door to door, involve in processing fish and assisting their male counterparts in fishing related activities. Women of such community are still quite behind of their men counterparts in the area of education and economic empowerment. They usually have less access to medical care, property ownership, credit training, and in employment. They are far less likely to be politically active and far more likely to be victims of domestic violence compared to men. Almost 95% of women of fishing community are facing violence in different forms in their lives in West Bengal.

Due to increasing poverty level, more women from this community are migrating as domestic workers. Mostly they have to leave their places and families for earning their breads, in that situation they have to face several kinds of violence. If they stay at their places, in that case also they are suffering with different sorts of violence. Despite of urbanisation and development women of fishing community is still double marginalised and excluded.

Situations are not different if we see the status of women of fishing community in health and education. Most of the women can not avail the health facilities. Due to tremendous uses of water they have fungal infections in their hands and feet. Marrying at the age of 15- 16, becoming mother at very small age, they face lots of health problems and infections. Very few women have institutional birth; mostly they deliver babies at their homes by untrained nurses.

In the case of education, due to poverty and unawareness, women from fishing community in West Bengal are not able to complete their school education. They have to marry at the age 15-16 maximum. Their parents cannot afford their education. They hardly complete class 5 or 8 and after that they do their household activities and helping their mothers. After puberty they are forced to marry a person of their parents’ choice.

³⁶Singh Mor, D.P. (2001), “Women and the Unorganised Sector”, *Social Welfare*, December, 31-32.

It has been observed that the sex ratio is decreasing for fishing communities in West Bengal which was 898 as per Census of India, 2001. Now it is decreasing as 880 as on 31.03.2013³⁷. It has been noticed that generally the sex ratio is lower in fishing communities, than in another communities. With the vanishing part how these communities can be developed and how Sustainable Development will be possible.

In West Bengal, fishers are part of the cast hierarchy. Thus, fisheries are different from agriculture in region as there is a lot of tradition that goes into determination of this activity as an occupation. While there exists social barriers, the entry into the traditional fishing sector, these barriers do not exist in centralized fishing, which is seen simply as any other economy enterprise.

The people belonging to fishing community are, by and large, not only economically weak in terms of earning and availability of work, the majority of them are not able to procure the minimum nourishment and the conditions of their women are worse than their male counterparts. So fishing community is a marginalized community and the women of this community are in margins within it in West Bengal in particular and in India in general.

Poverty, gender and violence mix and create a sense of powerlessness, frustration, anxiety, depression and anger. In another hand, corruption, violence, powerlessness, incapacity and bare subsistence living serve as interlocking forces that keep people poor and in a state of ill – being. Steps backward reflect a failure to sustain improvements, blocking of new opportunities and thus blocking the way of Sustainable Development.

Fish trade is a traditional occupation that has been a means of livelihood for thousands in India with the majority of fish vendors being women. Unlike men, whose labour is largely confined to the sea, river or lake, fisher women vendors have to travel with their product to market places. They have to cooperate with both the public and the law. They are often forced to deal with inherited prejudices and problems of various kinds. Along with being engaged in household chores from dawn to dusk, fisherwomen play an

³⁷Government of West Bengal, (2015) 'Handbook of Fisheries Statistics 2013-14', Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture, Aquatic Resources and Fishing Harbours, Kolkata 74.

important role in retailing, auctioning, sorting, grading, curing and drying, prawn peeling and collection of seaweed apart from hand – braiding and repair of nets.

Overall the quality of life for women is deprived across different fishing groups and communities. This is included long working hours, poor wages as compared to the men and in addition the burden of household maintenance³⁸. Having various problems fisherwomen still shows their interest to learn new techniques and skills and for improving their status in the fishing sector, they are attending different trainings.

Hence men and women have same position geographically but they are not treated equally in the world. In the realistic world women are getting less access to education, health care facilities, physical and financial resources and participation in political, economic, social and cultural fields. Women's lower status is manifested in women's low wage rates than men in all occupational fields and industries, in their limited upward mobility, and in their greater family responsibilities due to divorce, abandonment, etc. in the developed countries. Women's lower status is reflected not only in their work being underpaid, unrecognised, but also in their limited access to productive resources and support services such as health and education³⁹. Rustogi⁴⁰ indicates some markers for measuring the status of women in society namely education, health, survival, participation in public/private decision making and safety.

In fishing communities women's basic needs are undermined due to lack of facilities like proper sanitation including toilets, cooking fuel, water facilities, proper nutrition, etc. further deteriorates their condition. Fisher women can be distinguished in two groups.

- 1- Those who are directly attached with the fishing and fishing related activities.
- 2- Those whose husband or son is a fisher and the women fisher folk is engaged with some other profession mostly related to agriculture in rural areas and domestic

³⁸Biswas, M.P. and M. R. M. Rao (2014), 'Fisherwomen of the East Coastal India: A Study', in *International Journal of Gender and Women's Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 298.

³⁹Mohiuddin, Yashmeen (1995), 'Country Rankings of Women's Status: An Alternative Index', 1025-1039, *Pakistan development review*, 34:4 part III, Winter.

⁴⁰Rustogi, Preet 2004, 291- 343, significance of Gender – Related Development Indicators: An Analysis of Indian States, *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, vol. 11 No. 3, Sage Publications, <http://www.dise.in/Downloads/Use%20of%20Dise%20Data/Preet%20Rustagi.pdf>, accessed on February 26, 2012.

works in other's households in urban areas apart from helping their male counterparts in fishing.

Although their contribution is a great deal in fishing economy which is a part of our country, but still they are unable to come to the limelight. They are underestimated that relegates to lower payment and lower jobs. There are lacking of access to capital resources, leadership positions, decision making, technical training and formal education to women. While, they are afraid of being victimised by unscrupulous middlemen, this weakness exploits her in the community.

In the aquaculture sector in inland fisheries, women play a major role in the feeding and rearing of fish in the ponds. Many women have developed their own pond culture practices and also form small groups or co – operatives. But the major problem faced by them is not having enough money for the practice. If the social planner takes a role in forming self help groups with arrangement of micro credit system that would be helpful for them. Self help group with at least 10 women can be formed and given proper training for fish culture so that they can help their counter parts in this respect or for themselves⁴¹.

Women fisher folk are included in fishing in West Bengal primarily through four channels they are fishing, drying and processing, marketing and net making. Women from South 24 Paragana particular in Sundarbans and Sagar Island, are involved in harvesting shrimps seeds by using hand- nets in rivers and estuaries and in drying and processing fish. Women are engaged in drying and curing fish all along the coastline in Sankarpur, Digha Mohana also. They play a predominant part in the sun – drying of fish on the beaches and in the curing of fish in fish – curing yards. Women are in charge along with men in Sale as well as Marketing of fresh and dried fish in roadside stalls, villages, town markets and door to door supply throughout West Bengal. Hand – braiding and net mending is the fourth important sector of women's involvement in Fisheries

⁴¹Mukherjee, Madhumita, Soma Sen and Basundhara Chatterjee, (2010), 'Fisher Women In Sundarban Wetlands Area', in Pradeep K. Katiha et al. eds *Issues and Tools for Social Sciences Research in Inland Fisheries*, Bulletin No. 163, Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute (Indian Council For Agricultural Research), Barrackpur, Kolkata, 306.

especially in Diamond Harbour and Kakdwip landing centre of South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal. In addition with these activities the most important part of them is taking part in livelihood management by doing these or attending other households and supporting their families.

3.6. Marginalisation and Development of Women in Fishing Communities in West Bengal:

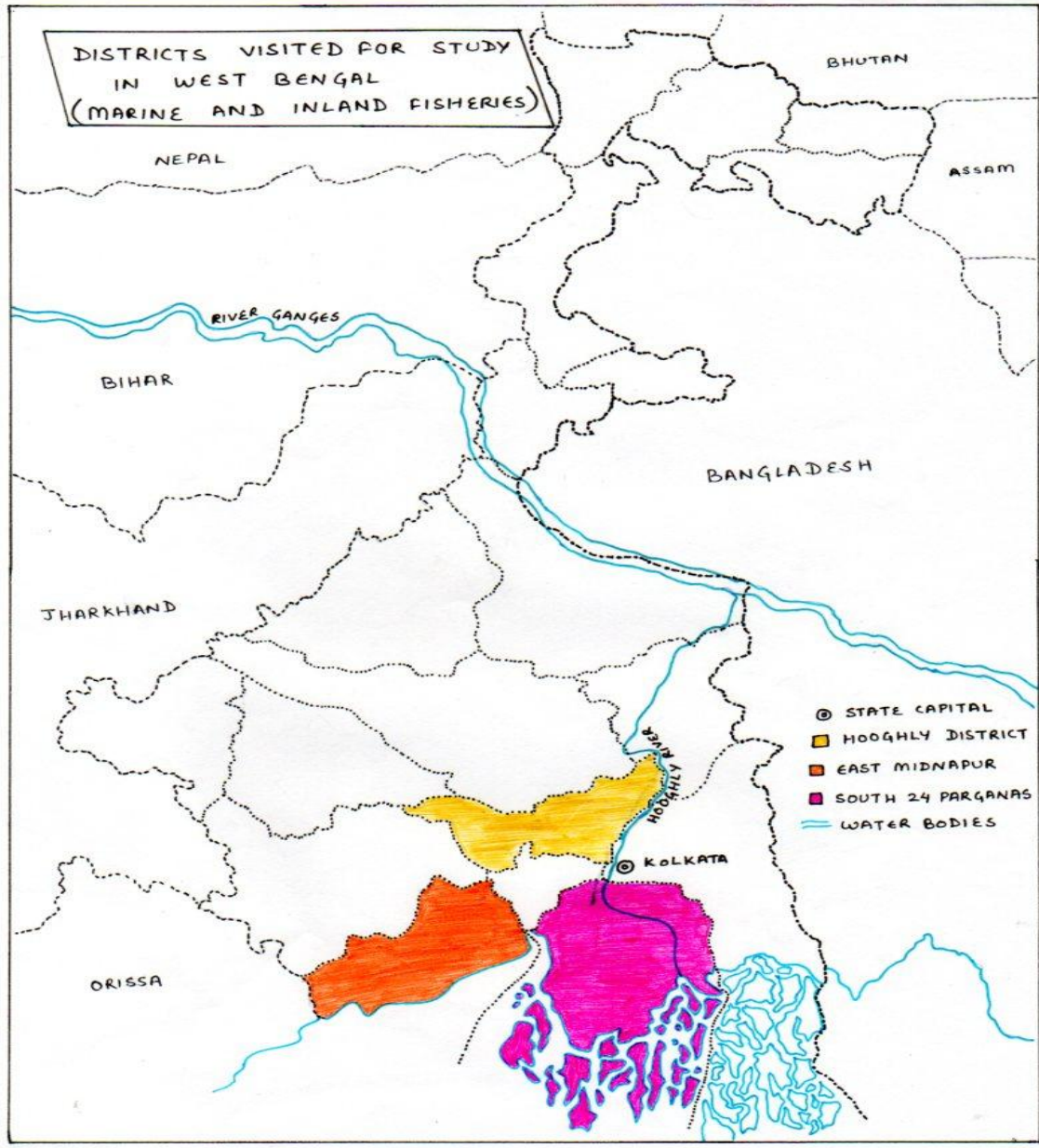
In West Bengal, a large number of people live on the coastal zone depending directly or indirectly on fishing. Most of the people depended on fish and fish catch as protein and livelihood also in this region. So a disturbance in fisheries will result into deficiency of protein supply in the diet that affected the poor and livelihood as well. The ecosystem and biodiversity in these zones will be under critical crisis with unknown far reaching consequences. Those things influence the health of the people with variously linked high cost to the nation as a whole. All happenings are forced people to migrate too far and near cities that will lead to fresh set of problems.

The coastal area of West Bengal, mainly the Mangrove vegetation of Sundarbans has wide variety of fish production and mainly people are dependent upon the natural resources for sustaining their livelihood. The mangroves of Sundarbans are receding day by day due to climate change. These are the supplier of food for habitat and for numerous species of fish. The mangroves are the protector of coast from Cyclones, floods and tidal waves. Not only they protect from natural disasters but also supply food, timber, fuel, fodder, wood and medicine for the coastal people. Moreover, due to the fast growing modern civilisation these things are disappearing day by day.

There are some changes in natural resources also as soil and ground water becoming salty, pollution from effluent and bottom soil disposal replacing agriculture and livelihood options that decreasing the employment opportunities and taking heavy duty of land, sea and people. The common people of grass root level are becoming sandwich from the both side – the land and the sea. The nature and the sophisticated civilisation have no way to escape.

The things are not different for the people of Shankarpur and Digha Mohana. This region is a part of the coastal plains estuary with the rivers Damodar, Rupnarayan, Haldi and Rasulpur rivers flowing through it. Growing tourism and its hazards are the main cause of deterioration of these places. Whereas machine made nets are the big issues for the women of Diamond Harbour and Kakdwip. For the study, some focus groups of women have been taken, involving in different fisheries related activities for livelihood management vis a vis as seed collectors, dry fish sorters and net menders from different fishing pockets of West Bengal. Those fishing pockets have been shown in the following three consequent rough maps showing different districts of West Bengal. These rough maps have been drawn on the basis of available data to introduce the location.

Map: 3.2. Districts visited for study in West Bengal



Source- Drawn by the researcher on the basis of field visits and available data

In the above map three different districts based on marine and inland fisheries have been shown. The districts which are shown have been visited for the study. South 24 Parganas and East Midnapur Districts are based on marine fisheries and Hooghly district is based on inland fisheries. Marginalised condition of the women of fishing communities in some of the fishing pockets of West Bengal are reflected below:-

3.6.1. Women involved in shrimp seed collections (Sundarbans):

India and West Bengal, women participate almost in all sectors of fisheries. Contribution of women in wild shrimp seed collection is a unique practice which is done by the women of Sundarbans. For fishing related activities women earn some money which she spends on her families. The fisher women in coastal areas are continuously harvesting the shrimp fish seed and small fish. But while doing that she is destroying other seeds for selecting a few.

In the month of June to September, there are heavy recourses of fresh water shrimp seed in the coastal region of Sundarbans. The fisher women collect maximum number of seed at this time by using mosquito net with a wide open in one side with bamboo end and end size is narrow, it is like a bag. For their ignorance, when they harvest shrimp seeds other seeds also struck in the net but fisherwomen thrown those seeds thus unknowingly she becomes the destroyer of natural seed stock of sea. Almost through the year fisher women get involved in seed collection. Except of mosquito nets, they are using Pushnet, Scoopnet, Dagnet and Shootingnet. For harvesting seed they are in group of 3-4 persons. They are using *Dingi*⁴², shooting nets, *Handy*⁴³, Anchor and Torchlight.

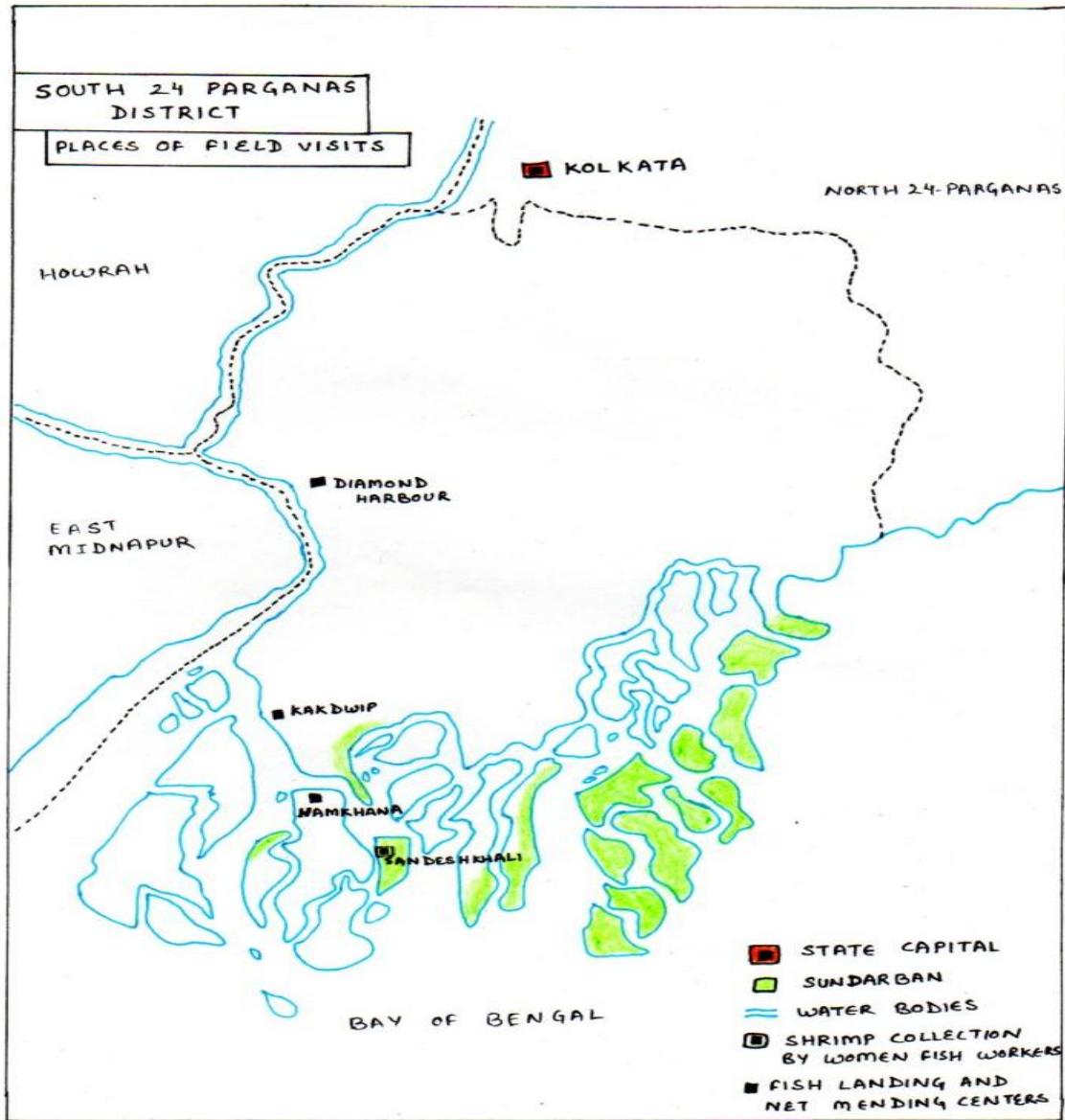
Approximately one lakh of fishing population in Sundarbans are involved in seed collection activity. They are using different techniques for seed collection. Some fisherwomen catch seed during tide, they fix their net in the water with support of two big bamboos and small stones. After completing tide they pull their nets from the water and collect seeds. Some fisherwomen, during tide, move in the water and holding their nets as floating condition. Passing water deposits seeds in the net. After one hour they pull out their nets from the water and collect seeds. For restoring seeds they make storage and fill with sea water. From collected seeds they segregate shrimp seeds and destroy others. In Sundarbans, fisherwomen catches about 300-500 seeds per day and earn about Rs. 150-250 per day in peak season. Otherwise they earn 40 – 60 per day. The field survey was conducted on the bank of river Bidyadhari near Sandeshkhali in Sundarbans for exploring their condition. The following rough map would show the major fishing and fisheries

⁴²Boat.

⁴³Aluminium pot.

related pockets of South 24 Paragnas including Sundarbans, which had been visited for the study.

Map: 3.3. Places of field visits in South 24 Paragnas District in West Bengal



Source- Drawn by researcher on the basis of field visits and available data

In the above map, places of field visits in South 24 Paragnas district have been shown. Sandeshkhali is located in Sundarbans where women shrimp seed collectors are collecting shrimp seeds whereas in Diamond Harbour, Kakdwip and Namkhana, women are also involved in net mending in fish landing and net mending centres.

3.6.2. Women (*Banchuni*⁴⁴) involved in dry fish sorting (Sundarbans, Shankarpur and Digha Mohana):

The women fish workers are mostly dry fish sorters in Sundarbans, Shankarpur and Digha Mohana. Mostly fishing and allied activities are considered as an ‘unclean’ occupation, these are restricted to the poor and backward people in the caste ladder. In these areas fishing castes are Tiyor, Bagdi, Jalya Kaibarta and Mahisya. Most of the women in these areas are the victim of abject poverty. They work under difficult conditions, adding with the absence of toilets in working place. They have to dry the fish on the ground due to lack of racks. They have no access to grants, loans or credit. Women dry fish sorters and processors face health problems, such as rashes on their hands. However, no effort is there for redressing these problems. The large markets are controlled by male fish vendors and women are not allowed to sell their fish in the markets.

The money they earn is essential for the survival of their families. They are illiterate. The place where they are sorting dry fish is called ‘*Khunti*’⁴⁵. They gather here from the neighbouring coastal villages. In Sundarban, they assemble at Khalisthan Char, located at the mouth of river Saptamukhi, close to the coast of Bay of Bengal and at Jambudwip during dry fish season from mid October to mid June. More than 6000 women are gathered every year at Khalisthan Char and Jambudwip. They come from Laxmipur, Amarabati, Bijayabati, Haripur, Rajnagar, etc. situated within Namkhana police station. Workers from Kakdwip, Pather Pratima and Sagar also gather here.

In between Shankarpur beach of Bay of Bengal and the flow of river Rupnarayan, the women dry fish sorters are gathered in different ‘*Khuntis*’ in group together. These *Khuntis* are run by different male owners who arrange these women at low wages. They are coming from the neighbouring villages like Ramnagar, Kanthi etc. and stay there by making camps with their families or in a group. Mothers are working with their small kids. Sometimes they leave them at home with their fathers but this is very rare. Many women leave their children at their homes. Thus their small children are depriving of

⁴⁴Women dry fish sorter

⁴⁵Centre for dry fish sorting

their childhood and the mother from motherhood for survival. They are working in the *Khuntis* for seven to eight months, for 10 – 12 hours per day. Their husbands are associated with different types of occupations. Some are catching fish in the sea or after a certain age some are pulling rickshaw or working as labourer in the other states or sometimes they do nothing.

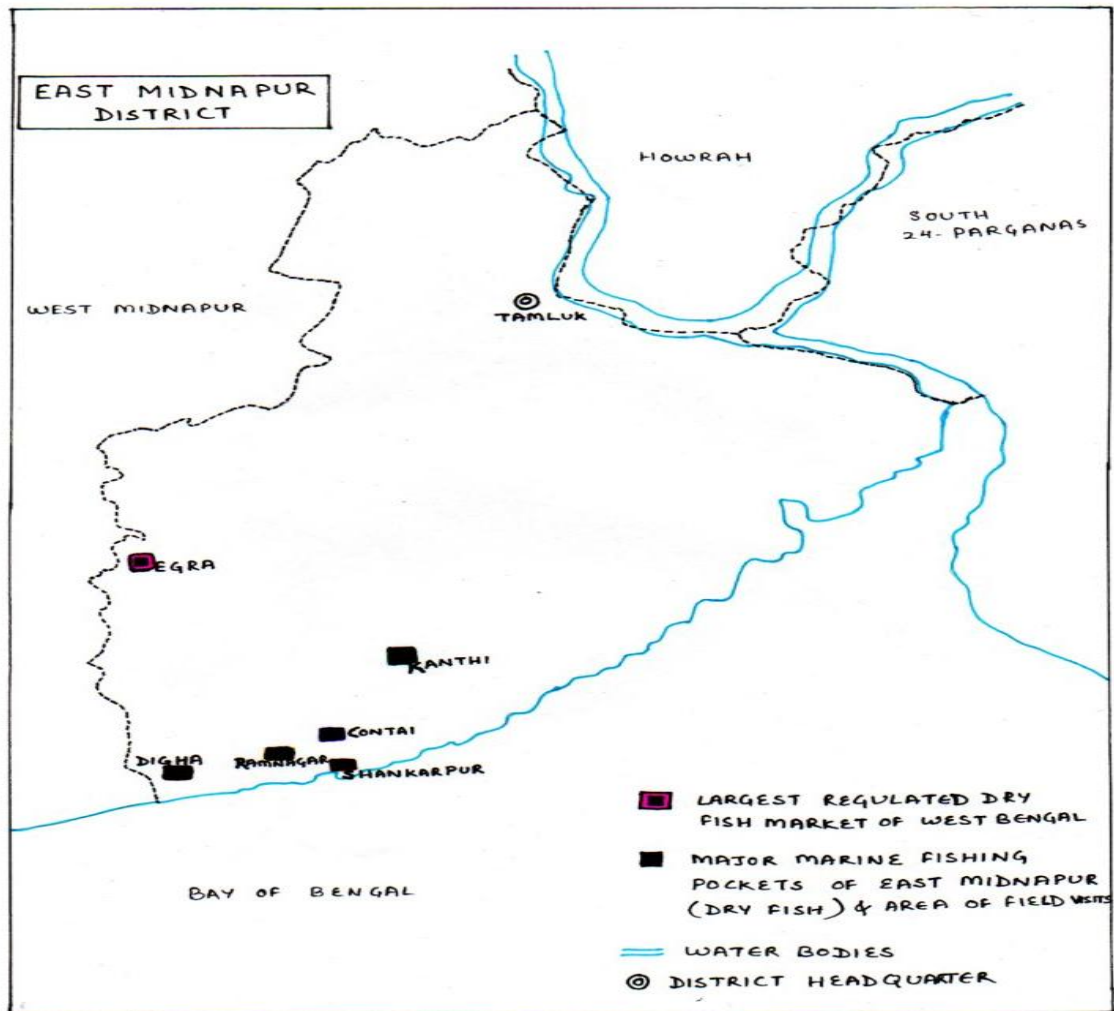
Near the estuaries of rivers Rupnarayan, Haldi, Damodar and Rasulpur, Digha Mohana is located. Here all these rivers are meeting with Bay of Bengal. The women dry fish sorters are gathered here also in a same manner from neighbouring villages and working in the very challenging conditions. Without proper drinking water, sanitation, electricity, and proper food. When the catches are brought to the fishing camp, they are dumped at a place, provided for this. Then the catches are spread over the bamboo mats for drying. The women fish sorters (*bachuni*) sit together in a group. For sorting out fish they use bamboo knives which are called *Kaittain*. They sorted out fish on the basis of species. After sorting, each species of fish are spread separately on the sandy courtyard under the sun.

In the pick season, they earn 130 Rs. Per day after working 12 – 14 hours. They have their lunch with them. That is wet rice, onion, salt and chilly. This peak season is only for 2-3 months and rest of the month they are getting 40- 50 rupees per day. These workers are getting job daily. On an average they are provided 15 days per month. They rarely exercise their option for not attending the fishing camps at night. Those who are not residing at the camps are getting one *fherki*⁴⁶ trashed fish as bonus during 6 days of lunar period.

In the following map of East Midnapur District, major marine fishing pockets especially for dry fish, which has been visited for the study, have been shown, where women are earning their bread as dry fish sorter or *Bachuni*.

⁴⁶ Basket

Map: 3.4. Places of field visits in East Midnapur District in West Bengal



Source: Drawn by researcher through field visits and on the basis of available data

In the above map five major places have been shown for marine fisheries following with fish drying and sorting. There are several *khuntis* (where dry fish are sorted out) in Digha and Shankarpur where women are involved in peeling fish and sorting out dry fish in the coastline of Bay of Bengal. Egra fish market is the largest regulated dry fish market in West Bengal situated in East Midnapur District.

The very next important fishing related activities of women are selling/ marketing fish to the door to door or from the retailer to market. Some women of fishing community prefer home – based remunerative jobs.

3.6.3. Women involved in net mending (Diamond Harbour and Kakdwip):

The West Bengal government for the welfare of the fishing communities built a fishing harbour called Diamond Harbour in Sultanpur, South 24 paraganas district in West Bengal. This is the landing centre of fresh fish also. Big commercial trawlers are landing fish here. Fishing nets are mending over there only. Net mending is the ideal occupation of women in fishing community. Now a day machine nets are using instead of handmade nets, so no need to make net now or it is very rare to make hand braiding net. They get only Rs. 60/ kg for hand making nets. Women mend nets in the shade after gathering together. They have to give attendance of their presence. They are working there under some contractors.

They start from 6 am in the morning to 6 pm .in the evening. In the meanwhile they have a break for lunch. They are working for 11-12 hours a day. They are getting Rs. 140 for 3 – 4 months and in the lien season some women get into themselves in ‘MGNREGA’s (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) 100 Days work scheme. Sometimes they involve in mid day meal programme also. Maximum women have to run their families. After going their homes, they do all their house hold duties, cook for their families and prepare the lunch for herself by pouring water into the rice and store it for next day. Maximum numbers of net menders are illiterate, having health hazards, no access of credit facilities, hospitals are quite far from their residences. Kakdwip is one of the largest fishing harbour in West Bengal. The activities of Women net menders are same here. Tones of fish catches are landing here. But the condition of fisherwomen is not different here.

3.7. Determinants of Marginalisation and Development of Women of Fishing Community in India in general and West Bengal in Particular:

Women’s inequality is universal, its magnitude and severity vary from one country to another, even within a country, from one region to another and from one community to another community. It is important to highlight this, because women’s issue should be dealt with carefully and their needs to be addressed in policy planning and

implementation⁴⁷. In this section, several determinants are being used. This research shall explore them one by one in the context of marginalization and development of women in fishing community and further try to prove as Sen and Nussbaum illustrate marginalisation and social exclusion as a part of capability deprivation and cause of capability failure and whereas development as a instrument of increasing capabilities.

3.7.1. Education:

It has been long argued by various UN agencies that the critical determinant of women's socioeconomic status is education, and that education, education and more education is the key to achieving social development by improving the wellbeing of girls and women and thus promoting gender equity.

The principle determinant of socio-economic development of women is education which is the key to achieving social development by improving the wellbeing of girls and women and thus promoting gender equality. Education is the only weapon by which women can fight with the hindrances on the way of their development.

In the case of fisherwomen the situation is more pathetic. They are in the dark side of the world. From early childhood days to the old age they are serving their families in very different ways. By becoming mothers, helping hands in the early stage of their lives, they are deprived of their childhood. After that they are get married and thus their adolescence is followed by early motherhood and thus their health is lost. In their old age they are continue their fishing related activities for their survival in the world. Nobody takes care of them.

So, they are in the vicious circle, in each and every stage of life they are deprived of and engaged in their livelihood related activities. Getting education is beyond their imagination.

As far back as 66 years, the Constitution of India promised to provide universal education to all children up to the age of 14 years. This goal was to be achieved by 1960. While

⁴⁷Choudhury, Sanghamitra (2013), 'Gender Discrimination and Social Exclusion: Assam Experience', in *IJDS* Vol. 5, Issue-1, 40-45.

considerable progress has been made in this regard in the decade of the 1990's, much still remains to be done for girls' education. Enrolment rates at the primary level have risen considerably, but many of the students who enroll dropout and only a very small number manage to get beyond the primary stage. Gender inequality in education is one important aspect of educational disparity. Inequalities and differences between communities is another critical aspect of this broader phenomenon of disparity in India. 80% Women from fishing communities cannot complete their school education after primary education due to poverty and social structure. This is the capability deprivation as Martha Nussbaum mentioned in her Capability Approach that is ability to get education. Narration from the field also reiterates the same.

Case Study: 1

Bulbuli Samal, 28years, a dry fish sorter in Sagar Island in Sundarbans, married at the age of 14, due to poverty could not get education. Being uneducated and due to ignorance she did not have bank account and thus gave her savings to the unrecognised local person, she saved this money for her own home, but one day the person ran away with all her money and thus she lost her savings.

So this is not only the true story of Bulbuli, this is the story of all illiterate or low educated women in India. Education is the foundation of life and the instrument of increasing the capabilities without education everything will be in dark and people may take advantage of this.

3.7.2. Poor Societal Status:

Women in India are the most excluded and discriminated segment of the population. Patriarchy limits women's control on property and other resources, including the products of their own labour. Poverty and patriarchy are the two issues which subject women to marginalisation and exploitation. Women's mobility is constrained, and their access to education and information hindered. Patriarchy is at the core of the structural element in discriminating women. Control of women's reproductive abilities and sexuality is placed in men's hands.

It has been revealed that the marginalized communities like fishing communities are one of the poor communities in all over the world. So a woman, belonging to a community which ranks low in social stratification in society like fishing communities are viewed as the marginal within the margins.

Though NGOs are taking some effort for promoting small – scale entrepreneurial development in culture fisheries; they are not receiving proper attention. Spending their lifetime as shrimp peeling workers, shrimp seed collectors, net menders; dry fish sorters women are not still included under the category of fisherwomen by the government and are not provided with benefit of any of the welfare measures. Their contribution is totally ignored. The women fisher folk even do not realize the value of their own self.

There are many dividing lines between those who are considered ideal women and those who are not. Married women are viewed with greater esteem than unmarried women, able-bodied women than disabled women, adult women than adolescent women, and wealthy, high-caste women than poorer, low-caste women like women from fishing community. As Martha Nussbaum mentioned about ability to be treated as a dignified being in Capability Approach, women of fishing communities also have the abilities for the same but their capabilities are deprived due to their low societal status. Observation from the field also reflects the same.

Case Study: 2

Gouri bhuiya, a dry fish sorter, searching for work in the other houses, for getting some money in lien season, but she was refused for that, because dry fish, even fish related works are 'unclean' and women who do these are also 'unclean'.

Thus women of fishing communities face a problem of societal discriminations, recognition problems and poverty due to their occupation and caste. In West Bengal, women who are related with fisheries activities are totally deprived from their recognition as fisher women.

3.7.3. Women with disability:

The last decade has been a testimony to the relentless efforts of disabled people in India. Disability legislation, inclusion in census and representations in media are some of the features of this struggle. Although the pace is slow and efforts fragmented, nevertheless some visibility has been attained for the lives marked as disabled in a society that still largely ignores their existence. Their voices have been subsumed by the male leaders, who have largely reflected their masculine bias by completely overlooking concerns such as sexuality, family and motherhood. To survive as a disabled person in such a blinkered social environment, has meant, coming to terms with unequal power relationships. This is reflected most clearly by an absence and invisibility in the most forward-looking social movements and dialogues, including the women's movement.

'Ek toh ladki oopar se apahij, is se toh accha mar jaati (in Hindi) (A disabled girl is better dead than alive)' marks the reality of a woman with disability⁴⁸ in India. That would be more vulnerable if the disabled woman belongs to a weaker community like fishing community. As a six-year-old girl affected with polio says, "My mother laments that a disabled daughter is a punishment, and she cannot figure out what past sins are responsible for my disabled existence." Leading a stigmatised life, a disabled woman in India belongs to a marginalised and invisible category. Whether disability is congenital or acquired, the oppression starts very early in life. With no opportunities for improving the quality of life, the disabled girl-child has no option but to live a life of subordination.

Just as society fails to acknowledge the social identity and significance of disabled lives, even policy discourse is coloured by its biased orientation towards the notion of the 'perfect body'. Policies too are thus remiss in their neglect of women's issues related to disability. However, over the past ten years, issues concerning disabled women have been highlighted within the realm of the women's movement. But still disabled women from

⁴⁸Ghai, Anita (2001), 'Marginalisation and Disability: Experiences from the Third World' in Mark Priestley (eds.), *Disability and the Life Course: Global Perspectives*, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 30.

marginalised communities like fishing community are still untouched⁴⁹. Narration from the field also shows the same.

Case Study: 3

Rita Mondal, 35 years old net mender, in Kakdwip fish landing centre, lost her left leg in an accident at the age of 24, at that time her husband and in laws left her for her disability, then she got this opportunity to earn, but that accident changed her life totally.

In every society disabled women are not very acceptable. In Hindu marriage, there is a ritual of *kanyadaan*, which means a complete girl as a gift without any disability. As Martha Nussbaum mentioned in her Capability Approach bodily integrity, which is ability to have healthy body also draw a line between capability enhancement and capability deprivation.

3.7.4. Women in special circumstances:

Social exclusion of women begins early in life and is especially notable at life transitions such as puberty and marriage. Due to their vulnerable conditions, girls of fishing communities are directly victims. They cannot complete their school before that they get married at the age of 14-15. In addition to poverty, early marriage is an important reason for discontinuing education as far as young girls are concerned. Exclusion is also evident in many of the obstacles young women encounter barriers to entering and staying in school, finding work, making friends, learning life skills, accessing health services and participating in civic life, In India , sex selective abortion and female infanticide reduce girls chances of even starting life.⁵⁰.

⁴⁹ Chakravorty, T. (2015) 'Marginalisation and Women of Fishing Community: An Experience from India' in Centre for Applied Ethics and Philosophy (ed) *Applied Ethics: Security, Sustainability and Human Flourishing*, Center for Applied Ethics and Philosophy, Hokkaido University, Japan, 56-57.

⁵⁰ Ibid,38.

Women of fishing community struggle more than their counterparts. Women's roles in nurturing and sustaining the family and community, and their economic contribution to household, are rarely recognized. They face gender discrimination at home, as individuals. Their public and private rights are denied; they are excluded from decision-making processes also. They face atrocities in markets from local thugs and middlemen; their health is adversely affected; and they face sexual harassment and physical violence⁵¹.

Though the phenomenon of women's inequality is universal, its magnitude and severity vary from one country to another, even within a country, from one region to another and from one community to another community. Women have been subjected to a number of humiliation, harassments and ill-treatment even today. Women continue to be the most helpless beings in the society. It is important to highlight this, because women's issue should be dealt with carefully and their needs to be addressed in policy planning and implementation. Despite of all these painful things, there is a true success story of a girl Durgamani Mondal, working as dry fish sorter in Shankarpur coastline.

Case Study: 4

Durgamani Mondal, a 16 years old, class 4 passed, dry fish sorter in Shankarpur coastline, after having a lot family pressure for marriage, she decided to work at the age of 12, she does not want to marry before 18. Her mother is a beggar and father is a rickshaw puller, now she is supporting her family for livelihood management and helping her siblings for education.

As Sen and Nussbaum maintained about the freedom and ability for taking decisions in their capability approach, Durgamani sticks with it and shows the courage,

On the other hand, marginalised communities like fishing communities are truly untouched from betterment. However, the disadvantage and discrimination faced by women continues to be large and the equality between sexes in the labour market is still a distant dream. Martha Nussbaum focuses on having ability to develop without fear, but in the case of women of fishing communities they are always scared for the abnormalities in

⁵¹Ibid, 57

their work place after having the abilities they are deprived of their capabilities. Women of fishing communities, who are left alone in the society due to various reasons, have to face lots of troubles as observation from the field also reiterates the fact.

Case Study: 5

Rani Bhui (name has been changed for confidentiality), 22 years old dry fish sorter, with two daughters, whose husband left her for son privileges, works in a Khunti (a place where dry fish are sorted out) in Sundarbans, stays in the camp with two small children, suffered from sexual harassment in the workplace many times, but for fear and defame, cannot report anywhere against this anti social practice. Police stations are too far, and get scared for filing the complaint.

Likewise, Rani, several women are facing this type of marginalisation day by day in all around the world. Marginalised people seriously lack access to police protection. They become target of harassment or victims of crime or corruption, when they do have contact with justice system. As justice system is recognised for its safeguards for common people but in reality the marginalised people are far from those practices. One for the ignorance and secondly for the fear fisher women cannot go to the police stations with their complaints in those fishing pockets.

3.7.5. Economic Status:

According to the Human Development Index 2015, there is a huge gap of gross national income per capita between male and female. Women earn 2116 dollars in a year whereas men earn 8656 dollars⁵² in India. Greg J. Duncan defines poverty as ‘a state in which resources are insufficient to meet basic needs’. The basic needs may be confined to physical needs only, but human being is more than just an animal hence has other needs which are also basic and universal, like needs of dignity, self respect and social inclusion and development, even though not directly tied up with physiology⁵³.

⁵²UNDP (2015), *Human Development Report 2015*, Oxford University Press, New York, 220.

⁵³Lakra, Christopher (2010), ‘Poverty and Sustainable Development: Concepts, Issues, Concerns and Challenges’ in Archana Sinha (ed) ‘Sustaining Communities Strategies for Sustainable Community Development’, Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, 29 – 38.

Studies have also focused on differential rates of labour force and workforce participation by women and men and consequent underrepresentation of women in workforce; as well as the sex-based discrimination in family and society in the spheres of education and skill formation and attitudes towards women's work — forms of discrimination that precede discrimination in the labour market and influence the gender based differences in employment and earnings. There has been a decline in the wage gap: the female to male wage ratio that was estimated to be 0.60 in 1994-95, increased to 0.67 in 2009-10⁵⁴.

Despite many developmental efforts, women are still much more likely to be poor and illiterate than men. They usually have less access to medical care, property ownership, credit training and in employment. They have bank accounts but manipulated by their male counterparts. They are far less likely to be politically active and far more likely to be victims of domestic violence compared to men. Some communities like fishing community are a marginalized community and the women of this community are in margins within it at different perspectives⁵⁵.

In Human Development Report,2013, it is observed that very low “Income index” component of the GDI essentially reflects the low workforce participation of women in India, which in turn suggests a combination of greater restrictions on women's economic agency as well as social lack of recognition of women's unpaid work. Martha Nussbaum also mentioned about proper nourishment with adequate food, with adequate shelter. There is a major undercurrent of poverty in the society. The case study also reflects poverty of fishing communities.

⁵⁴Chakravorty, T. (2014c) ‘Women of India: Social Exclusion Perspective’, in *Reyono journal of interdisciplinary studies*, Vol.3, Issue 1,108.

⁵⁵ Chakravorty, T. (2015) ‘Marginalisation and Women of Fishing Community: An Experience from India’ in Centre for Applied Ethics and Philosophy (ed) *Applied Ethics: Security, Sustainability and Human Flourishing*, Center for Applied Ethics and Philosophy, Hokkaido University, Japan, 57-58.

Case Study: 6

Chhavi Bhui, 40 years old dry fish sorter in Digha Mohana, no educational qualification, has to run her family alone because her husband is sick, cannot do work, her son is married but unemployed. She has to take all responsibilities of her family and after doing for all, giving house rent; she has no money for herself. She is used to with, poor sanitation, poor fooding, torn clothes etc.

This is the true picture of most of the women of fishing communities in India. In Our country 50% of women are residing below poverty lines which are unrecognised by the stakeholders. Women have their own position in the society, by overlooking their overall development; society cannot go ahead towards progress. Women represent 50percent of the world population according to the World Economic Profile of women. 30 percent of the official labour force made by the women. Women are performing 60 percent of all working hours, and receive 10 percent of world income and owing less than one percent of the world's property.

3.7.6. Health:

The proverb 'health is wealth' really reveals the importance of a healthy life. A healthy nation or overall development of a country always depends upon the good health of its women. A healthy woman can make a healthy family and healthy family can build a healthy nation. Whereas in various societies, women's ability to access resources is often determined by the amount of power she possesses in the home and in society. The political, economic, and gendered factors of reproductive health are also influenced by the level of power a woman possesses. A women's health is often constrained by economic dependence on her male partner, which leaves them powerless to control decision regarding reproductive health⁵⁶.

Every social group in the world has specific traditional cultural practices and beliefs, some of which are beneficial to all members, while others are harmful to a specific group,

⁵⁶Pillai, Vijayan K. and Leigh Johnson (2007) 'Public Health, Social Work and Reproductive Health the Role of Reproductive Rights' in *Journal of Health and Development* Vol. 3 No. 1&2, January – July 2007, 106.

such as women in fishing communities. These harmful traditional practices include forced feeding of women; early marriage; the various taboos or practices which prevent women from controlling their own fertility; nutritional taboos including lacking of proper food, traditional birth practices with preferring home delivery ; son preference and its implications for the status of the girl child; female infanticide; early pregnancy; unhygienic sanitary system and dowry price. These traditional cultural practices, harmful health practices are harming not only the individuals but also the society. However, it seems impossible to change the harmful practice as it takes on an aura of morality in the eyes of those practicing them⁵⁷.

This state of ignorance ensures their acceptance-and, consequently, the perpetuation of harmful traditional practices affecting their well-being and that of their children. Even when women acquire a degree of economic and political awareness, they often feel powerless to bring about the change necessary to eliminate gender inequality. Empowering women is vital to any process of change and to the elimination of these harmful traditional practices.

Home is the primary workplace for the majority of Indian women. Lack of space, lack of proper ventilation, electricity, toilet facilities make the home a far from ideal working environment for poor women in both urban and rural areas. In addition many women are constantly at the mercy of their husbands, in-laws, landlords and municipal authorities. However, there is very little data on women's occupational health and safety. Good health is not just about doctors and drugs. A clean living environment with access to safe drinking water and sanitation, adequate nutrition, protection from disease and a decent standard of living are the basics of good health. 62.4% of the mothers had 3 or more antenatal care visits for their last birth⁵⁸. As Nussbaum also mentioned about the ability for having good health, the women fisher folk are very far from the same. Observation from the field also reflects the same.

⁵⁷ Chakravorty, T. (2015) 'Marginalisation and Women of Fishing Community: An Experience from India' in Centre for Applied Ethics and Philosophy (ed) *Applied Ethics: Security, Sustainability and Human Flourishing*, Center for Applied Ethics and Philosophy, Hokkaido University, Japan, 58-59.

⁵⁸ Chakravorty, T. (2014a), 'Exclusion of women in health perspective: A case study of West Bengal' in U.G.C. sponsored International conference volume - 2 on *Women Empowerment & Globalisation*, ICWEG, 90-102.

Case Study: 7

Renuka Bhui, 48 years old, a dry fish sorter, has narrated the true story of her daughter, Laxmi Bhui, she got married at the age of 16, due to lack of money, she could not go to the school and helped her mother for livelihood before marriage. After marriage she continued her dry fish sorting activity, after having two children she was going to deliver the third one at home but while having delivery pain her baby's head struck in the uterus passage, at that moment the 'Dai' (birth attending nurses at home without getting any training) surrendered, hospital was 8 kms far from their residence, on the way to the hospital both could not fight with the situation and died.

This tragic and sad story of Laxmi, is not the single one, so many Laxmis are taking their last sighs for these life taking social illusions, lack of education and infrastructure in our interior India.

Case Study: 8

Parbati Bhui, 28 years old, a shrimp seed collector and harvester in Sundarbans. Having a severe disease in her hands for constantly collecting shrimp seeds from salt water, she is the only earning member of her family because her husband is not doing anything and a liquor drinker, cannot continue work anywhere because of his nature. Now she cannot collect seeds because of the disease doctor has to operate her right hand and cut it from the elbow, the disease was spreading out and could affect the whole body.

The above mentioned true story reveals the real facts that many women from fishing communities are facing with life threatening diseases in daily basis as occupational health hazards. As the options for alternative livelihood are not available for them due to their nature of work (dry fish sorting) they are forced to stick with the status of marginalization.

3.7.7. Domestic Violence:

One of the major challenges for women, which forced her to stick with margins, is Violence. Violence against women has been widely recognized as universal problem prevailing in every nation, culture, caste and class and being rooted in the socio-culture

behaviour and norms that sanction privilege of men over women. The preamble to the United Nations Organization's Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women recognizes that violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women, and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanism by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men (UNO, 1994).

According to the World Health Organisation 5,000 women are murdered in the name of honour worldwide each year. In India in 2008, there were over 8,000 "dowry deaths", whereby women are killed or driven to suicide when their husbands or in-laws abuse them in order to extract a larger dowry. This is not to say that women who are high up the ladder do not suffer abuse – domestic violence and forced marriage, for example, happen in all social and wealth categories, to the married and unmarried, young and old.

In India, women are subjected to violence even before they are born. An estimated 1300 female's fetuses "go missing" everyday. The national sex ratio, according to government figures for 2011, stood at 914 girls aged 0-6 for every 1000 boys of the same age. A cultural preference for sons along with the increasing availability of pre-natal sex screening, which is officially banned in the country, has led to a worsening of the ratio in the age group of 0-6, even as the ratio for the population as a whole has increased. A society that is dominated by men in terms of numbers is not likely to be in any hurry to end systematic discrimination against women⁵⁹.

But violence against women who are lower down the hierarchy is in general much less reported than abuses perpetrated against those inside what Rubin has called society's 'charmed circle'. Women of marginalised communities are less accessed by government and they also cannot report their problems to government officials. They become used to of these practices of violence against them. The men's violence against women includes many forms such as rape, intimate partner violence and sexual harassment. National Women Commission (1998), found women in the unorganised sector in India, are more

⁵⁹Bhandare, Namita (9 March, 2015), *What Changed After December 2012*, Live Mint (online newspaper) 1-4, accessed on 9.03.15.

vulnerable to sexual harassment than women in the organised sector as fishing is the unorganised sector in India. Narration from the field also focuses on that.

Case Study: 9

Tapasi Ghoroi, 25 years old, nil educated, a net mender in Diamond Harbour fish landing centre, has been victimised by Domestic violence by her husband. She got married at the age of 15, she has three son but she cannot take any birth control pills or aids, because of her husband ,whenever she wants to take or says no for sex, her husband starts to scold and beat her and uses slang terms he doubts on her for having any extra marital affair. She cannot complain anywhere due to fear.

This is not the story of a single woman of our country; in fact the whole scenario is that only. 80% of women whether she is from fishing community or else from any other, she is suffering by mental, sexual, physical, emotional violence.

In India, a study by the Washington based International Centre for Research on Women and the United Nations Population Fund found that more than half of the women surveyed said they had experienced some form of violence during their life time. In the same survey, Over 60% of the men admitted to some form of violence against their wife or partner. Globally, according to the World Health Organisation, 35% of women have experienced either intimate partner violence or non – partner sexual violence in their lifetime. Crimes against women increase 69% in India over the last decade. That includes molestation, rape, domestic violence, and so on. This figure does not include marital rape, which is not recognised as a crime in India.

It is now high time to insist that there should be no margins and double standard of morality for women. Marriage should continue to be regarded as a religious bond, but as this world itself is an imperfect one, so its secret ties would be imperfect sometimes. Society must recognise that cases may sometimes occur. The condition of divorce should be very stringent, but its necessity in modern times has to be recognised.

As a natural corollary of the joint ownership of the husband and the wife in the family property, and as a recognition of the valuable contribution in household management, the

law should be passed that 10 percent of the income of the husband should be converted into a new source of *stridhan*⁶⁰, to be completely controlled by the wife.

Studies have proved that violence against women is closely associated with the complex social conditions such as gender inequality, poverty, lack of education, child mortality, maternal ill-health, HIV (Human immunodeficiency virus) / AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome), and resulting poor quality of life suffered by women who cannot take part in the development process⁶¹.

3.8. State and Non State Initiatives for Development and Marginalisation of Women Fisher Folk:

Women have a unique position in the society; real development cannot take place if it bypasses women, who do not only represent 50 percent of a world's population but the kernels around which societal revolution take place. There is an emerging need to develop women status. Development is a concept that is equally important to both men. It is the idea of sharing power, of truly giving it away. But sometimes developmental processes are themselves creating hurdles in the path of progress of women especially women from marginalized communities. This can be seen through following lines that how state initiatives for development lead fishing communities towards marginalization:

3.8.1. Changes in Fishing Gears and in Technologies:

A drastic change in the day to day life of the women of fishing communities has been brought by modernisation in the fishery. This included many other people who do not belong to the fishing community into the fishing related activities. For fulfilling market demands, fishing boats are larger than previous ones, controlled by engine and dependent on oil, more investment needed in fishing, need more centralized landings, the gear got larger and efficient. These techniques are avoiding those communities who depend on food for fish. Specially, women are depriving of their traditional skills and thus their percentages of involving in direct fisheries are decreasing.

⁶⁰Stridhan is the term known as the wealth of women. Generally ornaments made with gold or any other precious metal, are counted within this.

⁶¹Maiti, Sameera, (2014), 'A Tough Road Ahead: Intimate Partner Violence during Pregnancy – A Study in Rural Uttar Pradesh', *Sociological Bulletin*, 63 (3), September – December 2014, 384.

Better landing facilities are required for landing larger boats. Therefore the fishermen land their catches at suitable landing centres instead of local landing centres. This practice avoids local women or they have to travel far from their local place for accessing the catch. All women are not allowed for travelling too far. That decreases their participation level in fisheries related activities.

By using larger fishing boats and gears, catches are also too large for handling by women. With these catches they cannot move out for sell and that lead them towards more vulnerable conditions as they are depriving from their traditional fishing practices and create a gap which is fulfilled by male fisher merchants.

Kanya Kumari saw hundreds of women displaced from the work of net making in 1979 – 1980 when the state of Tamil Nadu introduced the net making machine, throwing hundreds of women out of work. The Introduction of nylon nets and then machine made nets was a threat to the subsistence wages of women, the old and the otherwise destitute⁶². In West Bengal, in the place of handmade nets machine nets have been taken place. In initial stage several women were deprived from their occupation.

Women having less access to fish at their local landing places due to the formation of large and mechanised landing centers, they were forced to travel further to access fish. For the more daring ones this was possible. The others fell into being waged workers either cleaning shrimp for the processors or drying the trash fish landed by the trawlers. As the earnings as self employed fish vendors was substantially more than money earned in wage work, those women who needed to make a better living continued to fight all odds putting greater pressure on themselves in order to remain in the fish trade⁶³.

In Kerala Indo Norwegian project⁶⁴ and in Tadri – Karnataka DANIDA Project⁶⁵ in which women fish vendors were included as part of the programme and where an active

⁶²Lukas. J., (1997) 'Fish vendors meet their own credit needs', in Women First, Samudra Dossier WIF series, No 2, ICSF, Chennai, , 86

⁶³Vijayan, Aleyamma, 'The invisible women in Fisheries, Kerala, in Women First, Samudra Dossier WIF series No 2, ICSF, Chennai 1997, 33

⁶⁴The Indo – Norwegian Project in Kerala was started in Kerala in 1953. The goal of the project was to improve the quality of life of the fisher folk and increasing protein consumption among the poor by developing production and productivity of fish. The Project played a vital role in dragging out Indian Fisheries Techniques from traditional towards modern.

women's organisation was also created. Nevertheless the project changed the entire nature of the fishery, a clear example of how changed infrastructure changed fishing technology and thereby permanently denuded the women's spaces in the fishery.

The above paragraph clearly indicates that how even modern technologies have also acting as a catalyst to marginalization.

3.8.2. Increase in the export of dried fish:

The mid 1980s was also the phase when the better varieties of locally consumed fish were exported to distant countries to fetch better prices. While this is the change that brought fishers increased cash returns to invest in newer technologies, new boats, nets, motors, etc. this process gradually limited women's access to several varieties of fish. By the state effort some women have found a space as commission agents, supplying fish to the bigger male whole sellers. Some women also financed the boat owners to make sure that they had the right to the fish landed. But this is not a very significant number. Hence, the fact that some women did do this is enough proof to show that women would have been able to remain in the post harvest market chain if they had been supported by the state in their work. These changes took place in the 1980s when women in the southern states had already begun to organise and demand their rights to fish for marketing and for recognition as workers by the state⁶⁶.

Due to the Export trade women has been affected. Earlier all fish was landed in a bulk and so could not be marketed at a time. Women dried and salted fish and kept them for lean season or whenever they had not good catch for selling. Dried fish created a long chain across the country. For instance, Ribbon fish⁶⁷ carried from Gujarat and giving livelihood assurance to many people of South India in the lean season. But this entire local chain was disrupted due to the export of dried fish to abroad.

⁶⁵Tadri is the small fishing village in Karnataka where Aghnashini river meets with Arabian Sea and making a natural Harbour. The site of Tadri – Karnataka DANIDA Project is Tadri Port where DANIDA (Danish International Development Agency) built a fishing jetty in 1991 for enhancing fishing activity in the region. The main attraction of the project is shell fish, which give livelihood to the local people, but for the making of port, the ecosystem is decaying.

⁶⁶Nayak, Nalini,(1997), 'Women in Movements', in Women First , Samudra Dossier WIF series, No 2, ICSE, Chennai, 97- 99

⁶⁷Ribbon fish is very common in Gujarat and popular for dry fish.

In 1995 – 1998, Ribbon Fish was airlifted fresh to Hongkong which meant that there was no fish for the women vendors in south and north east India⁶⁸.

3.8.3. Credit System:

In certain fishing pockets in India where the matrilineal system exists, the state has come up with credit facilities to buy new boats and nets. The banks, through which the credit was channelled, recognised the men as the fisher and made the loan advances in his name because of the lack of recognition as a women fisher folk by the state. With this system in place, the women lost their rights of ownership of the craft and their right to the catches⁶⁹.

In West Bengal, women are taking loan or credit for their husband's business purpose or for assisting them in another ways. They are not taking loan for their own selves.

3.8.4. Increase in the numbers of fish processing industries:

Although modernisation and technologies lead to new work opportunities, even then after a certain period of time it turns out to be a myth. Further local people are excluded and the migrants get involved. Likewise, in the fishing sector, establishment of fish processing industries are growing day by day and that keep local women fish worker away from these processing plants.

Migrant women labour all the way from distant Kerala and Kanyakumari were employed in the processing industry in Gujarat, Maharashtra and West Bengal⁷⁰.

As women were thrown out of work in Kerala and Kanyakumari, they became the cheap labour to be used in the fish processing plants in Gujarat and other states of India. The entire fish processing industry based in Maharashtra, Gujarat and earlier Vishakhapatnam, in its formation stages, was built on the labour of these migrant women. After 20 years of its inception the processing industry opened up to local labour while

⁶⁸Mathew, Sebastian (2001), 'Gujarat Fisheries: Time to move from an exploitative to conservation and management regime', Samudra Repot, ICSF, Chennai.

⁶⁹Nayak, Nalini (2002), 'Transition or Transformation, A study of the Mobilisation, Organisation and Emergence of Consciousness among the Fishworkers of Kerala, India', Department of Social Analysis – Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary, Madurai, 2002, 68.

⁷⁰Public Hearing on the Struggles of Women Workers in the Fish Processing Industry in India, Samudra Dossier, WIF Series, No. 1, ICSF, Chennai, 1995.

still employing some migrant labour and there are a few from far away as North East India.

Two important institutional factors imposed this change. The first was the Public Hearing organised by women in the National Fishworkers Forum in 1995 on the conditions of migrant women workers in the fish processing plants, and several reports made by women's organisations that caused a hue and cry in the State Assemblies, that drew public attention to the inhuman working conditions of these women. The second was the opening global market that imposed new sanitary standards on the export industry and forced processors to comply with labour standards. The processors were required to improve standards inside the plants and in order to cut costs. They created a putting out system by which the initial peeling process was done by contractors who hired local women labour thereby minimising migrant labour and subsequently for the smaller numbers that were engaged in the plants, they provided better working standards⁷¹.

Process of migration has been effected so many lives of fisher folk communities. Increasing Dowries, social control over women, increased labour burden on women, domestic violence etc. are the consequences of migration. Many women have been migrated from their small fishing villages to big cities adjoining coastline for livelihood management. In cities their working condition with low wages, fed into the hands of the industry. Women migrating alone towards their destination, situation that made her excluded from her families. As Naila Kabeer explained, that exclusion of women makes cultural devaluation. By this process of exclusion women remain marginalised in all their lives.

Some feminists thinkers like Maria Mies and Benholdt Thomson see women as the last colony⁷². Hence, it is very clear that poor women and men together make up the internal colonies and it is also clear that the development of fisheries and other development

⁷¹Hynes, Patricia (1999) *Taking Population out of the equation: reformulating I = PAT*, in Siliman, Jael and Y nestra King etc., *Dangerous Intersections: Feminism, Population and the Environment*, Zed Books Ltd, 39- 70.

⁷²Maria Mies and Benholdt Thomson are the feminist scholars who are focusing on the rural and poor women of third world countries, through their writings. They also illustrate women's position in their book named *Women: The last Colony* as last colony after penetrated by capitalism and concern about their double load of being house wife and peasant.

policies effects fisher folk and causing displacement creating colonies of labour and forcing people to migrate.

3.8.5. Decentralisation and its aftermaths:

In 1990's after implementation of 73rd and 74th Amendments⁷³ of the Indian constitution, women got 33% reservation in local panchayats and governing bodies. Men find it very difficult to agree the new position of the women in society. Men still continue to control over women and her power, so that she cannot favour fishing communities in any way.

Women in fishing community are more aware of the prevailing social problems than the men. They know regarding the results of overfishing with the destructive fishing technologies as indebtedness. They know the impact of commercialisation which destroys social relations and increases the social insecurity in the community. They are trying to go out for assisting their partners and supplement the family income. Thus women of fishing community play a great role for Sustainable Community Development.

Improving women's spaces in fishing communities and their working towards sustainable livelihood requires a more holistic approach of understanding the interlinkages in the economy of the fishing communities, an economy based on a common property living resource, namely fish. Sustaining the fishery itself requires an approach of participatory management and if management has to be life and livelihood centered it requires that women will also play a role in the decision making process in co management. The understanding of the economics of the sector cannot be assessed in terms of 'fish production' but in terms of livelihood sustainability, which requires a different set of parameters from those that are generally used (ibid).

Patricia Hynes constructed a feminist equation to demolish the earlier $I = PAT$ equation in assessing the impact of population, affluence and technology on the environment. By introducing the category of patriarchy, which she spells out in terms of military expenditure, unpaid labour etc. otherwise incalculable or hidden, she arrives at a totally

⁷³The 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments were introduced in September, 1991 in Parliament and passed in December, 1992. It was about the decentralization of government and local self government up to the grass root level. The 73rd amendment is about rural local bodies under the Panchayat Raj Act and 74th is for the urban local bodies under Nagarpalika Act (Municipal Act) of the cities.

different equation and therefore at very different conclusions reaching at feminist conclusions that will lead to social transformation, developing feminist tools, categories and methodologies that are in keeping with a feminist worldview⁷⁴.

3.8.6. Development, Globalisation and Women:

Development is known as a constant requirement and but sometimes it can be achieved on human cost. The development of fishing harbours, the establishment of nuclear plants as in Kalapakkam and Kundamkulam, military bases in Karwar, Balasore etc., tourism industries as in Shankarpur, Mandarmoni in West Bengal and Puri in Orissa etc. and its related hazards are destroying the ethnicity of fishing communities. It is true that such developments have brought jobs for these communities, brought developed infrastructure for increasing their quality of life but it is also true that these developments spoiled the customary rights of fishing communities, changed the concept of community rights into individual rights, from the right to livelihood to the individual right to earn profits. These practises force to increase the level of Domestic Violence due to frustration and aggression⁷⁵ for not achieving the individual target, different types of harassment on women in various field vis a vis mental harassment, sexual harassment, harassment in work place, etc.

Hunger, poverty, repression and social alienation constitute another way to the creation of the situations causing human misery as Johan Galtung mentioned in his Structural Violence theory directly affecting the lives of women in fishing communities.

3.8.7. Growing SHG's and Women:

Micro credit and SHGs are assumed as women empowerment measures but these programmes should be seen from the point of financial markets, the role of banks, corporate sectors which are playing in drawing women as weak players into the market.

⁷⁴Hynes, Patricia,(1999), 'Taking Population out of the equation: reformulating I =PAT, in Siliman, Jael and Y Nestra King (eds)*Dangerous Intersections: Feminism, Population and the Environment*, Zed Books Ltd, , 39- 70.

⁷⁵According to the Frustration- Aggression hypothesis, human being become aggravated after prevention from achieving their desire. A natural build – up of blocked energy seeks release, and aggressive action is directed to the source of one's frustration. The hypothesis has its origin in a 1939. It has been studied by Dollar, Doob, Miller, Mower and Sears.

RBI policies instruct banks to provide credit without collateral to rural users. One will then have to assess the extent to which decentralisation actually benefits the local people and women in particular in developing local infrastructure and asset creation, vis a vis the benefits that have accrued to financial institutions like NABARD and other corporate houses who find an easy marketing network in the SHGs. Exploiting ‘women’s nimble fingers’ in the transition to the IT age in the 1970’s and giving the impression of increased paid jobs for women has now moved to ‘banking on women’s thrift skills’ in the transition to globally integrated financial markets highlighting women’s ability to mobilize and use credit presumably for asset creation⁷⁶.

3.8.8. Role of Legislation:

The legislative framework is the means of articulating the vision and role of the state in assigning rights and conserving resources. There are various legislations that have been put in place either as a result of a proactive stance of the state, demand of the people’s organisations or other informed groups. For example, the Marine Regulation Act, the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification, the Fishermen’s Welfare Fund, etc. There are other groups of legislation like the Rape Law, the Anti- Trafficking Act, The Inter – State Migrant Labour Act which have a direct relation to women as women, workers etc. The framework of these legislations favouring both customary and livelihood rights in one epoch and then individual rights in other (ibid, 15). Mostly these provisions have not been utilised by fishing communities because institutionalised arrangements for implementation do not grounded. So this is the problem for local bodies for effecting mechanisms to safeguard communities’ rights through proper use of the enactments.

⁷⁶Nayak, Nalini (2005) ‘Sharpening the interlinkages: towards feminist perspectives of livelihood in coastal communities’, paper presented in a seminar on *Women’s Livelihoods in Coastal Communities: Management of the Environment and Natural Resources*, Organised by The Institute of Social Studies Trust (ISST) Economical Resource Centre, United Theological College, Millers Road, Bangalore, June 6,2005, 2 –7, retrieved from 182.71.188.10:8080/jspui/bitstream/123456789/52/1/Bangalore%20 % 20 Coastal%2 0 Communities. pdf, accessed on 10.04.16.

3.8.9. Fish worker's Movement and Women Fisher Folk:

The Fish Workers Movement⁷⁷ came in front as non political formation for highlighting the issues of the fisheries related tasks and sustaining the livelihoods of fishing communities. There was a nationwide coastal march from Kanyakumari to protect water and life. This march highlighted in fisheries – nurturing life both in water and land. A Sustainable fishery was the main goal of the struggle. So, it is the part of feminist perspective positively. But women's issues were not highlighted and women had no space in decision making process in those movements.

the organisation of the informal sector which is growing in the country and as it becomes imperative for the sectors to establish their rights over resources, it is only in the forms of organisation and new institutions that are created, that the rightful place of women and their access to resources can be established in the process (ibid,16).

After completing 25 years, various fish workers trade unions, different states, people's organisations and NGO's have played a vital role for securing the rights of fishing communities. There is a vast ground for women in the larger paradigm of patriarchal domain within a particular sector. Other states should take some reference from the fish worker movements.

3.8.10. Natural Disaster Management and Women Fisher Folk:

Disasters in coastal region like big tidal waves of Andhra Pradesh in 1965, Cyclone in Orissa in 1999, and dastardly Tsunami at the end of 2004 which destroyed several lives of coastal fishing communities adjacent to coastline started from Indian Ocean to Bay of Bengal and demonstrated all kinds of aids as capital machine even on human tragedies. Floods of 2015 in different states of India, have affected the lives of fisher folk living on the river banks as in West Bengal many fisher families are residing on the bank of river Hooghly but they have to migrate different places or government shelters for safety. As Women are the main agents of change and Development, she affected by disasters, are

⁷⁷The Fish Workers Movement in India commenced in the mid sixties. It has been grown for different issues in different places in the country between the fisher folk and the State for sustaining fisher folk's right to life and livelihood. It has been against the rapid development process including dam construction and expansion of urban centers.

particularly vulnerable, with relief and rehabilitation efforts being largely insensitive to their specific concerns.

Andhra and Orissa resorted to a green belt cover because it was cheap, effective and sustain for Natural disaster management there are different approaches. Andhra also put in place a community warning system in which people in coastal communities were trained in disaster preparedness and where women in particular played an important role as trainees and community wardens. This was supported by the FAO. But the state bureaucrats attempted to sabotage these initiatives, among other things by reaching out to coastal and disaster prone people in remote areas. By looking at such efforts more intensely will help to compare the different ways in which the state managed such disasters in the pre and post globalisation periods (ibid, 16). It has been known now a day that disaster existing in the development of today and it is very tough to identify the actual beneficiaries.

3.8.11. Fundamentalism, Conflict and Women:

In fishing communities there has been group wise tension for domination on fishing gears. In these inter and intra conflict the role of women either abetting conflict or combating the same. In the race of dominance women's advantages which they have gained through education, mobility or political participation seems to get curtailed by new community controls. In the meanwhile, if any short term interest of local macho protectors of community would clash with these conflicts, fundamental moral and religious values be made visible. The foundation of new forms of values and morality reinforces the new expressions of masculinity that continue to hold women captive. Thus marginalised masses and women are made scapegoats by the fundamental capitalists and global economy.

3.8.12. Coastal aquaculture and Women Fisher Folk:

The demand of sea food is growing day by day. For meeting the demand and keeping the promise of greater supply for greater profit to investor, increment of production is the main target of the department of fisheries. Such a step promotes the privatisation of land,

water bodies and the use of ground water. The introduction of modern techniques raised many problems in coastal communities.

Brackish water aquaculture has been traditionally undertaken in several areas along the west coast of India for several generations. These systems were based on natural cycle, maintained diversity on the one hand and meet the food and work needs of growing coastal communities on the other. The 1990's witnessed an aggressive development of modern and intensive aquaculture on the east coast of India, a development that hit deep at the lives of coastal communities. As a result the communities and mainly women raised a hue and cry and managed to draw the attention of the media and society at large and a PIL case was filed. The Supreme Court ruled in favour of the people and ordered the aquaculture farms to be closed and banned it in certain areas. Because of being development oriented institution rather than a conservation and people oriented aquaculture still goes on and people's struggle against it still continue (ibid, 18).

3.8.13. Commercial use of Coast and Coastal Communities:

The coast of the country are increasingly targeted for their non living resources like oil, minerals or the construction of commercial harbours, military bases and tourism due to diminishing fisheries resources and neo liberal market economy. Fishing communities are quit far away from these non living resource practices. Thus they are not getting livelihood from them. In fact such development not only pollutes the sea ecology and destroy the living natural resources but also collapse the lives of coastal communities.

Several areas of the coast of the country are dangerously polluted. Like the Vapi to Tapi area of Gujarat coast is a much documented area with the Gujarat Ecological Commission cautioning the Government of Gujarat on the high levels of pollution even of heavy metals. Gujarat is the first state in the country that permitted the building of private harbours and like Maharashtra is parcelling out the sea for oil drilling. Moreover, every state government has some dream project. Like the Kalpasar project for the Gulf of Khambat in Gujarat, and Sethusamudram Project in the Palk Straight in Tamil Nadu (ibid, 18). In West Bengal Sagar Deep Sea Port Project is included in these examples. So the lives of fishing communities are just of no consequence in these developments.

From the above discussion it has been cleared that how the state and non state initiatives for development, affect the lives of women of fishing communities.

3.9. Women Fisher Folk and Sustainable Development:

Women fisher folk play a great role in sustainable development for their community. They work hard from dawn to dusk within a long coastline stretch, the famous mangrove forest, and at the mouth of different rivers and riverine of West Bengal. After that they return home and look after their families with smiling face. They cook for them whatever they have good like rice and cheap fish curry at night and usually they take a small amount of wet rice with salt, onion and chilly and store it for next day's lunch at work. Vegetables and pulses they hardly take as daily meal. They have not any complain regarding half feeding themselves but they are very much particular about the quality and amount of food for their families.

More than 50% of fisher women are living in the below poverty line. They earn for their families not for them. They have not any complain after wearing soiled, unclean and cheap clothes. They cannot use soap or hair oil due to poverty. They have not so much of options for recovery from serious ailments. They deliver their babies at home because they feel safe in this practice. They cannot send their children to school. They do not have any hesitation to send them for labour for adding some more in their family income.

After being active in for 16 – 18 hours a day at income generating task as well as domestic task women believe that their husband are the spine of their family and strong hold in their community. They never forget to offer their prayer to the symbolic representation of gods and goddesses of animals, forests, sea and water etc. for being financially sound and well being of their husbands and families. The women of this are very welcoming in nature.

Due to illiteracy and lack of awareness of their rights, the status of women fishers is far inferior to that of men. Moreover, they never think to protest against the eternal inhuman torture and unrecognised ownership meted upon them by male dominance. It has been seen that they are very much helpful to their male counter parts. It has also be noticed that

the women of fishing communities are introvert and obey their husbands for keeping their movements restricted at times.

Their ignorance to prove themselves to be able to contribute to sustainable fisheries development and general lacking of awareness is causing them to face the inhumane living and working conditions violating the labour laws. This is all because of general illiteracy, timid character, landlessness, being suspicious and hungry, but is always praiseworthy as they are seen to be better negotiators and more cool – headed in handling difficult situations and conflicts than men⁷⁸.

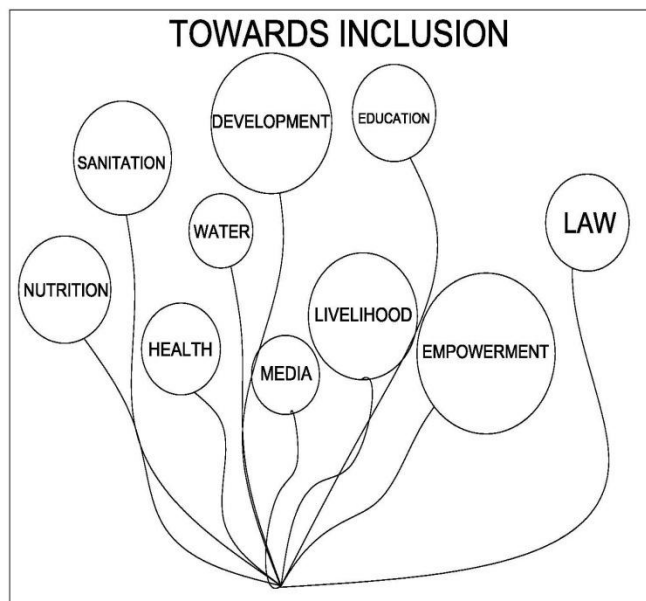
Women in fishing communities play a critical role in family and community stability and development as well as conserve many forms of natural resources extraction. Thus contribute a great part in Sustainable Livelihood Development and that leads to Sustainable Development. The overall development of communities is therefore related to women's reproductive health, literacy level, Socio-economic conditions and decision empowerment all of which have strong bearings on family welfare and therefore community welfare as a whole. Developing livelihood options for women is therefore very important for overall development of qualitative life for individual families and communities in which they live and thus that lead the communities towards sustainable community development.

⁷⁸ Mukherjee, Madhumita, Soma Sen and Basundhara Chatterjee, (2010), 'Fisher Women In Sundarban Wetlands Area', in Pradeep K. Katiha et al. eds *Issues and Tools for Social Sciences Research in Inland Fisheries*, Bulletin No. 163, Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute (Indian Council For Agricultural Research), Barrackpur, Kolkata, 309.

3.10. Measures to address the issues of Exclusion and Marginalisation:

Women can be included in the society when she is able to access all the basic necessities, which are required for a qualitative life; as Martha Nussbaum mentioned some markers for capability enhancement. Development and empowerment can be achieved through proper education, proper nutrition, proper sanitation, proper health, proper and safe drinking water, proper livelihood management, proper enactment of law, proper role of media and after all proper environment to live.

Figure: 3.2. - Measures to address the issues of Exclusion and Marginalisation



Source: - Chakravorty, T., 2015, 'Marginalisation and Women of Fishing Community: An Experience from India' in *Applied Ethics Security, Sustainability and Human Flourishing*, Centre for applied Ethics and Philosophy, Hokkaido University, Japan, 60.

3.10.1. Effective legislation to raise their unheard voice:

Following the declaration of 2001 as the "Year of Women's Empowerment" Government of India has announced that more stringent civil legislation enacted to combat violence against women. Women should not keep silence about violence they face in their day to day life. Breaking isolation and bringing marginalised women together has led to these groups becoming more visible and being able to speak out against the discrimination and

deprivation that they face. It also enables specific groups to begin to voice their needs and demands, which in turn leads to building a collective agenda for change.

Sometimes, the mere act of meeting regularly in a particular place creates visibility and helps others understand that we are not isolated individuals or deviants from the social norm, but a larger group within society that cannot be easily dismissed. Coming together in this way also builds a sense of collective power and inspires the potential for creating larger movements that can challenge social norms and policy at many different levels. Passing of new legislations must be needed.

3.10.2. Growth with Work, Opportunities and Equality for Women:

The process of economic growth must be linked to an expansion in opportunities for women, and must decrease inequalities. Women's access to basic social services must be increased – awareness, access, availability and affordability of education, nutrition and health services must be ensured.

3.10.3. Building Strong Leadership:

Women must be given the chance to speak for themselves, and to become involved at all levels of decision – making so that no decisions are taken without taking their perspectives and interests into account. Women leaders at every level must be supported to build their capacities to function effectively and advance women's interests.

3.10.4. Influencing Stakeholders, Legal frameworks, Legislation and Policy:

Building collective power and voice has also enabled marginalised and stigmatised groups to challenge laws and policies that discriminate against them, at both national and international level. Although some Government initiatives and schemes like Swarna Jayanti Sahari Rojgar Yojana (SJSRY), Indira Awaas Yojana, Janani Suraksha Yojana etc wield much needed hope in this battle for securing social and financial equality. In this respect, Indian Government has taken some more steps like issuing Identity cards and stopping catches of small fish.

3.10.5. Gaining Public Interest by Media Persons and Non Governmental Organisations:

These marginalised women groups through media can influence public attitudes through leaders and jointly creating more pressure on policymakers. NGOs can fill the gap between state policies and the beneficiaries and such initiatives for development should be encouraged by State. As the state is withdrawing its responsibilities in social provisioning, the increasing presence of NGO activity counter the spread of influence of capitalism or can join with more human resources to it as several of them join with the corporate world for development activities.

3.10.6. Starting User Friendly Services:

For upliftment of Women of fishing community some user friendly services should be provided them like alternative vocational trainings, credit trainings, bank loans etc.

One of the strategies that marginalised women's groups have used to tackle their invisibility is research and information generation about their numbers, issues and the particular nature of their exclusion from social, economic and political participation. Available data does not capture the multidimensional nature of work undertaken by women of fishing communities. Not surprisingly, few policies are formulated with these realities in mind. This assumes great importance when the national surveys or census systems in many of our countries have no mechanism for counting women with marginalisation.

3.10.7. Women's Rights are part of Human Rights:

The movement for gender equality must move from being an exclusive concern of women, to being a people's issue⁷⁹. Everyone who is committed to women's freedom and equality must join hands to work together to promote awareness, to mobilise action, to draw the attention of decision- makers, to break social barriers and to ensure justice because women's rights are human rights.

⁷⁹Sen, Kalyani Menon and Ak Shiva Kumar (2001), 'Women in India How Free? How Equal?', Mensa Computers Pvt. Ltd 2001, 9.

3.10.8. Training:

There are four major paradigms used to assess their under development. These are the ones related to technology, economy, structure and value. Among these the technology paradigms is most important, established on the belief that the western countries more specifically the developed countries, are financially rich due to presence of modern technology⁸⁰.

Due to lack of education fisherwomen are far behind from technical skills and knowledge which are required in competitive workplace. Without knowing new techniques women cannot be able to go ahead towards development. On the other hand men are associated with these technical programmes, and they are not allowing women to work with other men in most of the societies.

3.11. Conclusion:

The average Indian fishing family today finds it difficult to earn a livelihood throughout the year. Therefore, the vast potential available among the unemployed fisherwomen needs to be tapped, which can be done by making them capable of doing something remunerative on their own. This however requires that the women are motivated, have a degree of awareness, the ability to think critically and take decisions and above all possess a measure of self esteem. This power has to be acquired, sustained and exercised⁸¹.

In developing countries like India, the main cause behind poverty is the lacking of technological skills. The proper training programme, proper scientific management of programmes, proper implementation of the programme with usufruct rights may improve the social, economic as well as ecological balance. In West Bengal, the fisheries extension officer organise training with proper field demonstration in the block level but can arrange especially for the women at large level so that they can understand their

⁸⁰Mukherjee, Madhumita, Soma Sen and Basundhara Chatterjee, (2010), 'Fisher Women In Sundarban Wetlands Area', in Pradeep K. Katiha et al. eds *Issues and Tools for Social Sciences Research in Inland Fisheries*, Bulletin No. 163, Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute (Indian Council For Agricultural Research), Barrackpur, Kolkata, 304 – 305.

⁸¹Biswas, M.P. and M. R. M. Rao (2014), 'Fisherwomen of the East Coastal India: A Study', in *International Journal of Gender and Women's Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 301.

problems. Moreover some indigenous knowledge can also convey to them. There are some training programmes like 15 days fresh water aquaculture training is carried out at the state fisheries training centre in Kalyani situated in district Nadia for the fish farmers. Brackish water aquaculture training is also carried out at the research station of Pailan. Women participants were get involved in those programmes which show their interests to come forward to work their own. At the State Government level there are 33 various schemes for short term credit facility. Besides those very few women know about these facilities regarding training and credit.

For centuries, the search for social justice has been accompanied by the struggle to understand injustice, to grapple with the rationale behind inequality, discrimination, exploitation, oppression and violence committed by some groups and individuals against others; it is hoped that through this understanding, we can discover more powerful ways of combating oppressive social systems and build better ones. For a long time, most of us believed there was some single power that was behind all inequalities, and that there was one magic stick that could cure all social ills.

But the limitations and exclusions are a reminder to the society that still has to go miles to reach the goals. By recognizing and valuing the labour that goes towards the creation and sustenance of life, we also simultaneously value and respect nature and its resources. Redefining what is valuable also means redefining the power relations that exist between the rich and the poor, between men and women, and between races and nationalities. Such a perspective like feminist perspective is important in the quest for sustainable, equitable and gender-just fisheries.

A feminist perspective seeks to reshape gender relations. Gender issues thus focus not only on women, but on the relationship between men and women, their roles, rights and responsibilities, while acknowledging that these vary within and between cultures as well as by class, race, ethnicity, age and marital status.

Chapter 4

Marginalisation of women in Fishing Community in Jelepara

4.1. Introduction:

After the independence of India, the social indicators of development such as literacy, nutritional status of women and children, infant mortality rate, unemployment rate, and incidence of poverty have been far from satisfactory. This is basically due to inadequacy of social infrastructure and lack of access to basic amenities, especially for the socially and economically marginalised sections of society.¹

The peculiar background against which, issues relating to women initially surfaced in the Indian context, has led to many parallel thought processes and strands making it extremely difficult to come up with an overarching framework within which a cohesive interpretation of a number of fragmented and parallel discourses can be attempted². The persistence of patriarchy at the dawn of the twenty-first century, it is still in many respects ‘a man’s world’³. The tenacity of patriarchy is evident, although great strides in recognising women’s rights have been made in many countries. Despite the dramatic growth of female – headed households and some international gains for women in decision – making and positions of power, the twentieth century did not significantly undermine normative patriarchy. The slow advance of female well – being can be attributed in some instances to the existence of more rhetoric than material assistance or political will. The issues facing women and girls have been ignored for so long that solution will take decades to make a real difference in female lives⁴.

Women as workers are divided on the basis of their work between the secure and the insecure: the well – paid, full – time, trained professionals workers and the poorly paid,

¹Ghosh, Saswata, Ravi Kumar, Indrani Roy Chowdhury and Ramesh Bairy (2006), ‘Social Development Index’, in *India Social Development Report*, Council for Social Development, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

²Raju, Saraswati (2006), ‘Locating Women in Social Development’, in *India Social Development Report*, Council for Social Development, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 77.

³Billson, Janet Mancini and Carolyn Fluehr – Lobban, 2005, ‘The twentieth century as a transformative time for women’, in Billson, Janet Mancini and Carolyn Fluehr (eds) *Female Well – Being Toward a global theory of social change*, Zed Books, London, 7.

⁴ *ibid.*

seasonal, part time, untrained workers. Women at the bottom of the economic strata are in need of a global movement to protect those who are most vulnerable to exploitation in the labour market – females, especially those in developing countries⁵.

Some of the issues concerning human civilisation are product of our consumerist life style and others are the result of the doctrine of domination and power game and therefore need specific attention. Among all these issues, gender has gained primacy in recent discourses on social analysis because of its spread and effect. Women who constitute half of the population have been subjected to the tyranny and oppression of a patriarchal order for centuries and in fact, most of them are suffering from the same fate even today⁶.

The present chapter focuses on the marginalization of women in fishing community in Jelepara followed by case studies, introducing Hooghly district, located in the State of West Bengal, Hooghly – Chinsurah Municipality, which falls under the jurisdiction of Hooghly district and Jelepara, the study area, which is located under Hooghly – Chinsurah Municipality, Hooghly.

4.2. Introduction of Hooghly District:

Hooghly has been introduced as a district of eminence in the annals of Bengal until a very long time. The district has impacted West Bengal to find its place on the historical, social, cultural, political and economic map of India⁷. This district takes its name from the tributary of Ganga, River Hooghly, on the banks of which it is situated, about 40 kms north of Kolkata, the state capital. The great Bengali Kingdom of Bhurshut⁸ was overruled on this place for thousands of years. The Portuguese traders obtained permission for trade in this area from Sultan Mahmood Shah⁹ because in those days

⁵Fluehr – Lobban, Carolyn and Janet Mancini Billson (2005), ‘Towards a gendered theory of social change’ in Billson, Janet Mancini and Carolyn Fluehr (eds) *Female Well – Being Toward a global theory of social change*, Zed Books, London, 376.

⁶Sinha, Debotosh (2005), ‘Empowering Women: A Catalyst in Social Development’ in Narayana Reddy, V. et.al eds *Women in Development Challenges and Achievements*, Serial Publications, New Delhi, 3.

⁷Government of West Bengal (2011) ‘District Human Development Report Hooghly 2010’, Department of Development and Planning, Kolkata.

⁸Bhurisrestha or Bhurshuta was a Hindu empire of medieval India spread across Howrah and Hooghly Districts of West Bengal.

⁹ Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmood Shah reined Bengal from 1435 to 1459.

Hooghly river was the major route for trade and transportation and Hooghly served as an trading port. Eventually, Emperor Akbar gave permission to the Portuguese Captain Pedro Tavares, to establish a city anywhere in Bengal Province in 1579-80 and thus they opted for Hooghly and so it became the first European settlement in Bengal. Later, Hooghly became a structure of mixed European cultures - the French in Chandannagore, the Dutch in Sreerampore and Chinsurah, and Portuguese in Bandel. Initially, British were involved in trade like other countries but later on they became more powerful and in 1690 Job Charnock decided to shift the British trading center from Hooghly- Chinsurah to Calcutta now Kolkata. Consequently, Calcutta port became the centre of trade and commerce and subsequently Hooghly lost its importance. This district was brought under the direct British rule after the Battle of Buxar¹⁰ and merged into the state of West Bengal, after Independence of the country. Thus this district is stuffed with the depictions of the glorious heritage of Bengal¹¹.

The agricultural progress and industrial development have not been a simple and straight process of socio-economic churning here, but have engaged in a vital role to outline the vocation of Gangetic Bengal for centuries together. This district is the birth-place of Sree Sree Ramakrishna and Raja Rammohan Roy and the primary working place of Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, Haji Mohammed Mohsin and Rev. William Carey. Social reforms have had a compatriotic authority on the academic and artistic arena of Hooghly that is obvious in the historical formation of the past which catch the attention of the present generation equally as it had been in the past.

4.2.1. Demography of Hooghly District:

In this section some important demographic denominators are being highlighted which would reveal that fishing communities in this area are weaker section of the society and women, especially from the unorganized sector like fishing are doubly marginalized in urban areas as seen in Hooghly Chinsurah.

¹⁰The Battle of Buxar was fought between the armed forces of British East India Company and Mir Qasim, Nawab of Bengal on 22 October 1764.

¹¹District profile of Hooghly, <http://www.hooghly.gov.in/dllro/pdf/districtprofileofhooghly>, accessed on 28.09.16 at 22.30 hrs.

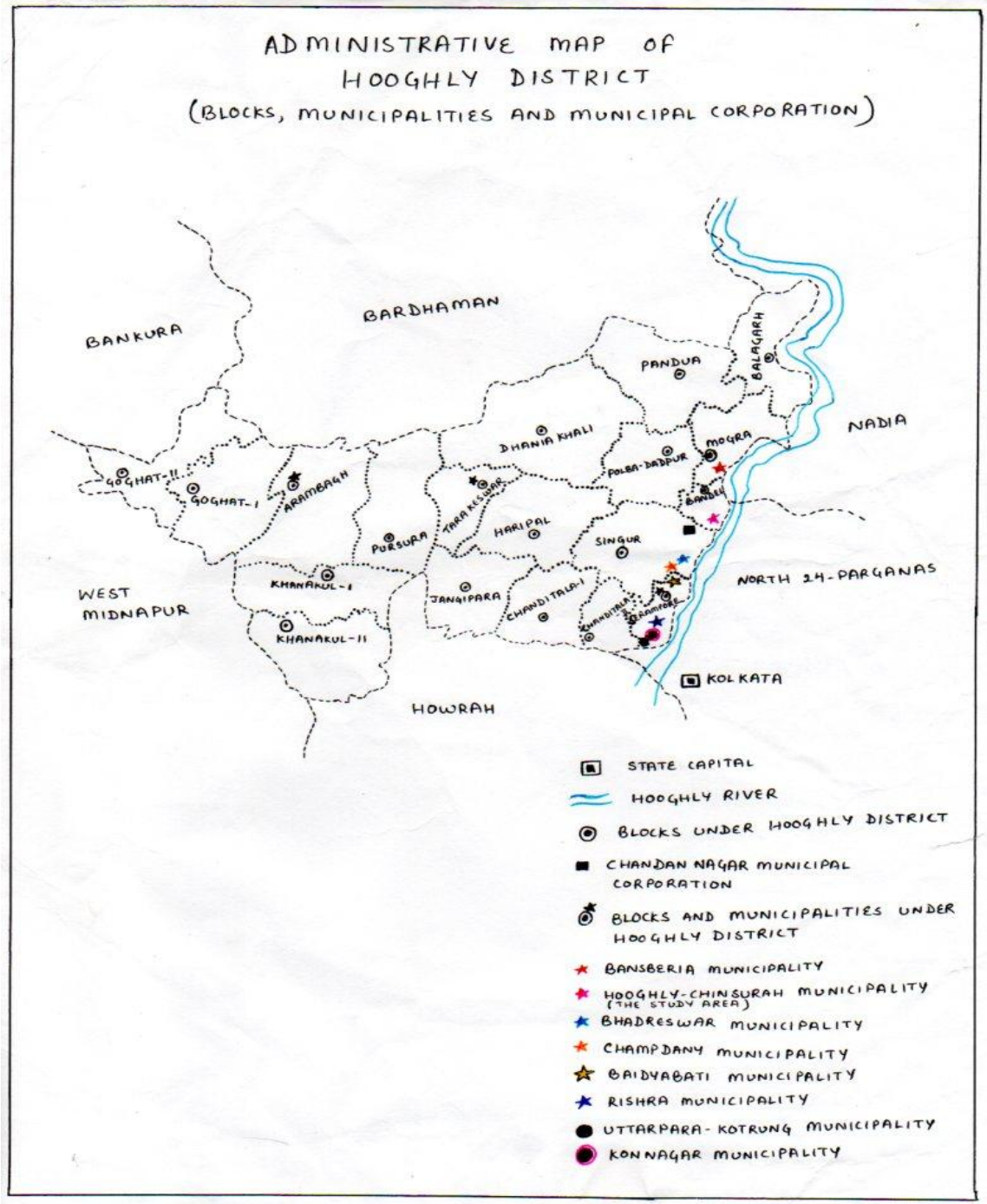
Hooghly has been a forerunner in the field of agro-industrial development sanctified with natural and topographic advantages. The credit for the first automobile plant of the country goes to this district only. This occurrence was based on the remarkable growth in agricultural produce, which is maintained pursued by setting up of numerous jute-mills that projected this district on the top of the growth hierarchy along with Bardhaman. It is one of the few districts in the entire Eastern region of the country that portrays superiority not only in agriculture but in all the sectors - small, medium and large - of industries. In fact, there are very few districts in the country have such a multiplicity of working population consisting of farmers, craftsmen, weavers, boat-makers, fisher folk, mill-workers and artisans in the backdrop of burgeoning urbanisation and the pressures of modernization¹².

A -Population of the district:

The total population of Hooghly District is 5,520,389(Census, 2011). Density of the population is 1,753 persons per km², 6.05% of the total population of West Bengal. Sex Ratio is 958 female per 1000 male population and the child sex ratio is 952 (0-6 age). Average literacy rate is 82.55% in which 87.03 are male and 76.36 are female (Census, 2011). The administrative division of the district has been shown in the following rough map which has been drawn to introduce the location on the basis of available data.

¹²Government of West Bengal (2011), 'District Human Development Report Hooghly', Department of Development and Planning, Kolkata.

Map .4.1. Administrative Map of Hooghly District



Source: Drawn by Researcher on the basis of District Human Development Report, Hooghly, 2011.

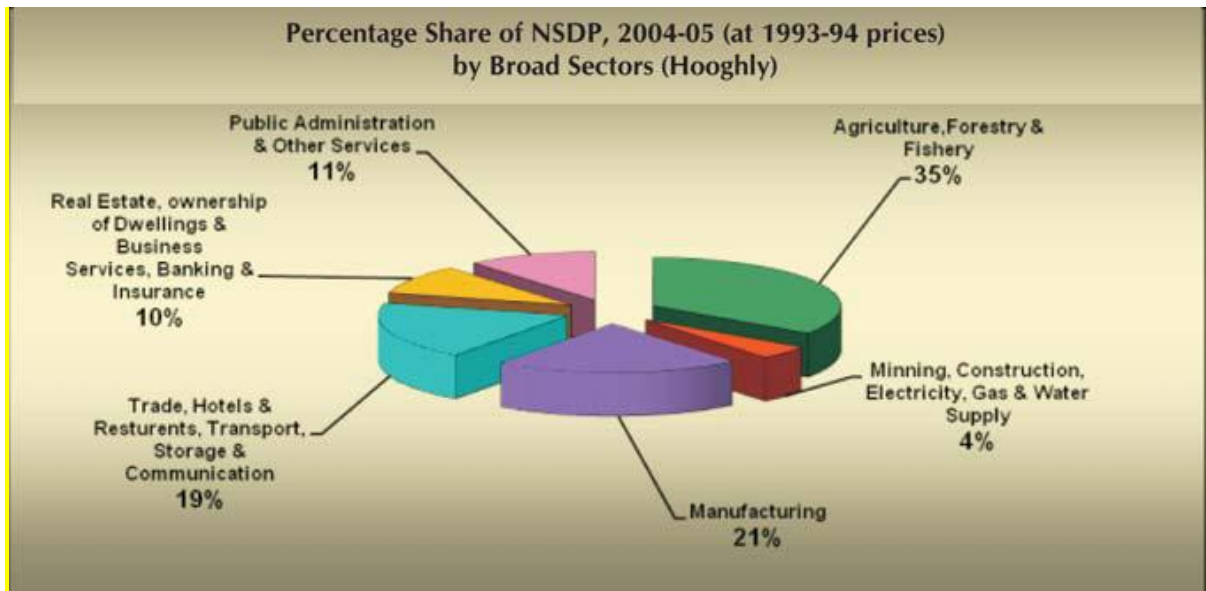
The above map shows the administrative distribution of the district. The Headquarters of Hooghly district is Chinsurah town which is within the Burdwan Division of the State of West Bengal. There are 4 sub-divisions, 18 blocks, 12 municipalities, one corporation in Hooghly district. Among the 12 municipalities, Dankuni Municipality is the newest one, created on 14th January, 2008, under West Bengal Municipal Act, 1993. Total geographical area of the district is 3149 sq km (DHDR, 2011). Municipalities have been shown in different colours and blocks have been shown in black colour and square shaped. Places which are the division of blocks and municipalities as well are indicated by star marks and round shapes.

B. Shares in National State Domestic Product of different working sectors in Hooghly District:

In Hooghly District, there are many sectors which are included in primary, secondary and tertiary Sector. In which the share of public administration and other services in the National State Domestic Product is 11%, the share of real estate, ownership of dwellings and business services, banking and insurance in NSDP is 10%, trade, hotels and restaurants, transport, storage and communication's share is 19%, manufacturing's share is 21%, mining, construction, electricity, the share of gas and water supply is 4% and the share of agriculture, forestry and fisheries is 35% in the National State Domestic Product¹³.The sectoral contribution can be understood by following figure:-

¹³Government of West Bengal (2011) 'District Human Development Report Hooghly', Department of Development and Planning, Kolkata.

Figure: 4.1 Percentage Share of NSDP, 2004-05 (at 1993-94 prices) by Broad Sectors (Hooghly)



Source: District Human Development Report Hooghly, 2011.

It is evident that the sector consisting of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing contributes as high as around 35 per cent of district income, followed by manufacturing (21 per cent) and Public Administration and others (11 per cent). Contribution of fisheries sector is high in the NSDP of Hooghly district whereas the conditions of the people who are involved in this sector are vulnerable and marginalized.

C. Sex Ratio and ‘Missing Women’¹⁴ in Hooghly District:

The sex ratio (defined as the number of females per 1000 males) is an important indicator of health, nutrition and survival status of women. The existence of gender disparity is indicated through the low number of women per thousand of men, which may be caused by female foeticide (girl child is less desired), dowry deaths, lack of proper maternal health care, nutrition etc. Gender disproportion in the attainment of socio-economic indicators of development is a common phenomenon in the developing countries. Generally women are found to be ill-treated in relative terms with men, even within the

¹⁴Government of West Bengal (2011), ‘District Human Development Report Hooghly’, Department of Development and Planning, Kolkata.

same family. 'This is reflected not only in such matters as education and opportunity to develop talents, but also in the more elementary fields of nutrition, health and survival'¹⁵.

In 1992, Sen published an article titled *More than 100 Million women are Missing* where it is argued that the parental preference for sons and unequal access to food and health care for husbands and wives in poor families are responsible for poor sex ratio in the developing countries. This is a matter of poverty and also a serious gender bias. According to Sen, if women were treated by their families in the same way that men are treated, there would have been at least another 100 million women alive today.

As per the 2001 census, Sex ratio of the district (947) is well above the State (934) and country average (933) and it has been improved and reached 958 in the state according to the 2011 census. Nonetheless, there is wide variation in sex ratio across various blocks and municipalities of the district. In Hooghly district, the sex ratio is high, above 1000 in Chanditala-I block and Khanakul II block, while it is a shocking 785 in Champadani municipality. Also, the sex ratio is much lower in the municipalities and Municipal Corporation than in the blocks. Of the eleven, only two municipalities, Hooghly-Chinsurah (M) and Arambag (M) have a sex ratio higher than 950, while six municipalities, Bansberia, Tarakeswar, Serampore, Bhadreswar, Rishra and Champadani are below 900. That is, the sex ratio is worse in the urban areas than in the rural areas¹⁶.

D. Measuring Gender-disparity and Missing Women:

Uneven sex ratio is one of the major determinants of gender disparity. Standard gender equality implies 50:50 sex ratios, in other words, it is 1000 females per 1000 males. The divergence of the number of females per 1000 males is a measure of gender disparity. Intuitively, the shortfall of the number of adult females per 1000 males can be considered as *gender parity missing women*. Another measure of missing women is the difference in the ratio of female child to total child between age 0-6 and the ratio of adult female to the total population including various age groups. This can be called *Juvenile sex parity*

¹⁵Sen, A. (2002), 'Forward', in Sakiko Fukuda-Parr and A. K. Shiva Kumar (eds.) *Human Development, Essential Readings*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

¹⁶Government of West Bengal (2011), 'District Human Development Report Hooghly', Department of Development and Planning, Kolkata.

missing women. Gender disparity missing women is found both in urban and rural Hooghly but Juvenile sex parity missing women is mostly found in urban Hooghly¹⁷.

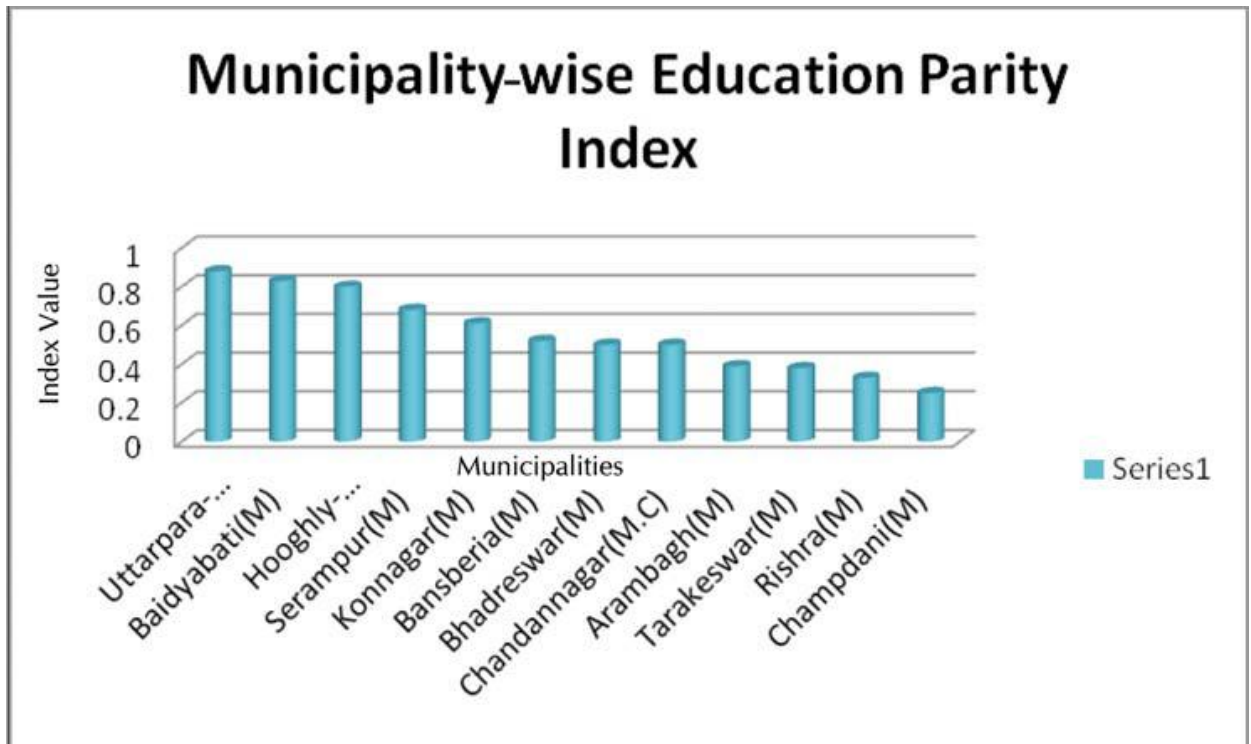
E. Gender and Education in Hooghly District:

Formation of human capital is central to the notion of human development. It is considered as one of the fundamental means for expanding opportunities, building capabilities and safeguarding freedom. Access to education is essential for making informed choices and participation in political and economic process. Gender differences in educational attainment are one of the important indicators of relative well-being of women. In Hooghly, the general literacy rates are quite good. The average literacy rate for the district is 75.1%. But there exists a difference in the rates between men and women. While the average literacy rate for men are 82.6% that for women is 67.2%. The lowest female literacy rate is recorded in Polba-Dadpur block (57.3%), while the highest is in Uttarpara-Kotrung Municipality (83.3%). It has been revealed that, the municipalities, in general have a higher rate of female literacy than the blocks. The enrolment rates and the retention rates of children are not very promising. However, in many areas, the enrolment and retention rates among girls are higher than boys. But the scenarios of the urban slums are different from this fact. In Bansberia, Bhadreswar, Konnagar and Rishra municipalities, the retention rates are 100% among both boys and girls¹⁸.

¹⁷Government of West Bengal (2011), 'District Human Development Report Hooghly', Department of Development and Planning, Kolkata.

¹⁸ Government of West Bengal (2011), 'District Human Development Report Hooghly', Department of Development and Planning, Kolkata.

Figure: 4.2. – Municipality wise Education Parity Index.



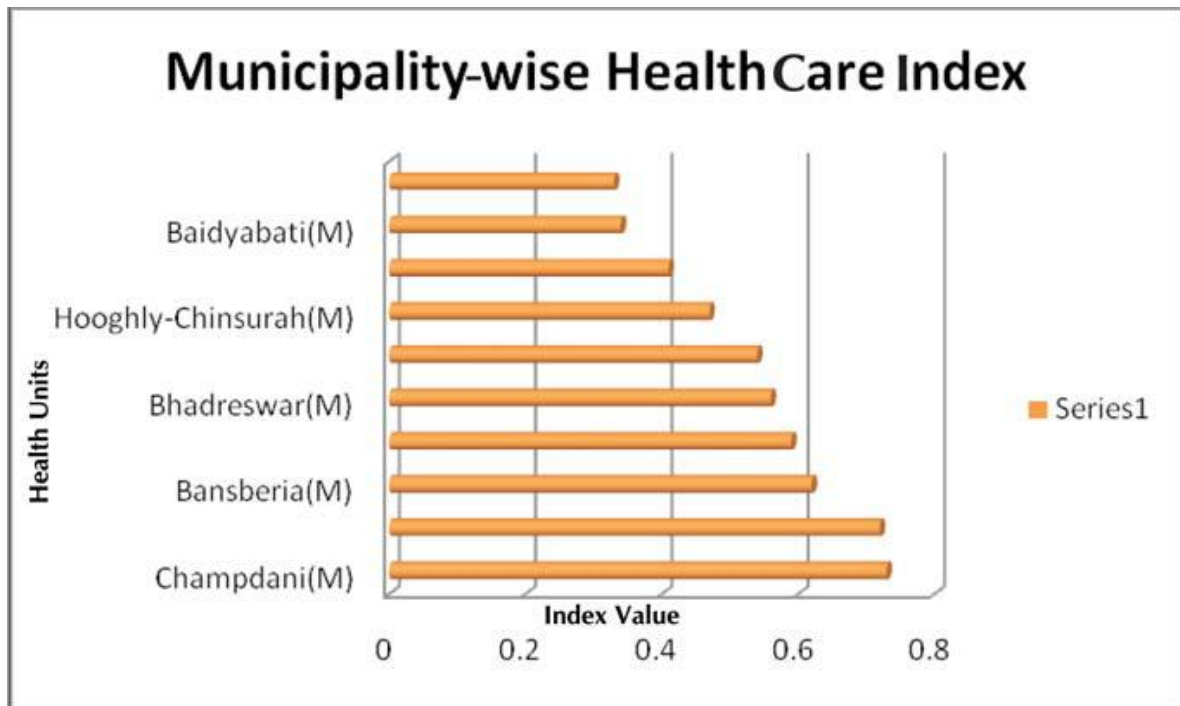
Source: - District Human Development Report, Hooghly, 2011

It has been shown in the above map that among the municipalities in Hooghly District regarding education, Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality ranks third after Uttarpara – Kotrung Municipalities and Baidyabati Municipality respectively.

F. Gender and Health disparity in Hooghly District:

In the following chart shows the disparities that how the municipalities are different in the case of maternity health care.

Figure: 4.3 Maternal Health Care Disparity Index



Source: -District Human Development Report, Hooghly, 2011.

Among the municipalities of the district, Champdani(M) experienced with best performing municipality in terms of maternal health care services while Baidyabati(M) is the worst performing municipality in the District in this regard. In this index Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality ranks fourth.

Another vital challenge in front of the women of weaker section of the society is the fuel for cooking. Indoor Air Pollution (IAP) generates while cooking and create a serious health hazard. Though this hazard was largely neglected for a long time, it now appears from various studies that this particular hazard is even serious than unsafe drinking water. Women and children below five years are the most affected by this pollution and this problem assumes alarming proportions in the backward slums of urban areas and rural areas of the country. Popular bio-fuels used are wood, coal, cow dung and crop residues. These generate pollutants like carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, formaldehyde, benzene and carcinogens like benzopyrene. They pose serious health hazards and are potentially more dangerous as the victims are forced to live in very close proximity to the

source of pollution¹⁹. The long hours of cooking that woman have to put in makes them extremely susceptible to various diseases.

4.3. Hooghly – Chinsurah Municipality:

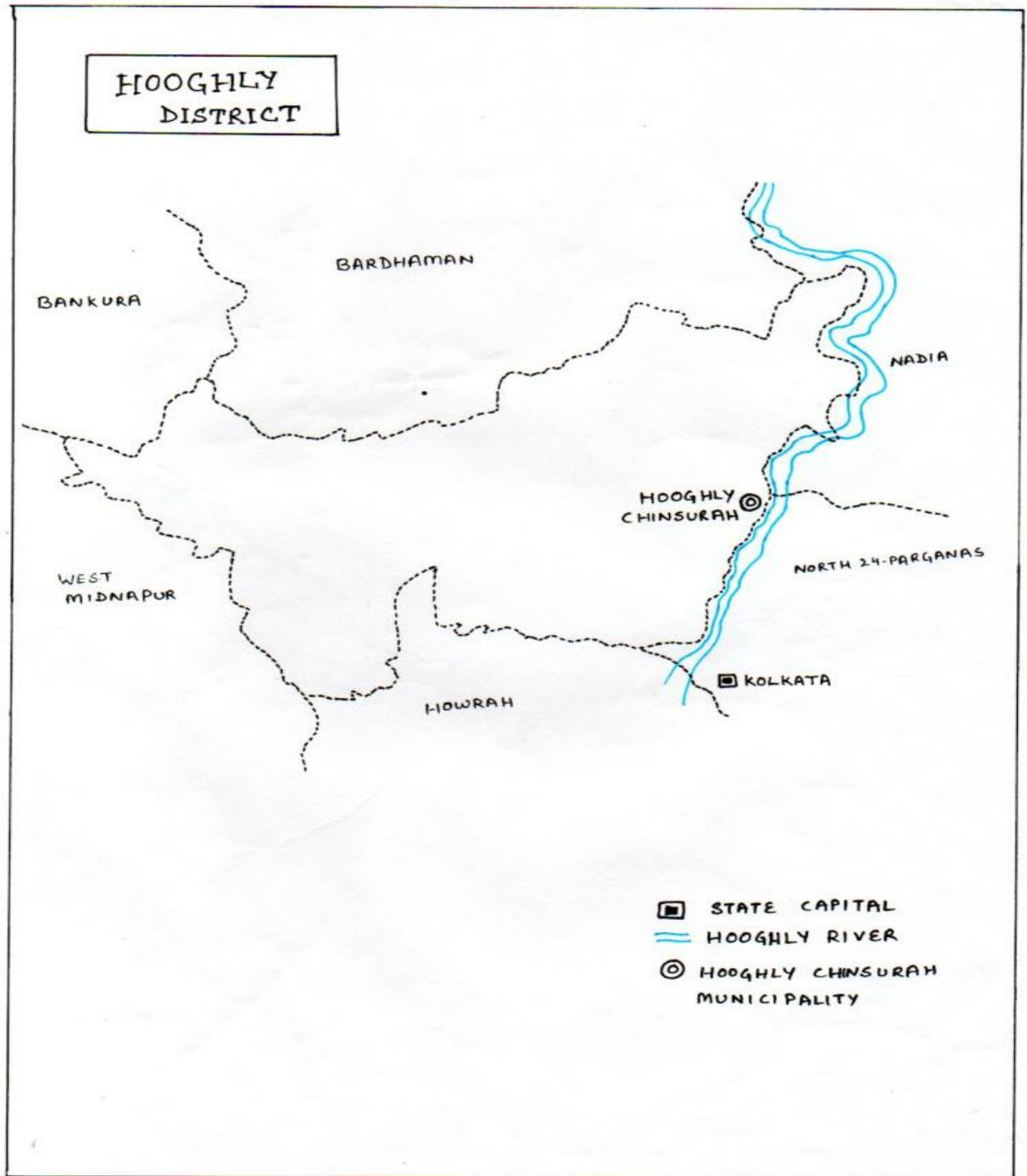
Chinsurah, a city situated just in the south of city Hooghly, was a significant Dutch settlement in 17th century. The Dutch built a factory there in 1656 in Chinsurah and structured the town as their trading centre in 1795. At the time of the Napoleonic war, the settlement was taken by a British battalion. Once more during the peace process of 1814, Chinsurah was given back to the Dutch, but ultimately, Chinsurah, like other Dutch settlement in India were passed onto the British in 1825 in exchange for their possession in Sumatra²⁰.

Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality was recognized in the year of 1865 with Mr. Cockrell as its first Chairman and Mr. G.S. Park as its first vice chairman. Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality is one of the oldest municipalities of greater Bengal. In 1865, Hooghly – Chinsurah Municipality was created by the union of Hooghly and Chinsurah towns mainly with the purpose of local governance and tax collection. The location of the municipality in the Hooghly District is shown in the following map rough map which has been drawn for introducing the location on the basis of available data.

¹⁹Government of West Bengal (2011), 'District Human Development Report Hooghly', Department of Development and Planning, Kolkata.

²⁰HCM (2015), 'City Development Plan 2014 – 15 -2018 -19', Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality, 72.

Map .4.2. Location of Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality in Hooghly District



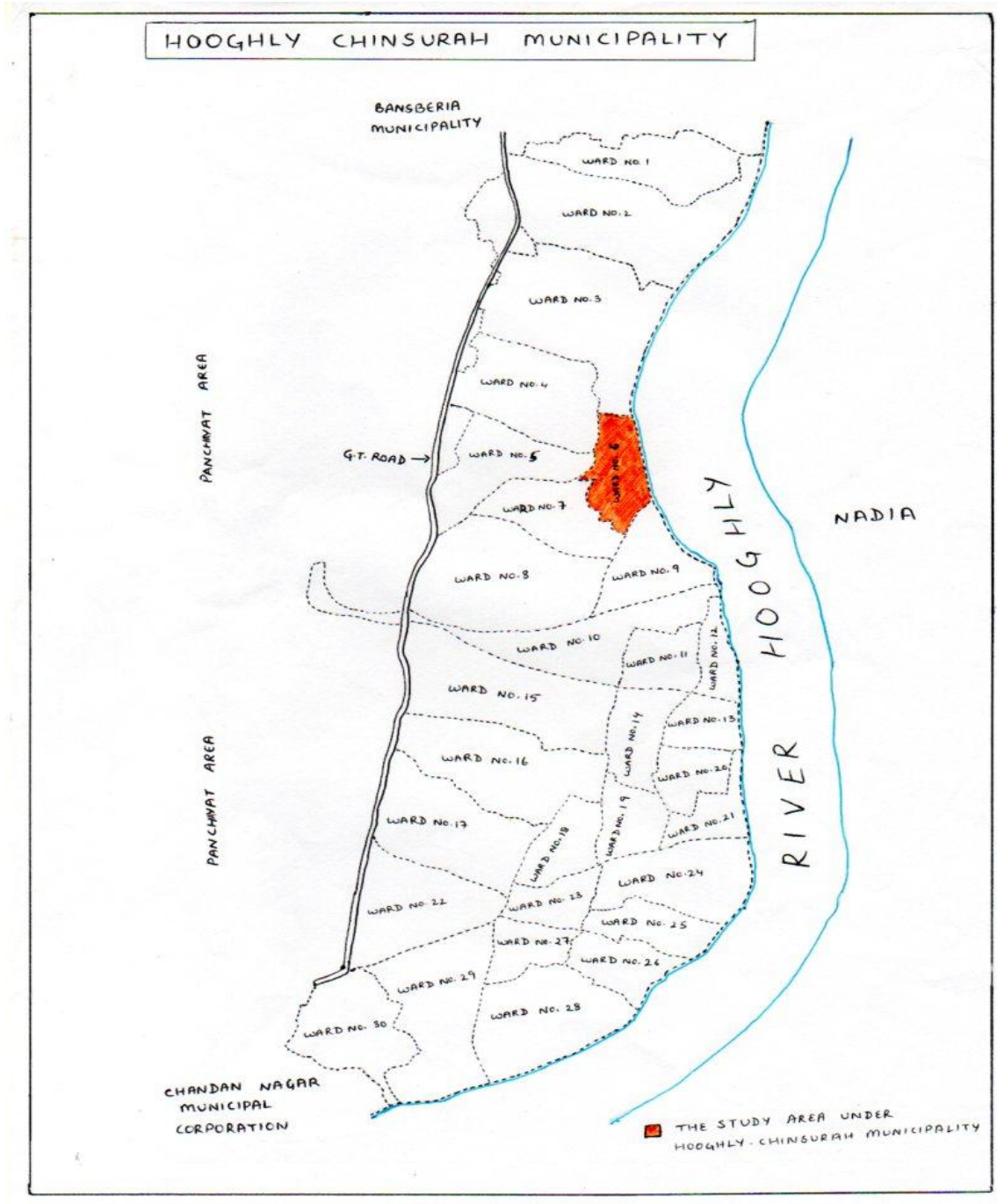
Source: Drawn by researcher based on field visits.

The above map shows the location of Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality in the Hooghly District on the river bank of Hooghly and north of the state capital Kolkata.

Currently the municipality has 30 wards covering a total area of 17.29 sq. Km. The population of Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality is around 1.77 lakhs as per 2011 census, including 88844 Male and 88415 Female, which attributes to its predominant position within Hooghly District and its surrounding. The total literate people are 137409 including 69504 male and 67905 female, which is 80% of the population. It is also the District Head Quarter as well as Chinsurah is the Divisional head quarter of Burdwan Division²¹. The administrative division of Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality can be understood by following rough map which has been drawn for introducing the location on the basis of available data.

²¹ Ibid, 73.

Map .4.3. Administrative division of Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality



Source: Drawn by researcher based on the data available in Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality

In the above map, thirty wards have been shown which are under Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality. Ward no 6 which has been coloured in orange, is the study area, located on the bank of river Hooghly.

At present Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality has identified 232 numbers of slums within 30 numbers of wards. Total population of the slums (as per USHA²² survey) is 59000, which is 29.45 % of the total population. It has 2 Government Hospitals, 33 Municipal Health Sub Centre, 2 Municipal Ambulance, but it does not have a single Municipal Maternity Home and Regional Diagnostic Centre. It has 2Nos of Municipal Primary school but it does not have any Higher Secondary School on its level and *Shishu Siksha Kendra* also. The municipality has 2205 Nos of beneficiaries under Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS). 1655 Nos of beneficiaries are under Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS) and 112 Nos of beneficiaries under Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS). But no data available regarding *Annapurna Antodaya Yojana (AY)*, *Annapurna Anno Yojana (AAY)*, *Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY)*, *Kanyashree* scheme and *Yubashre* scheme.²³

Twenty first Century is regarded as the Century for Urbanisation. The index of urbanisation in West Bengal is a little higher than that of the national average, calling for the greater need for planned intervention. Total urban population in the State is to the tune of 29.1 million is distributed across 128 towns covering only 3% of the total land area of the State. The urban population is likely to increase at a faster rate and expected to reach 38 million in 2021. This increasing urbanisation has manifested congestion, led towards inadequate water supply, lack of proper sanitation, health problems and environment degradation and hazards. A large number of urban sprawls have grown during the last few decades which have added considerable increase of slum population. Pressure on habitable land is increasing, resulting conversion of vacant land of various other uses particularly for housing and other commercial activities. All such are thereby leading to unplanned development. On the other hand, this rapid pace of urbanisation has created both opportunities as well as challenges not only to provide adequate physical

²² Urban Statistics for HR and Assessment (USHA) for urban poor settlements.

²³ Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality, E- News_January_2016_HCM, accessed 20.04.16 at 14.00 hrs.

and social infrastructure to sustain the growth but also to ensure holistic development and to provide proper living environment to these huge urban populace.

There are 140 slums within the municipal jurisdiction covering about 3.5sq km. in aggregate. About 59,000 population lives in these slums. Thus, about 32% of municipal population is accommodated on 20.24% of land area²⁴.

4.3.1. Livelihood of the people

In this municipal area, 4534 are marginal workers, within which 23 cultivators, 37 agricultural labourers, and 1416 are household workers. 52155 are the main workers.

The Municipality is not characterized by the predominance of the industrial sector. There are small-scale industries of varied nature ranging from mosquito net and umbrella making to petty engineering activities. Trading and other service industries are occupying an important position in the industrial setting as a consequence of the creeping urbanization. Fish trading of vital importance covers a large area in municipality.

4.3.2. Environment and Geographical distribution

The Hooghly River flows by the eastern boundary of the Municipality and it is placed 40km. north of the state capital Kolkata. Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality is encircled by Bansberia Municipality, Bandel Gram Panchayat, Kotalia 2 and Kotalia 1 Panchayat and Chandernagar Municipal Corporation in the north, north-west, west, south-West and south respectively. It is located between 22° 54'4' north latitude and 88 ° 23'46'' east longitudes²⁵ in the world. In the north there is Dunlop Factory,²⁶ Sahagunj, situated under the Bansberia Municipality.

²⁴ HCM (2015), 'City Development Plan 2014 – 15 -2018 -19', Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality, 72.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Dunlop India Limited set up the first tyre manufacturing plant in Asia on a 239 – acre plot of land at Sahagunj. The plant which started its production with of variant vehicles including aircraft, and closed production in 1996.

Hooghly River or the Bhagirathi – Hooghly²⁷ River is an approximately 260 kilometers long distributary of the Ganges River²⁸ in West Bengal, India. The river divides from the Ganges as a canal in Murshidabad District at the Farakka Barrage²⁹. The town of Hooghly – Chinsurah was formerly known as Hooghly. This town is located on the river, in the Hooghly District. The origins of the name of Hooghly River are not known, whether the city or the river derived the name first. Like the rest of the Ganges, the Bhagirathi – Hooghly is known to be sacred to Hindus, and its water is believed to be holy. Bhagirathi – Hooghly river system is an essential lifeline for the people of West Bengal in general and Jelepara in particular. Through this river only the East India Company sailed in to Bengal and established their trade settlement – Calcutta, which had been grew up to be one of the greatest cities of the world. The river provides plenty of water supplies to the plains of West Bengal for irrigation, industry and human consumption. The river is navigable and the major transport system in the region with a huge traffic flow. The fish from the river are essential for the local economy and people as well.

4.3.3. Transportation

Traffic lifeline of the twin town Hooghly and Chinsurah are Howrah- Bandel main line railways, Bandel-Naihati railways and the Great Grant trunk Road (NH-2), which run through the western boundary of the Municipality mostly, except few small segments on their eastern side. Hooghly-Chinsurah is also connected with Naihati through ferry services across the River Hooghly. The district headquarter of the Hooghly District has several other important traffic and transport network. As per the GIS records of the

²⁷In the upper course of the river, it is generally known as the Bhagirathi, until it reaches Hooghly. The literal meaning of the word Bhagirathi is caused by ‘Bhagiratha’, a legendry Sagar dynasty prince who was involved in bringing the river Ganga from the heavens on to the earth, in order to release his 60000 grand uncles from a curse of the saint Kapila.

²⁸ In Murshidabad district, the Hooghly River runs parallel to the Ganges, past Dhulian and just above of Jahangirpur, where the canal ends, the river takes another course. In the south of Jahangirpur, Hooghly River leaves the Ganges area and flows towards south. After passing through Bahararampur, Bardhaman Districts, Nadia Districts, it initially forms a boundary between Nadia District and Hooghly District at Kalna, then further south between Hooghly District and North 24 Paragnas District, after flowing past Halisahar, Hooghly- Chuchura, Kamarhati, the River turns to the south west and enters the twin cities of Kolkata and Howrah. At Nurpur, it enters an old channel of the Ganges, turns south and empties into the Bay of Bengal.

²⁹ The Farakka Barage is a dam that transfers water from the Ganges into a canal near Tildanga in Murshidabad district. The canal supplies water into the Hooghly.

Municipality, total length of 2758 roads (including all lanes and by lanes) of the Municipal area is 321.31 km. Of which almost 42 percent are all weather roads, total length of such roads being 134.33 km. The Barddhaman-Howrah Main Line (via Bandel), the Katwa – Howrah line (via Bandel) and the Bandel –Naihati line of the Eastern Railways connects this area with Kolkata, Barddhaman, Katwa and other important places.

4.3.4. Climate of the place

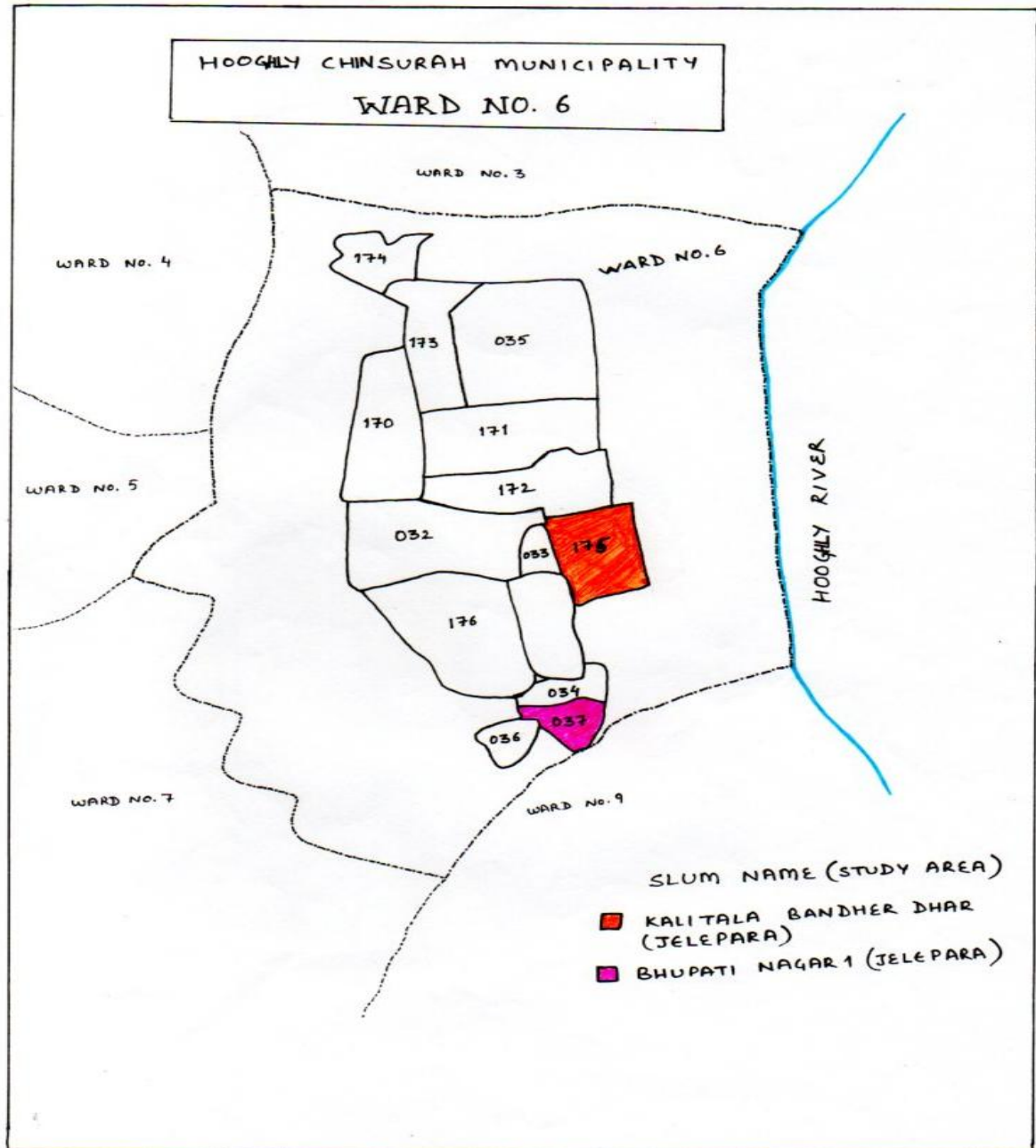
The maximum temperature of Hooghly – Chinsurah city is 42 degree Celsius and minimum is 28 degree in summer (April – Mid June). During monsoon (Mid June-August) the maximum rainfall is 30 to 40 centimeter per year. During winters (November – January) the temperature varies from 9 degree Celsius to 20 degree Celsius. The average temperature of Hooghly – Chinsurah City during Spring and Autumn is between 16 degree Celsius to 24 degree Celsius.

4.4. Jelepura (The Study Area):

‘Jelepura’ is the local name of the fishing ‘Clan’³⁰ or ‘Slum’, where fisher folk are residing. ‘*Jele*’ is the local Bengali term which means ‘the person who is catching fish and allied with fishing related activities’ and ‘*Para*’ means a smallplace where people reside, so the term ‘Jelepura’ means the place where fisher folk reside. It is located in Ward no 6 under Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality on the river bank of Hooghly in West Bengal. Jelepura covers two slums namely Kalitala Bandher Dhar and Bhupatinagar 1, which are known as Jelepura. Following rough map shows the exact location of two slums known as Jelepura with slum code, which has been drawn for introducing the location on the basis of available data.

³⁰ A large group of people united for some common trait or purpose and share an interest or common aim.

Map .4.4. Demarcation of slum in ward no 6 of Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality



Source: Drawn by researcher based on the data available in Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality

In the above map all codified slums (by Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality) have been shown under the ward no 6. Slum code no 175 is Kalitala Bandher Dhar, coloured in orange and slum code no 137 is Bhupati Nagar 1, coloured in pink, are known as Jelepara.

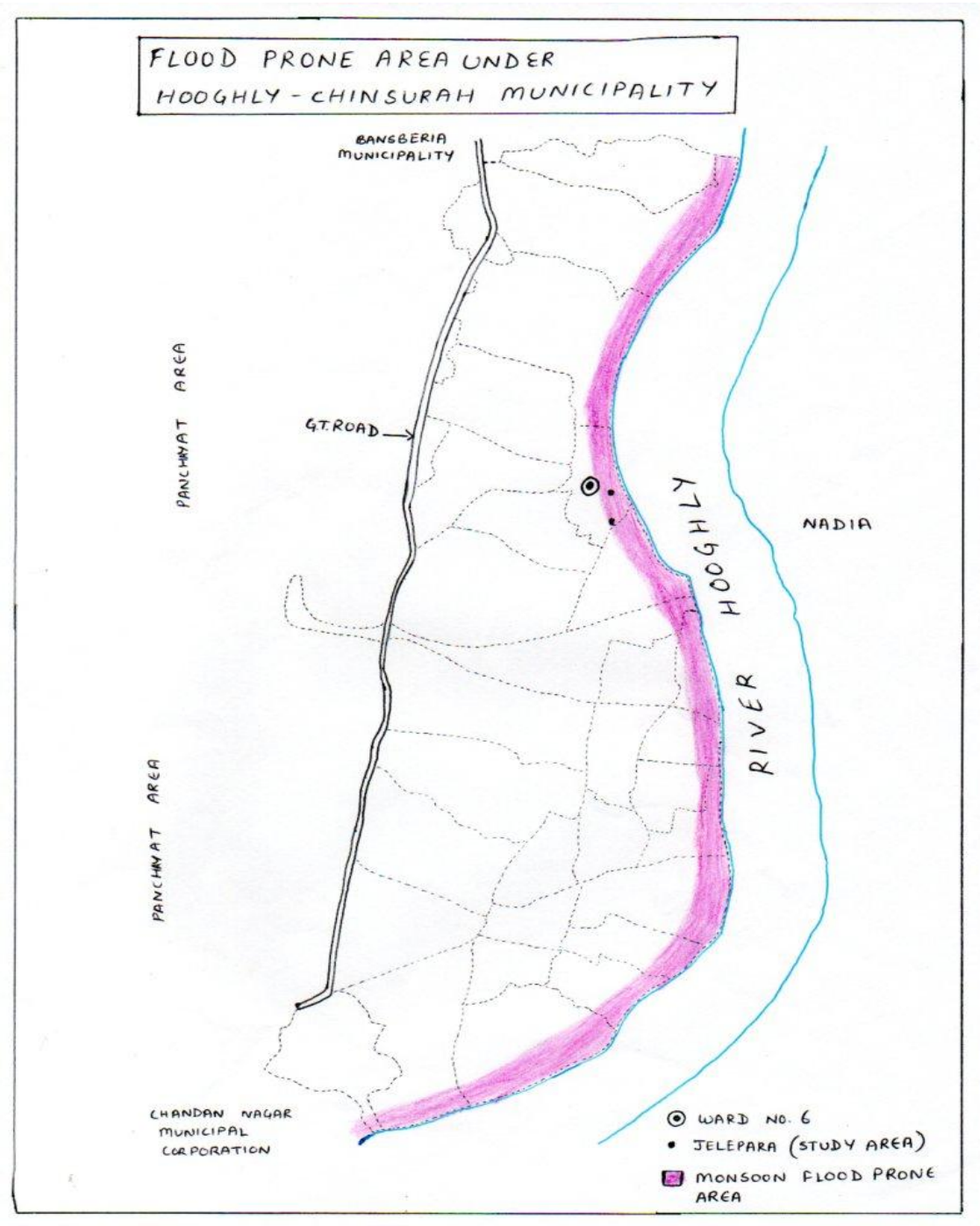
4.4.1. Environment and Location of Jelepara:

Jelepara is located at the bank of River Hooghly on the eastern side, which is the lifeline of this fishing urban slum but in summer, the river starts to recede, that creates problem and become threat for their livelihood. In rainy season, they have to go so far for fish catch with so much of life risk because this place is the flood prone area of the locality. Flood water becomes curse for the people of Jelepara and the women of this place are the main victims of flood. As it has been shown in the map below that in Hooghly district, Jelepara is situated in the flood prone area. Every year, during the month of July and August, which are the flood prone months for Jelepara; flood water gets into the most houses in these months in Jelepara. Some houses are totally under the flood water in the rainy season. In such a pitiable condition many fisher folk families have to move towards government shelters³¹, leaving all their basic amenities in their homes for floating in the water. Sometimes they have to shift towards government shelters with their cattle also. During flood time very few fisher folk can go for fishing, most of the fishermen are get involved in managing their lives for survival from flood so they have to sleep with half filled stomach. The condition of women and children in this time are more vulnerable.

In Hooghly District, there are many places under municipalities and blocks that are facing floods during rainy seasons because of the rising water levels of river Hooghly and other rivers flows in the district. There are so many slums situated at the bank of river Hooghly, in the city of Hooghly- Chinsurah that is under the threat of flood during every monsoon. Jelepara the study area, under the ward no 6, Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality, is one of them. Due to floods, the people of the area are facing life threatening problems. The following map which has been drawn for showing the areas of the Hooghly-Chinsurah which are flood prone, marked with pink colour. The study area is also covered in this map and coloured in pink, in the bank of river Hooghly.

³¹ During flood situation, the affiliated schools of Government of West Bengal are directed to provide shelter. So that people of Jelepara can shift there and save their lives. Mostly two affiliated schools are getting order every year one is Hooghly Gour Hari Harijan Vidyamandir and the second one is Hooghly Girls School.

Map.4.5. Flood Prone Area of Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality (including Jelepara)



Source: - Drawn by researcher based on field visits and District Human Development Report, Hooghly, 2011.

In the above map it has been shown that the area situated on the bank of river Hooghly are flood prone areas. Jelepara the study area also falls under this zone which is the major challenge of survival of the people of this area.

During the monsoon period, the inhabitants of Jelepara faces tremendous threats various kinds of diseases such as diarrhea, typhoid, malaria, Jaundice, and other water born diseases. Women in this condition prove to be the most vulnerable as they are easily infected. Other problems for these inhabitants are snake bite, insects bite, etc.

Fuel, is another challenge for them. They use fire wood and kerosene oil for cooking food with spoiled and smoky stoves. These practices are more harmful for their health than smoking tobacco. The situation worsens during flood times as the basic fuel is also being not reachable for them and hard for them to collect.

Soil erosion is also one of the big threats for the people of Jelepara. Every year after flood they are not only losing approx one feet of their cultivation land as submerged with water, but also their houses and livelihoods.

The capacity to collect fish also varies season to season. In summer as the receding of the river water level goes down and it becomes a challenge for the fishing communities for livelihood. In the other hand, in winters, they have to travel many miles to collect river fish as it is difficult to catch fish in high tides. For good accumulation of fish they have to wait in mid river through whole night. Sometimes they return blank hand also after giving his best to get a good catch.

4.4.2. Administrative structure:

As mentioned above Jelepara is located under the Hooghly – Chinsurah Municipality's Ward no -6. The ward has fourteen slums consisting 5360 people as per Census 2011, in which 2642 are male population and 2718 is female population. There are 1187 households in Ward no- 6. In the ward 4250 people are literate that is 79.29% of whole population. But the fact is that among female population only 58.86% are literate. The fourteen slums are - Bhupati nagar (Slum Code – 0034), Nimtala (S. Code – 0036), Baral Ghat (Puransha) (S. Code – 0176), Kalitala (Purbansha) (S. Code – 0173), Haldarpara

(S. Code – 0171), Kalitala Kalinagar(S. Code- 0032), Charaktala (S. Code – 0035), Bhupati nagar 1 (S. Code – 0037), Kalitala Bandher Dhar (S. Code – 0175), Kalitala (Uttaransho) (S. Code- 0174), Kalitala (Sashandhar) (S. Code – 0172), Kalitala (Madhanchal) (S. Code – 0170), Chandni Ghat (S. Code – 0177), Kalinagar Paschimansha (S. Code – 0033).

Amongst the above mentioned slums two are chosen for case study - Bhupati nagar 1 (S. Code – 0037) and Kalitala Bandher Dhar (S. Code – 0175). They are jointly called Jelepara by the local people because of fisher folk population. These slums are existing since 45 and 40 years accordingly, acquired 22000 and 25000 sq. metres of area. These slums are located on a fringe area³². Bhupati nagar 1 is a notified slum, by the Hooghly – Chinsurah Municipality, the year of notification of this slum is 2004 under private land ownership whereas Kalitala Bandher Dhar is a non notified slum under the land ownership of Government of India, the total population³³ of these two slums is 808 (as per survey conducted by Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality). In which female population is 396, which is 49.5% of the total population.

4.4.3. Transport Facilities:

As mentioned above the Municipality area is well connected with rail and water route. Jelepara is 1 km far from the main traffic road which is called Bally – Bandel More, which is connected to the three railway stations. Hooghly station is approx 4 kilometers far from this juncture, which is connected to the Bardhaman – Howrah main line, Bandel Jn is approx 2.5 kilometers far from this place, which is connected to the Bardhaman – Howrah main line, Katwa – Howrah line and Bandel – Naihati line, that connects Sealdah, Kolkata and Hooghly Ghat station which is also 2.5 km far from this juncture, connects Bandel – Naihati line.

Except railway services, Bally – Bandel More is connected with public ferry service also which is 5 kms from this place, in Chinsurah. Ferry service is available for crossing the

³² Fringe areas are known as an area on an outer edge or periphery with less importance.

³³ Including the population of Bhupati Nagar 1 consisting 140 people in which 70 are males and 70 are females and the population of Kalitala Bandher Dhar having 179 people residing there in which 91 are males and 88 are females.

river Hooghly and connects Naihati. After walking 1 km, the inhabitants of Jelepara are connected with all these transports facilities. But the dilemma is that the developmental benefits are not reaching to them properly.

4.4.4. Living Condition:

There are total 171 total households in Jelepara, including 82 in Bhupatinagar 1 and 89 in Kalitala Bandher Dhar .Out of total households only one house is semi *pucca*³⁴ and the rest are *kuccha* houses.³⁵ In summer, it is very hard to survive in these houses because of teen sheet's roof and during the rainy season its tuff to survive with leaking rain water from the roof which is made up of straw. In winter, they people sleep at night facing cold air which comes through the holes of the wall, which is made up with '*Dorma*'.³⁶ Many of the houses have doors made up of bamboos. There is a very small window in their houses, covered with the piece of ragged cloth. Although municipality is taking initiatives for providing them good housing like by the programmes under 'BSUP'³⁷ and 'Housing for all'³⁸ but for attaining those programmes they have to deposit initially Rs. 25000 at a time. This has become a great hurdle for them, because the people who are not able to survive properly due to the lack of basic needs, this is very challenging for them to meet this expenditure at a time. There are so many schemes for housing for fishing folk from the Department of Fisheries, Government of West Bengal, (which will be described in the next chapter) as 444³⁹ fisher folk family got housing facility in the district of Hooghly but the people of Jelepara are not in a position to avail.

³⁴ Semi pucca house means a house made up of mud and brick and the roof is made up of tinsheets or roof tiles.

³⁵ Kuccha houses are made up of mud and their walls are made up with '*Dorma*' (A mat made up with dried date, palm or bamboo leaves and sticks).

³⁶ A mat made up with dried date, palm or bamboo leaves and sticks.

³⁷ Basic Services of Urban Poor (BSUP) is the scheme by the Ministry of Housing and Poverty Alleviation, Govt. of India, for slum dwellers to solve their basic problems due to the fast urban growth.

³⁸ *Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana* Housing for all was introduced in 2015 for providing houses to all urban poor within 2022.

³⁹ Government of West Bengal (2015), Handbook of Fisheries Statistics, 2014 -2015, Department of Fisheries.

a) Water Supply:

In Jelepara, none of the houses have water connection. They have to take water from road side water taps. The houses of Bhupati Nagar 1 are partially connected to the water supply. It is near to the road side tap water. There are 30 taps and one open well in this slum⁴⁰. Whereas in Kalitala Bandher Dhar there is no water supply. The slum is not connected with water supply. Women of this place carry water from another slum which is 0.5 km far from the place. It has become more challenging for them to survive during the time of flood. Flood water enters the area and covers the place where the tap is located. Polluted and poisonous flood water gets mixed with the drinking water tap and makes it poisonous. Approximately one month either July or August, during flood, people have to face lots of problem, because of this people of Jelepara suffer from various water borne diseases during floods. They often use *fitkari*⁴¹ for purifying water and make it safe for drinking.

b) Roads of Jelepara:

The approaching roads by the two slums are Non – Motorable Kaccha (road made up of mud and brick). The distance from the nearest road is less than 1 .0 kilometers. Internal roads are also Non- Motorable Kaccha. In rainy season it is very tuff to connect Jelepara because of flood all the roads which is entering into the Jelepara, is disconnected due to the flood water.

c) Electricity availability:

Street light facilities are provided there in Jelepara by West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company Ltd. (WBSEDCL) with a long distance gap. Most of the houses have electricity connection in their houses. Very few houses are there without electricity connection. They use to survive with earthen lamps, candles and lamps fueled by kerosene oil.

⁴⁰Usha Survey 2010 – 2011.

⁴¹ Alum.

d) Sanitation:

There is no personal septic tank or flush tank in Jelepara. No house has dry latrine. There are 32 community septic tanks in Bhupati Nagar 1 but no any community dry latrine in the slum⁴². But in case of Kalitala Bandher Dhar the scenario is different; their status is much more precarious as they do not have toilets in their houses. They have to go for open defecation⁴³ to the river bank or adjacent fields near by their houses. Though Municipality has schemes under ‘*Swaccha Bharat Abhiyaan*’,⁴⁴ but it will take time to be in practice.

4.4.5. Health Facilities:

There is no primary health centre within the radius of 5 kms with Jelepara. The situation is same for urban health post also. There is one Government hospital and one maternity centre, 2.0 to 5.0 km. far from Jelepara whereas private clinic and registered medical practitioner are available near from the study area. The distance is 0.5 to 1.0 km. There is no Ayurvedic doctor within 5.0 km. of the study area. Because of these poor scenario the people of Jelepara are unaware the importance related to health. Due to the distance of government health centre and hospital with so many formalities they overlook their diseases and decide not to go for treatment. Almost 55% of the population do not go to the hospitals for various reasons like distance, lack of awareness, for handling too much of formalities, auto fare or any other issue. No person is covered in this slum under health insurance.

4.4.6. Education Facilities:

Jelepara has not seen the light of education. There is no municipal preschool in the locality; it is more than 5.0 km whereas private preschool’s distance is less than 0.5 to 1.0 km. There is a municipal primary school which is almost 1.0 km far from this place whereas there is not any state government primary school in the locality. Municipal high

⁴²Usha Survey, 2010-2011.

⁴³ Open defecation known as a practice whereby people go out in the fields, forests, bushes, open water bodies than using the toilet to defecate.

⁴⁴ Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi announced the ambitious ‘Swachh Bharat Mission’ (clean India mission) on 2nd October, 2014, on the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi’s 145th anniversary. It is a mission for keeping clean India.

school is situated more than 5.0 km from the study area. State govt. High School is 2.0 km far from this place whereas private high school is less than 0.5 km. With these facts it is understood that the availability of private schools are their where the people even cannot afford the two times bread properly. The availability of Government School in a distance, where some people of Jelepara are reluctant to go.

4.4.7. Market Availability:

There are about 477 wholesale and 3157 retail markets in the state of West Bengal. Nearly, 3717 wholesalers and 44349 retailers are doing their trades in those markets. The only legislation for fish marketing in West Bengal is West Bengal Fish Dealer's licensing Order, 1996. As most of the people is fish eater, the domestic fish marketing is very much dominating in nature⁴⁵. Domestic Marketing Channels for Inland Fish:-

- 1) Fisher – Local auctioneer – Fish Collector/ Local Dealer – Auctioneer – Wholesaler- Retailer- Consumer.
- 2) Fisher – Fish collector/Local dealer- Auctioneer – Retailer – Consumer.
- 3) Fisher – Wholesaler – Retailer – Consumer.
- 4) Fisher – Dealer – Auctioneer – Vendor – Consumer.
- 5) Fisher – Dealer – Auctioneer- Hotel Supplier/ Restaurant – Consumer.

The wholesale and retail market prices of different fish species varies from market to market and also place to place. Market prices of different fishes are increasing at the rate about 4 – 10 % every year.

In Hooghly District, there are 10 wholesale markets, where 162 are wholesalers. Whereas there are 68 retail markets and 1280 retailers are in the district. In comparison with other districts Hooghly has rank 8th in the number of wholesale markets according to the Handbook of Fisheries Statistics, 2014-2015, 58-59.

⁴⁵Government of West Bengal (2015), Handbook of Fisheries Statistics, 2014 -2015, Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture, Aquatic Resources and Fishing Harbours, Kolkata, 58.

In the case of the related study area there is a big wholesale fish market within 1.0 km. of Jelepura named *Chowkbazaar Macher Aarat*,⁴⁶ where fishermen sell their fish catches. Due to the erosion effects, problem of receding, lack of rain or flood and growing population in fisheries, fish catches in the river Hooghly, is decreasing day by day so they have to compromise with their deal and sell their catches at very minimal prices for meeting their ends. Because of the low fish production in the river and low quantity of the fish catches, the price of fish are increasing now a days like the wholesale average price of the very common fish *Rohu*⁴⁷ is now rupees 125 per 500g, rupees 140 for upto 1 kg and rupees 185 for 1.5 kg fish in the Chowkbazaar wholesale fish market, Hooghly⁴⁸. But the fishermen sell their catches for normally between 80 – 120 rupees per kg.

Generally, they go for fishing in a group of 4-6 persons. They distribute the amount among themselves whatever they get after selling their catches. Some fisherman buy fish from this whole sale market for selling (who do not catch fish). They have to buy fish at the high cost and then by giving very low margin of profit they are selling their product by door to door visit. The average retail rates of *Rohu* in the market is rupees 145, 175 and 230 for 500g, 1 kg and 1.5 kg fish accordingly⁴⁹.

Whereas, in the case of *Hilsa*,⁵⁰ locally known as *Illish*, which is one of the rare and most costliest fish with full of demand, cost rupees 500 for 500 g to 1.0 kg in average in whole sale market whereas the retail price is rupees 800 for 500g – 1.0 kg *Hilsa* fish⁵¹. In rainy

⁴⁶*Chowkbazaar* wholesale fish market is one of the oldest fish market in Hooghly. Over 1 Quintal fish of more than 10 lakhs rupees, are marketed from here to the different zones of the district including marine fish and inland fish. Fish exported from Andhra Pradesh, are also available in this market.

⁴⁷The *Rohu* or *Labeo Rohita* is a species of fish of the carp family, found in the inland water bodies in South Asia. It is extensively used in aquaculture and it is a large omnivore.

⁴⁸Government of West Bengal (2015), Handbook of Fisheries Statistics, 2014 -2015, Department of Fisheries,65.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰*Hilsa* is one of the most important fish species contributing towards the capture fisheries sector of the state of West Bengal. The importance of *Hilsa* in the socio – cultural milieu of the state and its demand in the commercial market has made this fish the focal point of interest in terms of its availability and price index.

⁵¹Ibid.

season, they eagerly wait for the catch of *Hilsa* because of the high demand and high price. But now days, *Hilsa* fishery is a great concern⁵² for all the stakeholders who are affected by the gradual decline in the availability of the fish. To address this issue, as a part of the national initiative on *Hilsa* conservation, the Department of Fisheries, West Bengal, has been involved in awareness generation and implementation of the amendments made in the inland and Marine Fisheries Acts, concerning *Hilsa* Fishery. For the above said *Hilsa* conservation policy⁵³, local fisher folk has to suffer for the time being because they are prohibited to catch small *Hilsa* and instructed not to catch fish during the growing time of *Hilsa* but according to the fisher folk of Jelepara, if coincidentally some small *Hilsa* trapped into the fishing net with other fish then they cannot pick out the fish during fishing and because fishing is their main occupation, if they stop fishing then what will be the alternative option for livelihood for the restricted months.

4.5. Fishing Communities of Jelepara:

One of the most vulnerable and marginalised communities in West Bengal are the fishing communities, who lives hand to mouth and economically poorest among the poor. It is estimated that the per capita annual income of fisher family in Jelepara is about INR 21000 that means their average income per month is 1750, where the country's per capita income⁵⁴ is INR 93,231⁵⁵ which is about 77.5% higher than the per capita income of Jelepara as a whole. They are deprived of many basic amenities in their life which forced them to being an isolated community.

⁵² Primary Causes for Decline of *Hilsa* Fishery:-i) Habitat degradation due to anthropogenic intervention. Ii) Alteraion and contamination of breeding ground caused by eco – hydrological changes. Iii) Obstruction to migration of the fish due to siltation of estuary mouth, a consequence of deforestation. Iv) Intense fishing pressure in Hooghly – Bhagirathi river system – operation of large number of fishing vessels. V) Pollution of river due to discharge of untreated effluents, sewage and agricultural runoffs. Vi)Over exploitation of juveniles resulting in recruitment failure. Vii) Over exploitation of brooders is leading to disruption in spawning. Fishing of brooders in the marine and estuarine sector especially by foreign trawlers (Myanmar/Bangladesh) is a concern. Viii) Prevalence of unrestricted and unsuitable fishing methods using gears having small mesh size. (Hilsa Conservation and Research Centre (2014), 'A silver linig in the grey welkin of Hilsa Fishery', Department of Fisheries, Government of West Bengal, 18).

⁵³ Hilsa Conservation and Research Centre (2014), 'A silver linig in the grey welkin of Hilsa Fishery', Department of Fisheries, Government of West Bengal, 18.

⁵⁴ Per capita Income measured the average income earned by a person in a mentioned area, it is estimated by dividing the area's total income by its total population.

⁵⁵Suneja, Kirtika (March 21, 2016, 0156 hrs) 'India's per capita income to cross Rs. 1 lakh in Financial Year 2017,' Economic Times, accessed on May 07, 2016, 14.30 hrs.

The Bengali Proverb '*mache – bhate bangali*' (rice and fish make a Bengali) well illustrates the important role played by fish and fisheries in West Bengal. Fish represent 60 percent of total animal protein consumption and are a key source of vitamins and nutrients. In West Bengal, the hereditary fishermen are called '*Jele*'. '*Jele*' is the hereditary community based on occupation. The *Jalia Kaibarta*⁵⁶ and the *Rajbongshi*⁵⁷ are the two main sects of fishing communities who reside in Jelepara. In these two sects of fishing communities *Rajbongshis* are in majority in Jelepara.

Most of the People of Jelepara migrated from East Pakistan as refugees due to the religious conflicts that occurred after the partition of India and Pakistan which continued even after the creation of Bangladesh and afterwards. They seized the land on the bank of river Hooghly and started residing there. Women were mainly the sufferers of this migration. They had to arrange for their livelihood and support their male counterparts. Due to the caste occupation they opted for fisheries and fisheries related secondary tasks.

Fishing is one of the major occupation of the people of Jelepara including fishing net making, rickshaw pulling, trolley pulling, fish selling, laborers' with daily wages, working as help with pay in other households, making umbrellas and mosquito nets, peeling sticks from coconut leaves, date leaves and palm leaves for making sweeping materials, rearing cattle like goat, cow and hen, etc.. As the main occupation of all the fisher folk families is fishing, majority of the fishermen (almost 70 - 80%) attended fishing for more than 10 to 15 days in a month. Rest of the days they usually stay at home that is one or two days in a week depending on the availability of fish in the river. Generally they are waiting for *juar* (high tide), for getting big catches.

The fishing intensity depends on the availability of fish. During summer, they are unable to get more fish catches because of the river recede and the low water level of the river. In that situation, most of them are not able to move for the fishing. Because in Jelepara,

⁵⁶ The word '*Jalia Kaibarta*' or '*Jele Kaibarta*' means the person who depends on water, in other words, the community that earns its livelihood from related occupation as fishing. *Jalia Kaibartas* are originally belongs to the Indian states of Assam, West Bengal and eastern Bihar..*Jalia Kaibartas* are enlisted as schedule caste in the state of West Bengal's schedule in twenty third position.

⁵⁷ '*Rajbanshi*' means descendent of royal dynasty. Initially they were kshatriyas as per Indian '*Varna System*'. But latterly, they were discarded from the kshatriya status. In West Bengal, *Rajbongshis* are considered as fishing community and it is scheduled in the state of West Bengal's Schedule in fifty fourth position.

only 10 households have their own fishing boats out of 71, rest people have to take boat in rent. If they go for fishing during those days when they know it is hard to get fish and not get good fish catch then anyhow they have to pay the rent for using the boats. They are paying rupees 130 – 150 for once to get the boat on rent and this practice resulting low income. They use handmade and machine made nets for fishing but now a days, due to the increasing price of raw materials for making handmade nets, they are now switching towards machine made nets because at the cost of one handmade net they can buy two machine made nets. In fishing nets there are different categories of nets for catching different types of fish. Like bag nets, gill nets and caste nets with small and big mesh sizes for catching small and big fish, but using small mess size net are being restricted now, for the protection of the natural cycle of recruitment of the fish. The type and number of gears owned by the fisher folk families has direct impact on the income earned by the individual. Personal gear means more income but others gear means income falling.

The fishermen from Jelepara are not trained like other fishermen in West Bengal. There are 14382 trained fishermen in West Bengal as per recorded by the department of fisheries in 2015 (Handbook of Fisheries Statistics, 2014 – 15, 2). There are some employment generation programmes of fish farmers under Fish Farmers Development Agency (F.F.D.A.) in West Bengal but in the case of Hooghly District, there is no employment under the programme during 2011 – 12, 2012 – 13, and 2013 – 14; whereas in Hooghly river fish production was 0.43 lakh ton in the year 2013 -14.

The fisher folk of Jelepara worship the river Hooghly before going for fishing. They worship *lord Shiva* and *Shakti* also along with nature. They celebrate *Durga Puja* (worship of Hindu Goddess Devi Durga), *Shivaratri* (Worship whole night Lord Shiva), *Janmashtami* (celebration of the incarnation day of Lord Krishna) and *Charak Puja* (celebration worshipping Lord Shiva). *Charak Puja* is the local festival of the people of Jelepara, during 13 – 14 April of every year. They (fisher folk) organize a fair, in which,

they jump over the fire, they prick needle on their body, walk on saber for worshipping lord Shiva and remove their sins. This celebration is also called *Charak Shankranti*⁵⁸ also.

4.6. Women in Jelepara:

Women's roles in fisheries, are not given due importance and are often overlooked. But in reality women are seriously involved in fishing related activities in Jelepara. They support their male counterparts for their fishing related activities. They manage their households, manage funds for their families and for their male counter parts for purchasing fishing equipments, involve in fish production system, feed preparations, and feeding fish and shrimp as well as in post harvest activities. It is estimated from nine major fish producing countries, women comprise 46% of the labour force in small scale capture fisheries related activities, including pre and post harvesting work. It is observed that in the cases where women participation was higher, the families performed better in terms of the livelihood achievements in the Hooghly River⁵⁹.

Women have traditionally been occupied in pre-and post-harvest processing of the fish products and marketing the catch. There are hardly any authentic statistics available on the number of women involved in fisheries-related work, though it is well known that women play important roles in the sector. In general, the fishing community is considered to be encoded with low economic status because of their social and economic backwardness. Women of this community are thought of “economically inactive” or merely play a supportive role as fishermen's wives. Unfortunately, limited access to resources, credit and insufficient technical knowledge, poor participation in decision making, limited awareness of mass media become the limiting factors for the fisher women for their economic and social development⁶⁰.

In Jelepara, women play secondary role in fisheries activities. She mends nets for their male counter parts, cleans nets after fishing, divide fish catches by species, culture fish

⁵⁸*Shankranti* is the last day of every Bengali month and the Charak Shankranti is the last day of every Bengali calendar year.

⁵⁹Tyagi, R. K.(2009), ‘Socio – Economic Status of Fishery of river Ganga’, *Bulletin no. 160*. Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute, Barrackpore, Kolkata, 55.

⁶⁰Roy, Aparna et al. (2015), ‘Socio Economic status and Livelihood of Fisher Women of Hooghly Estuary’, *J. Inland Fish Soc. India*, 47 (1), 49-56, 2015, Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute, Barrackpore, Kolkata.

fries, cleans fishing vessels, selling fish door to door and participate in pre and post harvesting of fish. After selling the fish, she dries the remaining fish, for their future expenses in summer when fish catches are affected by the extreme hot and river recedes. Thus knowingly or unknowingly, women of Jejelepara play a wider role in sustainable livelihood management. But there is no data or record of their involvement and contribution in fisheries.

Apart from these activities, she is struggling for their livelihood expenses and management from dawn to dusk. After doing all necessary household duties in their houses like carrying water from the road side water tap with a distance of 0.5 – 1.0 km. for cleaning, cooking, drinking, bathing and washing, nurturing their children and sending them to the school, maximum women of Jejelepara, go to the other households as domestic help⁶¹ (as Jejelepara is a urban slum situated in the city, maximum people are going out for their duties so they need the helping hands for their household works) for cleaning utensils, cleaning houses, washing clothes and sometimes cooking also. They used to attend 2 – 5 houses as per work load. Very few women of Jejelepara are working as ‘aaya’⁶² or nurse with 12 hrs duty hours (8 AM – 8 PM) in other houses. Some of the women of Jejelepara are work as a mid day meal⁶³ worker also. But the number is very low. Out of 159 women in Jejelepara only 4 women are involved in Mid – Day –Meal –

⁶¹Go to other houses which are 0.5 – 2.0 km in distance from Jejelepara, for helping in household works on contract basis for the amount of 300 – 700 per households on the basis of workloads.

⁶²Women who is taking care of patients, children and elderly person and getting wages on the basis of per day service is called *Aaya* in local terms. In Jejelepara, women who are working as *Aaya* are getting 60 – 80 rupees per day as per their performance.

⁶³For enhancing enrolment, retention and attendance and simultaneously improving nutritional levels among children, the National Programme of Nutritional support to primary Education (NP- NSPE) was launched as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on 15th August 1995. In Continuation with this programme, in 2001, MDMS (Mid – Day Meal Scheme) was introduced, in which every child in each and every Government, government aided primary school and local body school, was to be served a prepared Mid Day Meal with a minimum content of 300 calories of energy and 8 – 12 gram protein per day for a minimum of 200 days. The scheme was further revised in 2002 to cover not only above said schools students, but also children studying in education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) centers. In October 2007, the scheme was extended to cover children of upper primary classes (class vi – viii) studying in 3,479 Educationally Backwards Blocks (EBBs) , the name of the scheme has been changed from ‘National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education’ to ‘National Programme of Mid Day meal in Schools’. The Nutritional norm for upper primary stage was fixed at 700 Calories and 20 grams of protein. An another revision has been added to the scheme in April,2008 to recognized as well as unrecognized Madarsas. (Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, www.mhrd.gov.in/mid-day-meal, accessed on 12.05.16 at 15.15 hrs.)

Scheme. After coming back home they get involved again in fisheries related work and cooking with other household activities. The families of working women of Jejepara, are too much depended on them for their day to day life. Even their male counterparts who are directly involved in fishing, often, ask them for help economically because by only fishing, they are not be able to fulfill all the expenses.

Having being uneducated or little bit educated women of Jejepara is now taking interest for their children's education because of Mid Day Meal Scheme and *Sarva Siksha Abhiyan*⁶⁴ (Mission for Education for all). They are sending their children to the schools and get out of the tension little bit for their lunch but not become free from the tension for the dinner. They share their earnings in their children's education (purchasing books and stationeries), in loan repayment taken for their husbands occupation, in any construction or repairing of their houses and in day to day expenses. They do not have sufficient money for themselves after meeting all expenses. Some women of Jejepara peel dried coconut leaves for getting the stick by which they make sweeping materials like broom. After that, they sell these to the market at very low price at 40 rupees per kg. But all these activities which have been mentioned above are based only on the availability of demand. Sometimes they get work or sometimes they have no work. The working ratio of women in Jejepara is 60:40. 40% women are completely home makers, they are not allowed to work outside. Even, they have to face so much of difficulties, their children are not able to continue their studies due to lack of money, often, they have to sleep at night without food, they do not have proper clothes to wear, moreover, they do not have proper shelter where they can stay. Having facing all these adversities, they cannot do any work for betterment of their lives, for the inbuilt patriarchal structures of the each and every society from the top to bottom. Generally they are going to take bath to the roadside water tap only. 50 % of the total women in Jejepara are forced to go for open defecation.

⁶⁴*Sarva Siksha Abhiyaan*, has been operational since 2000 – 2001 to provide for a variety of interventions for universal access and retention, bridging of gender and social category gaps in elementary education and improving the quality of learning. *Sarva Siksha Abhiyaan* include opening of schools , construction of class rooms and toilets, arrangements of drinking water, provisioning for teachers, training for teachers, free textbooks and uniforms and support for improving learning achievement outcome (Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, www.mhrd.gov.in/sarva-siksha-abhiyaan, accessed on 12.05.16 at 15.20 hrs.)

4.6.1. Marginalization and Women in Jelepara:

*'We come from our family's house to live in our husband's house. If we mention our name in this house, they say, 'what you earn is ours, because you are in this family's house', or 'because you are working on this family's land. Let the land be registered in our names, so that we will not always feel like we are in someone else's family'- Santokbehn, agricultural labourer, Ahmedabad.*⁶⁵

*In your joint family, I am known as the second daughter – in – law. All these years I have known myself as no more than that. Today, after fifteen years, as I stand alone by the sea, I know that I have another identity, which is my relationship with the universe and its creator. That gives me the courage to write this letter as myself, not as the second daughter in law of your family...I am not one to die easily. That is what I want to say in this letter - Rabindranath Tagore, 'letter from a wife', 1914*⁶⁶.

*We not only want a piece of pie, we also want to choose the flavor, and to know how to make it ourselves -Ela Bhatt, founder, Self- Employed Women's Association (SEWA), (1992)*⁶⁷.

In similar note as above, Sen also reiterates that 'women issues' in India could never be 'one dimensional', as they were substantially enlarged to incorporate the vast canvas covered and the role played by women in realizing the aspirations of the common people including themselves⁶⁸. The principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes – the legal subordination of one sex to the other- is wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement...it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality, admitting no power or privilege on the one side, no disability on the other⁶⁹.

John Stuart Mill's observation in the eighteenth century (1989) that a full democracy must be characterised by egalitarian gender relations was not fully realized in the

⁶⁵Nussbaum, Martha (2000) 'Women's Capabilities and Social Justice' in *Journal of Human Development*, vol. 1, No. 2,219.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Sen Amartya (1999),*Development as Freedom (1st edition)*,Oxford University Press, New York ,4.

⁶⁹ Stephen Collini (1989), *Mill's Selections*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.

twentieth century. The Western first and second wave of feminism, the ‘Third world’ anti – colonialist and feminist – nationalist movements, and several decades of ‘female empowerment’ development activism have still not achieved the much – desired goal of gender equity. Contemporary social paradigm is replete with the struggle of the poor against the repressive policies of the elite, which reduces their access to resources, pollute their environment, and destroy their life support system and cultural ethos. This form of development marginalises and belittles women besides forcing them to bear the burden of exploitation and suffering. On the other hand, development in the true sense of the term is expressed in terms of equality, economic growth, emancipation and empowerment, which has remained elusive. Throughout history and in almost all the societies, inequalities of women and men are part and parcel of an accepted male dominated culture. One of the basic factors causing unequal share of women in development relates to the division of labour between the sexes. The division of labour has been justified on the basis of the childbearing function of women and this is biologically important for survival. Consequently, distribution of tasks and responsibilities between men and women in a given society has mainly restricted women to the domestic sphere⁷⁰.

The effects of the long –term cumulative process of discrimination against women have been accentuated by underdevelopment. Graphically, while women represent nearly fifty percent of the world’s adult population and one third of the total labour force, they labour nearly two thirds of the total working hours but receive only one- tenth of world income and own less than one percent of property⁷¹.

Regarding ownership of land, women do not enjoy equal rights, particularly in the developing countries where most of the production, processing, storage and preparation of food are carried out by the women. Bringing water from far off wells and rivers and gathering fuel wood from forests are also part of their daily duties. Such enormous waste of human energy is unnecessary in this technological age. Not only that under the

⁷⁰ Sinha, Debotosh (2005), ‘Empowering Women: A Catalyst in Social Development’ in Narayana Reddy, V. et.al eds *Women in Development Challenges and Achievements*, Serial Publications, New Delhi,4.

⁷¹ Vishwanathan, Maithili (1999), *Women and Society*, Printwell, Jaipur.

hegemony of a pervasive patriarchy women's role in subsistence economy been substantially ignored⁷².

The United Nations Report (1977) on the status of women worldwide states that, the realities of women's lives throughout the planet indicate that gender equality in all its manifestations remains a long way off. Women are still the group of people who undertake the bulk of the unpaid work which is done in the society, live in greatest poverty, control the fewest resources, and (most of whom) are hardly educated even to the primary school level⁷³. This adverse position of women in the society is the result of rigid behaviour and suppressive customs against the female sex.

As pointed out by Amartya Sen⁷⁴, 'The afflicted world in which we live is characterised by deeply unequal sharing of the burden of adversities between women and men....Indeed, gender inequality is not one homogeneous phenomenon, but a collection of disparate and interlinked problems'.

Sen identifies seven types of inequalities – in mortality, natality, basic facilities, special opportunities, in professions, in ownerships, and in households. Quality of life means a life with following qualities which has been shown in the following diagram:-

⁷²Sinha, Debotosh (2005), 'Empowering Women : A Catalyst in Social Development' in Narayana Reddy, V. et.al eds *Women in Development Challenges and Achievements*, Serial Publications, New Delhi, 5.

⁷³Dagar, Rainuka, 1998, 'Intervening for gender Justice', *The Indian Journal of Social Work*, Vol. 59, No..

⁷⁴ Sen Amartya (2001), *Development as Freedom (2nd edition)*, Oxford University Press, New York ,4.

Figure .4.4. - Pre Conditions for Quality Life



Source: Drawn by researcher on the basis of field survey

As it has been shown in the above figure it is very important for leading a quality life women should have qualitative health care, qualitative education with equality in educational access, should be free from violence so that women can move freely, equality in political participation so that they can express their views and opinions in choosing the government and other related political activities, their human rights should be protected and they must have qualitative living conditions, in which they can survive.

Global issues Amnesty International⁷⁵ (2000) offered an end of century reflection on the status and condition of females worldwide, which throws into relief some of the century's contradictions:

“Migrant Workers: Because of crushing poverty, hundreds of thousands of women and girls seek work outside their country (or far from home in their own country) as field

⁷⁵ Amnesty International (2000) *Women's Rights are Human Rights: The Struggle persists*, retrieved from www.amnestyinternational.org and accessed on 26.10.2015.

workers or domestic helpers, usually without government protection against abusive employers or basic human rights violations.

Domestic violence: Violence against women continues unabated and remains under reported across the globe. Government agencies, including the police and courts, often fail to protect victims or adequately penalise or restrict the movement of perpetrators.

Refugees and internally displaced women: Women and girls make up 80 percent of all displaced people and refugees⁷⁶. During armed conflicts, women and girls suffer from rape, sexual abuse and the burden of caring for children, the sick and the elderly in hostile circumstances. Malnutrition, illness and sometimes starvation follow refugees from camp to camp. Domestic violence rates escalate during war and chronic conflict.

Torture: Even in the modernized world, women were being raped and subjected to multiple forms of abuse and sexual violence by the authorities that are supposed to protect them, both inside and outside prisons.

Human rights defenders: Women who struggle for the rights of others often find themselves at risk for human rights abuses and violations.

Discriminatory laws, practices and traditions: ‘Profoundly discriminatory laws and practices – often in the name of religion, tradition or culture’ continue to underscore the notion of male superiority and rights⁷⁷. Controversial issues such as abortion rights and mandatory veiling persist, and millions of women and girls are subjected to female genital mutilation.

Political voice: Freedom of expression and the right to live in safety are by no means universal: worldwide, the average level of women’s representation in parliaments is only about 10 percent⁷⁸.

⁷⁶ Mohanty, C. T. (2003) *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practising Solidarity*, Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina, 235 -4.

⁷⁷ Charlesworth, H. (1997) ‘Human rights as men’s rights’, in C.C. Gould (ed.), *Key Concepts in Critical Theory: Gender*, Humanity Books, Amherst, New York, 385.

⁷⁸ Billson, Janet Mancini and Carolyn Fluehr – Lobban, 2005, ‘The twentieth century as a transformative time for women’ in Janet Mancini Billson and Carolyn Fluehr – Lobban (eds), *Female Well-Being Toward a global theory of social change*, Zed Books, London, 6-7.

The expression 'well – being' is frequently used to refer to a best possible state that involve some measure of satisfaction, confidence, physical fitness and health. Well being widen to a state of social, economic, political and individual well being that involve the opposite of isolation, poverty, disenfranchisement, poor health, alienation or powerlessness⁷⁹.

Well – being and ill – being analysis of female well – being is intricately tied to the assumption that certain basic human needs must be met in order to achieve a good quality of life⁸⁰. The central part of well – being and ill being include several interconnected internal and external dimensions: material well being, physical well being, security, freedom of choice and action⁸¹ and good social relations. Well –being and ill- being are firmly rooted in social structures. Ill – being, which is not simply the opposite of well – being, is closely associated with certain aspects of poverty and marginalisation which has been seen as both an outcome and a process – both a cause and an effect of structure.

Condemnation of access and opportunity creates a structural portrait of gender stratification, characterised by the barriers and abuses, which serve to threaten the human capabilities and promote sexual abuse and harassment, domestic violence, unequal inheritance, arranged or forced marriage, female infanticide, low – paying or unpaid work, pay inequities, and silencing of one's political voice. As Martha Nussbaum mentioned in her capability approach, that the development cannot be seen only in the terms of economic growth and poverty as low income, there is a lot of the preconditions of development by increasing those capabilities, the position of the women in society, can be developed.

Women have multiple identities in the life cycle which strongly influence their authority and autonomy, preferences and household status. In general, women are treated as an easy apparatus for the ends of others as reproducers, care – givers, sexual outlets, and agents of a family's general prosperity, which is also true in case the of women in Jejepera.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Doyal, L. And I.Gough (1991), *A Theory of Human Need*, New York, Guilford Press.

⁸¹ Dasgupta, P. (1993) *An Inquiry into Well – being and Destitution*, Oxford, Clarendon.

The following lines from Marathi poetry is the opinion of a child who waits for the mother who works for them from dawn to dusk. The narrator talks about the prevailing darkness, which 'reign' their lives. The narrator waits at the door of their hut, which is in utmost darkness whereas the surroundings glitter with light; the narrator is hungry with empty stomach whereas the surrounding is swarming with delicious aroma of food. The narrator's eyes brimming with tears when the narrator could figure out a shadow which could be seen drawing near, a thin dark body, the mother is back. This is the story of the children of the fishing community as well where the mothers' are at work all day long with no profitable consequences. The darkness and the hunger is an unalienable part of their lives.

Daylight would Die, Darkness would reign.

We are at our hut's door. No single light inside.

Lights burning in houses around.

Kitchen fires too. Bhakris beaten out.

Vegetables, gruels cooked.

In our nostrils, the smell of food.

In our stomachs darkness.

From our eyes, welling up, streams of tears.

Slicing darkness, a shadow heavily draws near.

On her head, a burden. Her legs a – t – totter.

Thin, dark body ... my mother.

All days she combs the forest for firewood.

We await her return.

---Waman Nibalkar, 'Mother', in Arjun Dangle (ed.), *Poisoned Bread: Translations from Modern Marathi Dalit Literature* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1992), this poem translated by Priya Adarkar.

As much as in agriculture, forestry and industry, women are likely to constitute a larger proportion of the poor within the fisheries sector and are often excluded as a resource user group in fisheries governance and resource management. While women bear the brunt of the costs of gender inequities, these costs are distributed widely and are a cause of persistent poverty for all members of the society. Addressing gender inequities by improving women's incomes and educational levels, as well as their access to information and decision making processes, improves human capabilities of the household, as well as society in general⁸². It has been proved that those countries which have performed well towards achieving gender equity have also reached higher levels of economic growth and social well – being in general⁸³.

4.7. Factors responsible for Marginalisation of Women in Jelepara:

The provision of Sen's five instrumental freedoms is, however, dependent on cultural norms and rules that are manifested in a myriad of ways, including through roles and responsibilities within families, and through policies, practices, and legislation at community and state level. In India, there exist numerous formal and informal arrangements and institutions that shape the different capabilities of men and women. As in Bengal, occupation based caste system is still survived, that greatly influences individuals access to rights. Like people from 'Jele' (Fishing community) community form 'the weakest economic segment of the society with limited access to education and financial institutions, and little effective voice.

Women of fishing communities often start contribution to household economic activities before they are 15, with some putting in a full day's work by the time they are ten. They undertake the bulk of work necessary to maintain the home, contribute manual labour to

⁸²The WorldFish Center(2010), 'Gender and fisheries: Do women support, compliment or subsidize men's small – scale fishing activities?', CGIAR, Issues Brief No. 2108. August, Penang, Malaysia.

⁸³World Economic Forum (2008), 'The global gender gap report 2008' Geneva, WEC.

the cultivation of plots, and care for their cattle⁸⁴.Parameters of marginalization of women are discussed elaborately in the following paragraphs:-

4.7.1. Patriarchy and Family structure:

The model of the family and the existence of patriarchy is the main factor by which women are getting marginalized. Patriarchy literally means the ‘rule of the father’ but expands to mean the rule of men who are taught, by socialisation and ideology, to be dominant and are allowed to use force whenever they consider it necessary. Patriarchy cuts across the fates of women in all phases of life. Across cultures, tightly knotted economic and religious patterns define a women’s role in the family but the emotional climate of the family complicates that role.

Whether she takes her place in a male/female family system as daughter, wife or senior mother – or heads her own single – parent household – people react negatively and sometimes violently to a woman’s attempt to be assertive, challenge authority, or choose reproductive, sexual and financial freedoms. Families are the key connective tissue of social life. Cultures vary regarding the views about women in the families, but all families raise common issues for women. Families are the core of the forced choice, children or work outside the home, family or career, domesticity or public achievement. Many women feel forced to choose the domestic sphere because of inadequate day care and the reluctance of many males to take on their fair share of childcare and housework. Thus, Patriarchy is the root cause of marginalization of women in our society and all spheres of life. The case is not different for the women of fishing community in Jelepara, in fact the situations is worse for them.

Women are united by the invisibility of several important aspects of their lives, including motherhood, invisible household work, double shifts in informal/formal labour, rape, intra-family violence, and discrimination, regardless of social class or extent of economic development. These issues affect women’s health and quality of life, as has been

⁸⁴Venkateswaran, S. (1995) *Environment, Development and the Gender Gap*, New Delhi, Sage Publication, 24.

confirmed by international organisations such as UNIFEM⁸⁵ and World Health Organisation. Frederick Engels observed that the organisation of agrarian communities heralded the demise of female power and the beginning of patriarchy as men took over the rule of women. Patriarchy repeats specific domination patterns of men over women and men over men.

The age of marriage of the women in Jelepara, is one of the factors for their marginalization. They get married at the age of 15 -18 with the age difference of 8 – 15 years with their grooms. In whole their lives they have to be subordinated by their male counterparts under fear or life threatening abuses with no choice of motherhood as Nussbaum mentioned in her Capability Approach. On the other hand, effects of delayed marriage on lower fertility rates are obvious, as is the important connection between increased educational access and contraceptive use. Colonial governments in the twentieth century outlawed child marriage and post- independence nations raised the legal age of marriage for women and men to eighteen or twenty – one years. The rising education trend for females is surely a significant factor in delayed marriage.

In Jelepara, women are continuing victims of Patriarchal Structure; they do not have options for going apart from them. As fishing community in itself vulnerable community, the fisherman's nature is dependent on their fish catches. If they get a good catch then their mood towards their wives, mothers, and sisters are well, if they don't have then their moods are different. When they don't have money or lose money in gambling or drinking, they ask their working wives for that, but after taking all their expenses for day to day needs, she hardly has anything left so when she denies giving the money, the husband beat or bite her or rape her. As Nussbaum mentioned, 'Life', which is related to the concept of worth living. These incidences are never reported anywhere and are happening silently. They do not know the feeling of love, only know that it is their duty

⁸⁵ United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), works to ensure the participation of women in all levels for development strategies and practice. It acts as a supporting system of United Nations, that link the needs and concerns of women to all critical issues on the national, regional and global agendas. Concentrates on the economic dimensions of gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of globalization. Find out the ways to promote the progress of poor women. In January 2011, UNIFEM was merged into UN women, a composite part of United Nations, with the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the office of the Special Advisor on Gender issues (OSAGI), and the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW).

to satisfy their husbands and after getting tortured several times for so many years she just wants to finish their lives because she does not have any respect for their lives. Women are like an object in Jelepara. In each and every houses the case are same but in different manner. The observation from the field has also reiterated the Idea given by Nussbaum.

Case Study 1

Shobha Yadav (Mondal), (real name of the respondent) 45 years old women, daughter of a fisher man, working as a mid day meal worker, in Hooghly Girls High School, Hooghly, was get married at the age of 16 with her choice, after one months of Marriage her husband started to show his real character, started to beat her, broke her front two tooth, forced her to have sex with him anytime, without using any contraceptives, by that she got pregnant eleven times and give birth eleven babies but she failed to protect her babies from diseases, malnutrition and natural hazards, nine out of eleven babies she lost and only two survived, after sometimes she started to refuse him then he started to go towards another women.

It is very pathetic that in our society, many women who are facing these problems on regular basis, which are unreported, unnoticed and sometimes suppressed. The life of Shobha forces to think that 'the trust' towards her husband has spoiled her life. Women has been seen as the symbol of lust only with full of emotions. Women's education is necessary, this is the only path through which she can walk without fear and to some extent can be free from emotions. As Johan Galtung's, 'Structural Violence' theory, patriarchy is the main cause of women's subjugation. Now Shobha wants to remove her surname 'Yadav' but she is unable to do that as she does not have divorce certificate. In our system the existence of patriarchy too, nobody will ask a women whether she wants to change her maiden surname or not. If she financially empowered even then she has to give so much of explanation behind changing the surname.

Patriarchic descent systems remained strong in our society, continuing the strong discrimination against women in all sphere. Around the world, the birth of a girl is still often an event of sorrow. As the Chinese proverbs say, the birth of a girl is a 'small

happiness’ – or ‘a family without a boy is like a day without sun.’ In China and India, male- female ratios have become imbalanced from female feticide and infanticide rooted in the low value placed on females. In patriarchal families, like in Jejepera, absence of male due to fishing for 3 – 4 days, females become de facto heads of households on a temporary basis with the underlying assumption that male authority will resume once he returns. In other cases, the arrangement is permanent. However, patriarchal families are still a powerful norm worldwide in accepted forms.

4.7.2. Personal Victimization:

‘Violence against women is perhaps the most shameful human rights violation. And it is perhaps the most pervasive. It knows no boundaries of geography, culture, or wealth. As long as it continuous we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development and peace’. - Kofi Annan, former secretary general of the United Nations 1997-2007, delivered in general assembly held on 1999.

All human beings are entitled to basic rights, but women and girl children are not treated the same as men and boy children. Millions of women throughout the world suffer violence, poverty, and denial of their human rights for no other reason than their gender. In general, civil societies all over the world, with their differing educational, legal, and welfare systems, are still predominantly set up and administered by men. The result is that fundamental and inalienable women’s rights are neither integral to society nor constitutionally guaranteed, but remain as a bonus, an add – on, something that can be taken away or dispensed with rapidly in times of stress and external pressures. At the beginning of the twenty – first century, women remain largely excluded from decision making and legal processes on both a national and an international level⁸⁶.

Domestic Violence is only one aspect of violence against women, but it is perhaps the most hidden and secretive abuse men use against their wives, partners, sisters, and daughters in the place women and girls should feel safest –the home. It has remained hidden for so long for many reasons, including the stigma involved in asking for help and the historical indifferences of both society and its legal frameworks designed to address

⁸⁶ Horsbrugh – Porter, Anna, (2009), *Created Equal*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, xii.

the problem. In the past it has been treated as a private issue, and a problem that the state shouldn't get involved with.

Definitions of domestic violence vary --- and ideas about what constitutes it also vary according to where you are in the world. The British Home Office revised its own definition in 2004 to include violence between family members over eighteen, as well as adults who are, or were, intimate partners. ...Domestic abuse includes actual or threatened physical violence, sexual assault, stalking, intimidation, keeping a partner from contacting family or friends, stopping them from working outside the home, and continuous use of abusive and derogatory language. Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, or psychological abuse – but it always involves humiliation, denigration, and pain. Violence in the home against women is a denial of their basic human rights to security, equality, liberty, and sometimes even the right to life itself.⁸⁷

Women fall victim to rape, molestation and violence because of their womanhood, not because they happen to be wealthy or impoverished, educated or illiterate, having good looks or not, aged old or a small baby. Everywhere, rape, marital rape, molestation, abuses, physical and mental torture, wife beating, dowry deaths and ultimately suicide are as visibly important symbols of women victimization in Jejepera in particular and India as a whole in general. Women have been bitten, beaten, raped and verbally assaulted—even burned at the stake—in order to keep them ‘in their place’. Systems of authority (in the case of Jejepera counselor, police and then court) tend to minimize brutality against women as ‘a family matter’, so that most violence against women goes unpunished.

Most of the women in Jejepera do not go for report anywhere, because they have the mindset that these torturous activities have to be tolerated for being with them (with their male counter parts) and know these activities as a part of their lives. They have seen this practice from generation to generation. The male members also take lesson from the other male members who act like this with their female counterparts and thus the practice of wife battering is transmitted from one generation to the next. On the other hand, Gender

⁸⁷ Ibid, 52 -54.

violence as a violation of women's rights and human rights was placed on the global agenda, first acknowledged at the historic UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993. In preparation for the conference, worldwide hearings were held and 500,000 signatures were collected on a petition demanding that women's rights be placed on the main agenda, not just discussed in small groups. Women requested a special rapporteur on violence against women and a tribunal on crimes against women.

The linkage was made again at the Beijing Women's Congress in 1995, which resulted in the Declaration on Elimination of Violence Against Women. The declaration addresses the physical, sexual and psychological dimensions of violence, including battery, sexual abuse of female children, dowry related violence, marital rape, other traditional practices harmful to women, and non-spousal violence related to exploitation. Women in India protested against bride burning and intervened to protect women who were threatened by domestic violence.

These attempts do not reach the ground level. In Jelepara, 99.9% of female population is facing all forms of violence. It may be from father, brother, husband, son and so on. During field visit it was found that nobody is free from the shackles of violence in Jelepara. But not a single complain has been lodged anywhere, neither in local body of administration nor the police station. They stop themselves from reporting anywhere by thinking about the results of that afterwards. They have to stay with them only in all cases. They cannot even go to their own places to stay after marriage after facing lots of difficulties and tortures. These mindsets are the structural violence in our society as Johan Galtung said in his theory and so narration from the field has also reiterated the idea of structural violence.

Case Study 2

Seema Mondal, 19 years old, married at the age of 15, having two son, one is 3 years old and another one is 1 year old. After getting several tortures from her in laws and husband for 24 hrs, like beating, biting, pinching burning bidi⁸⁸ on the body and after all marital rape, whenever her husband demands. She started to protest against these practices at home but nobody was there to listen her, but she never went out for complain against them in anywhere but one day after getting tired of these practices, she took her two son and ran away from that place, she went her father's home for a while, which is in the another slum of Ward no. 6. One morning her husband went there and asked to go back but she refused, he abused her and went back, after that day she heard that her husband has committed suicide. Now, her life has become more precarious than before, everybody in the in laws blame her for that incidence, even they have taken her first child from her, she has to listen blaming in her place also, after some days the cause of suicide revealed, he has taken some money from others for gambling, he failed to return that is why he committed suicide. After that, her in laws abuse her for this. She is now works as help in others places for meeting her and child's end and fighting to get her son back from her in – laws.

This is the true story of victimisation of violence and toleration of Seema (name has been changed for ethical reasons). Due to early marriage, she had to become mother of two kids at the age of 18 +, which is the age of marriage. Due to lack of education, she is facing lots of difficulties. Her mother in law was also the part of these torturous activities due to the mind set of having being tortured by in laws and after all the high respect for Patriarchy.

4.7.3. Economic Subordination and Poverty:

As Oxford Dictionary defines poverty 'indigence' and 'indigent' as 'lacking in what is requisite'. Greg J. Duncan defines it as 'a state in which resources are insufficient to meet basic needs.' The basic needs may be confined to physical needs only. But man is more

⁸⁸*Bidi* is the handmade Indian Cigarette, which are filled by tobacco and wrapped by tendu leaves. These tobacco filled leaves deliver more nicotine, carbon monoxide and tar, carry a greater risk of oral cancer, lung disease and heart disease.

than just an animal hence has other needs which are also basic and universal, like needs of dignity, self respect and social inclusion, even though not directly tied up with physiology. Therefore poverty is having insufficient resources to meet all basic needs, whether these basic needs stem from our animal nature or not. Having less is not necessarily the indicator of poverty.

Poverty can be viewed as a condition of falling below the minimum standard of subsistence level appropriate to each society or the absence of enough money to secure life necessities or a condition of acute physical want, starvation, malnutrition, disease and want of clothing, shelter and medical care. Today, the poverty line is drawn based on per capita daily intake of 2400 calories in the rural area and 2100 in the urban area.

According to the World Bank estimates, 456 million Indians (42 percent of the total Indian population) now live under the global poverty line of 1.25 dollars per day (PPP). This means that a third of the global poor now reside in India. However, this also represents a significant decline in poverty from 60 percent in 1981 to 42 percent in the year 2005, although the rupee has decreased in value since then while the official standard of Rs. 356\ Rs. 538 per month per capita has remained the same. Income Inequality is ever on increase in India. Nearly 75 percent of the poor are in rural areas, most of them are daily wagers, and self- employed householders, unorganised workers and landless labourers⁸⁹.

In India, on the one hand there has been a rapid economic growth in terms of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) on account of globalisation but on the other hand there has been increase in unemployment (8.8 percent), mass poverty and hunger and destitution for a large number of people. It is the consequence of planning and implementation of economic policies guided by the motive force of making profit. Actually all our economic and social activities of this country should be planned and oriented to satisfy the real needs of the people instead of making profit. Then it will lead to the welfare of every

⁸⁹Lakra, Christopher (2010) 'Poverty and Sustainable Development: Concepts, Issues, Concerns and Challenges' in Archana Sinha (ed) 'Sustaining Communities Strategies for Sustainable Community Development', Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, 29 – 32.

individual rather than just a few. This sane view has been ignored by our politicians, planners, academicians etc. who opted for a capitalist method and bureaucratic control⁹⁰.

Poverty analysis of India requires more sociological and anthropological orientation and economic and factual interrelation. This is because poverty in India is controlled, governed and rooted in the social system. Although poverty primarily taken by thresholds as an economic concepts and usually understood and explained in economic terms, the causes of poverty can be best visualised and analysed in sociological and anthropological viewpoints which examine the situation empirically. PC Joshi has said that absence of sociological contribution has impoverished the very concept of anti – poverty planning and mobilisation. Therefore, economic and non economic indicators should be taken together for quantitative and qualitative dimensions of poverty⁹¹.

In one hand India has such a population who are not able to meet their both ends and the other is that India is going to be home of 4.37 lakh millionaire by 2018 with the count doubling by 2023, as a rapid rise is expected in the ultra rich population over the coming 10 years making it ‘India’s Decade’ in terms of wealth creation, a new study says. Stating that a ‘long standing caste system’ makes the wide gaps in incomes and wealth more acceptable in India, the study by wealth – x found that wealth creation and luxury consumption are relatively hampered by ‘Social inequality or austerity agendas’ in other emerging markets like Brazil and China. According to the report, emerging markets such as India and South Africa would see their millionaire population rise significantly in the coming decade.⁹²

Fishermen constitute the key group on whose capacity to toil and work the expansion of the tertiary sector depends to a considerable extent. Their special feature involved in the intensity of their night time efforts in catching fish. Their acquired knowledge about the condition of the pond/tank in which they operate and their relative scarcity in the context of the inland sector. In India development of fishermen is often restricted to the traditional fishing communities near the coastal areas in maritime states while the interest

⁹⁰ Ibid 35 – 38.

⁹¹ Ibid 35 – 38.

⁹² Shipra Sharma, July 08, 2015, 16:45 IST/ PTI, ‘Politics and Nation’ Economic Times.

of those associated with inland fishery is relatively neglected⁹³. Which is also true for the fisher folk of Jelepara.

In many cases these are formed of illiterate/semi literate, indigent fishermen who lack the knowledge of latest fishery technology and proper attitude to fishery development⁹⁴. This vicious circle is further strengthened by lack of institutional support and finance that hinder their smooth performance.

The exploitation of female labour has been bolstered by patriarchal values, both in the countries where the multinationals are based as well as in the countries where cheap female labour is in high demand. Patriarchal laws or policies have prevented females from achieving economic security. While not all women have been relegated to the weak and fragile feminine role pressed upon them in the Victorian era, and in fact many have traditionally been held in high esteem for their economic contributions to family and community, men generally get the best jobs, receive more pay than women for the same work, and make the major decisions for community and state. Women remain at the lower end of a segregated labour market in many countries, concentrated in a few 'pink ghetto'⁹⁵ occupations, and hold positions of little or no authority.

In Jelepara, sometimes women earn more than their male counter parts but for the patriarchal core, she has to spend her whole income in day to day needs or hand it over to their husbands. They have nothing to spend on themselves after working hard from morning to evening outside the houses and before and after that inside the houses. The situation of the women who are not involved in any work except household duties at their homes, are more vulnerable. They are not allowed to work outside from the home. They have to stay back at homes for the name of security whether sometimes they are more insecure in their places. In the absence of their husbands, they have to face so many unbearable situations at their homes.

⁹³ Datta, S. and R. Kundu, 2007, 'Socio – Economic Appraisal of Culture Based Fishermen : Case Study in West Bengal' in *Journal of Social Science*, 15(3),255-262.

⁹⁴ Chakraborty, C., S. Dutta and P. Katiha, 2005, 'Fishery Co – operatives in West Bengal : A Socio – Economic Appraisal', in *Environment and Ecology*, 23 (special – 1), 50-57.

⁹⁵The term 'Pink Ghetto' referring stressful and underpaid jobs ruled by females, coined in the year 1983.

Sometimes they are misbehaved by their brother in law or sometimes they have to protect themselves from father in law also. This is the worse effect of their subjugation. They don't have proper clothes to wear, proper food to eat, proper bed to sleep, proper drinking water to drink and after all proper shelter to stay. The whole thing is dependent on the good catch of fish. One day they eat rice with cereals and fish curry and the another day the women of the household takes only the left over that are rice with rice juice and salt after giving the whole food to all. They do not send their children to the school after primary level. They hardly manage to send their children to school up to primary level. They involve their son in fishing related activities with their father and daughter in household duties. After puberty the girls of Jelepara get into the marriage institution and after that the circle of victimisation starts.

Women of fishing communities do not have the capabilities which Nussbaum mentioned in her capability approach as 'Senses, Imagination, and Thought', 'Emotions', and 'Affiliation'. They are not free to use their imagination as 'truly human,' they do not have their own choices in decision making and monetary expenses, don't have their control over their own speech for others. Their emotional developments are wrecked by fear and anxiety. They are not free without their husband's concern to participate in any social interaction. Having being tortured by many years, she lost self dignity. Narratives from the field have also reiterated the idea given by Nussbaum.

Case Study 3

Nato Mondal, 45 years of age, wife of Tapan Mondal, (fisherman), was not allowed to go out for work, for that she faced many hurdles in life, she has three children, two daughters and one son, but not able to educate them properly. They studied up to primary level only. Daughters got married at the age 15 – 16 due to poverty. One daughter of two named Seema Mondal, 22 years old, having one daughter, fled from her in laws place because of violence and poverty. Now she is staying in her mother's place even after listening too much of abuses.

If NATO got permission for working outside, then they do not have to face problems as discussed. If she had money and freedom of choice, then she would have surely educated

her children, and the scenario would have been different by now of her family. This is the common condition of most of the houses of Jelepara.

4.7.4. Natural Hazards:

It is again the women who become the brunt of any adverse effects of climate change. It is a fact that women are closer to nature than men, and therefore the responsibility for environmental protection are of their prerogative.

Temperature increases are already affecting biophysical systems (IPCC 2001, 3-4). Certain natural systems are particularly vulnerable (mangrove forests, small island states, coastal areas, and river banks). Negative outcomes may include declining crop yields in many tropical and sub – tropical areas, decreasing water availability in arid regions of the sub – tropics, and an increase in vector and water – borne diseases, heat stress mortality, flooding, and wildfire incidence. The spread of disease, and reduced drinking water availability in some areas, could have gender – differentiated impacts where women have less access to medical care than men⁹⁶.

Women are often key to household survival when disasters strike, although their responsibilities in the domestic sphere make them economically vulnerable before such an event occurs. Groups of women likely to be particularly vulnerable to natural hazards include refugees, those on low incomes, homeless elderly and disabled women, recent migrants, and so on. Women’s work can be affected in a variety of ways by natural hazards. Productive assets may be lost, pushing women into low – wage labour. More women than men work in the informal sector and in small enterprises. These sectors are often worst hit, and least able to recover as a result of disasters.

In some places and situations, women are more at risk because of culturally – specific pre- disaster gender norms. Female mortality was much higher than male mortality in the 1991 cyclone floods in Bangladesh. 71 females per thousand died compared with 15

⁹⁶Nelson Valerie, et al (2002), ‘Uncertain predictions, invisible impacts, and the need to mainstream gender in climate change adaptations’, in Rachel Masika eds. *Gender, Development, and Climate Change*, Oxfam GB, UK,52.

males per thousand⁹⁷. Cultural norms relating to the preservation of female honour through seclusion mean that women may delay leaving the home to seek refuge, until it is too late.

According to briefing paper presented to the Indian Parliament by the Centre for Science and Environment in 2000, Climate Change manifestations in India will include increased temperatures, sea level rise along coastal regions, changes in monsoon rain patterns such as a decline in summer rainfall, increased flooding in the Gangetic Plains, Himalayan Catchment and water resource problems in arid and semi arid regions⁹⁸. As Jelepara is located in Gangetic plains, it also has to face the tremendous flood situations during monsoon and become the after effects.

Women, who are dependent on indirect fisheries related tasks and other households jobs and gathering fodder and fuel will be even more vulnerable as climate change advances, as they do not presently, have access to the necessary resources or social status within households and communities⁹⁹. In the case of Jelepara, during flood, they have to shift to the government shelters, and make arrangements for their daily needs. In spite of all odds too many families stay together and maintaining hygiene is often a problem. Women often become a victim of various types of diseases such as urinary tract infection, pelvic infections etc. Observation from the field visit has also reiterated the failure of development process.

Case Study 4

Shobha Mondal, 30 years old, fisherman's wife, working as domestic help in other households, could never forget the flood of 2002. In that year during the months of July and August, heavy flood occurred in the district. Shobha was 7 month pregnant When the flood water entered into her kachha house at night, she was alone, her husband went for

⁹⁷Baden, S., C. Green, A.M. Goetz, and M. Guhathakurta (1994), 'Background report on gender issues in Bangladesh', BRIDGE Report No. 26, Brighton : Institute for Development Studies, University of Sussex,49.

⁹⁸Agarwal, B. (2001) 'Participatory exclusions, community forestry, and gender: an analysis for South Asia and a conceptual framework', *World Development* 29 (10): 1623 – 48.

⁹⁹Adger, W.N. and P. Kelly (1999) 'Social vulnerability to climate change and the architecture of entitlements', *Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies for Global Change* 4 (3-4), 253-66).

fishing, and the level of water was increasing very quickly. By the time she realized that her house is submerged in water, it was too late for her to run away. In this hue and cry, her labour pain started. With the help of the neighbour she was saved and rushed to the nearby hospital where she delivered the baby in the floor of the hospital due to non availability of patient bed.

Shobha's case is not the only one. There are many in this area, who face similar situation every year during flood times. That type of situation depicts how environment has caused havoc in their lives and pushed the population towards marginalised situation.

4.7.5. Occupational Hazards:

Occupational hazard also makes the women of fishing communities marginalized. While fishing they have to face high tide, low tide, and flood situations which are the common factors of fishing hazards but sometimes these are the life threatening hazards. They also have to face robbery and local dacoits at nights while fishing in the mid river. Women member of fishing communities are also vulnerable in absence of their men who are mostly away from their houses for occupational reason.

They have to face lots of hazards due to their (women in Jelepara) own occupation as well. Most of the women work in other houses as domestic help. After working whole day in the other houses as domestic help their hands get infected. Consequently, skin of the hands get very dry and starts to peel and this affects their livelihood also. Observation from the field has also reiterated the same.

Case Study 5

Padda Mondal, 50 years old lady in Jelepara, widowed at the age of 25. Her husband drowned and died while fishing in the river due to heavy current of water. She has two sons, in the absence of her man, she has to bear all responsibilities of family alone. She met her daily expenses and fulfill her responsibilities by working as domestic help in nearby locality. Because of financial constraint, she could not even continue educating her sons formally and is a victim of depression and trauma.

This example depicts that how the women of fishing communities become the brunt of occupational hazard.

4.7.6. Level of Education:

'If women are expected to do the same work as men, we must teach them the same things'.-Plato, 427-347 BC.

Education is the catalyst that leads to Human Resource Development comprising better health, nutrition, improved socio – economic opportunities and more congenial and beneficial natural environment for all. Education plays a crucial role in demographic transition, female education, in particular, is important in the process of lowering fertility and mortality. An educated and skilled work force contributes to higher economic growth. Education empowers and, through empowerment, affects longer social processes¹⁰⁰.

Education, especially female education, is generally considered a key factor to development. It is closely related to the demographic parameters and other indicators of health and socio- economic conditions of a population, or a nation as a whole. Female education is believed to have a great influence on the maternal and child health as it enhances the knowledge and skills of the mother concerning age at marriage, contraception, nutrition, prevention and treatment of diseases¹⁰¹. This also means that the higher infant and child mortality rates among the poorly educated mothers are due to their poor hygienic practices and lack of connection with the modern medical facilities. Moreover, maternal education is related to child health because it reduces the cost of public health programmes relating to information on health technology, increases household income and productivity of health inputs¹⁰². Thus it is suggested that the best

¹⁰⁰Singh, Surendra and Om Prakash Singh (2005), 'Gender Discrimination and Primary Education' in Narayana Reddy, V. et.al eds *Women in Development Challenges and Achievements*, Serial Publications, New Delhi, 211.

¹⁰¹Mosley, W.H., and Chen, L.C., (1984), 'An analytical framework for the study of child survival in developing countries', in *Population Development Review (Suppl.)*, 10, 25-45.

¹⁰²Schultz, P.T., 1984, 'Studying the impact of household economic and community variables on child mortality', in *Population Development Review (Suppl.)*, 10, 215 -235.

health development agenda for the developing countries is to increase investment in formal education, particularly female education¹⁰³.

It has been noticed that about 75 percent of 960 million illiterate persons in the world are women. India is one of them with sex disparity in literacy rate as per the last census. Thus education especially female education is claimed to be crucial for improving the physical and socio –economic well being of population and thereby it is vital part of national planning in India and other developing countries¹⁰⁴.

Inadequate share of women in education is affecting their status in all walks of life and also compromising the health and education of their children. What is significant is that the future of the girl child gets further endangered if her mother is illiterate, for an educated mother will always educate her daughter but an illiterate mother may not. What is important is that the girls of this country are crying out for education. In every village, interior cities and urban slums, across the length and breadth of the country, girls want to go to school and resent the fact that they are denied the privilege. They cannot be deprived of their fundamental right to education and compromise their future by perpetuating a low socio –economic status as also a lower rate of social and economic development for the country too. The lamp of knowledge must be lit inside every child of India and this should be done fast¹⁰⁵.

Gender differences can be seen in the rate of literacy in the marginalised communities. The causes can be a larger number of girl children are required for household work, in addition to taking care of their siblings – both in rural and urban areas. In fact, the opportunity costs for women education are much higher than in the case of boys’.

The ability to read and write is an essential element of human capability as Martha Nussbaum maintained in her Capability Approach. Literacy is the first step towards acquiring other tools of learning, and can open the doors to a much wide world of knowledge and information than would otherwise be accessible to women. Education

¹⁰³Caldwell, John C., (1982), *Theory of fertility decline*, Academic Press, New York.

¹⁰⁴Khongsdier, R.,(2005), ‘ Maternal Education in Relation to the Indicators of Health and Development in Northeast India’ in Narayana Reddy, V. et.al eds *Women in Development Challenges and Achievements*, Serial Publications, New Delhi,257-258.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid 155- 156.

expands opportunities for women, equips them to make more informed choice empowers them to resist oppression and enables them to claim their rights. The right education is inextricably linked to other basic human rights including the right to freedom from discrimination, the right to work and the right to participate in decisions affecting one's self and one's community¹⁰⁶.

Education, which could increase their choices and opportunities remains limited or non-existent. While, many children attend school until the age of ten, girls usually drop out earlier to help at home. Women from marginalized class, have little power within the household, and their contributions especially in family enterprises, is often hidden from public awareness. This lack of power extends beyond the family, as women rarely participate in community - level decision making, and are consequently, less able to act as agents of change to better their conditions¹⁰⁷.

For the majority of women from poor marginalised families like Jelepara's, going to school is like a dream. In poor families, both boys and girls begin to help with household chores from a very early age, but as they grow older, the burdens on girls increase. By the time they reach adolescence, girls carry a major share of the burden of survival tasks including fetching water, collecting fuel wood and fodder, cooking, cleaning and caring for younger siblings. Their work, like elder women, is unrecognised, invisible and undervalued. These are children who do not have a childhood, and who are not protected by any existing child labour laws¹⁰⁸.

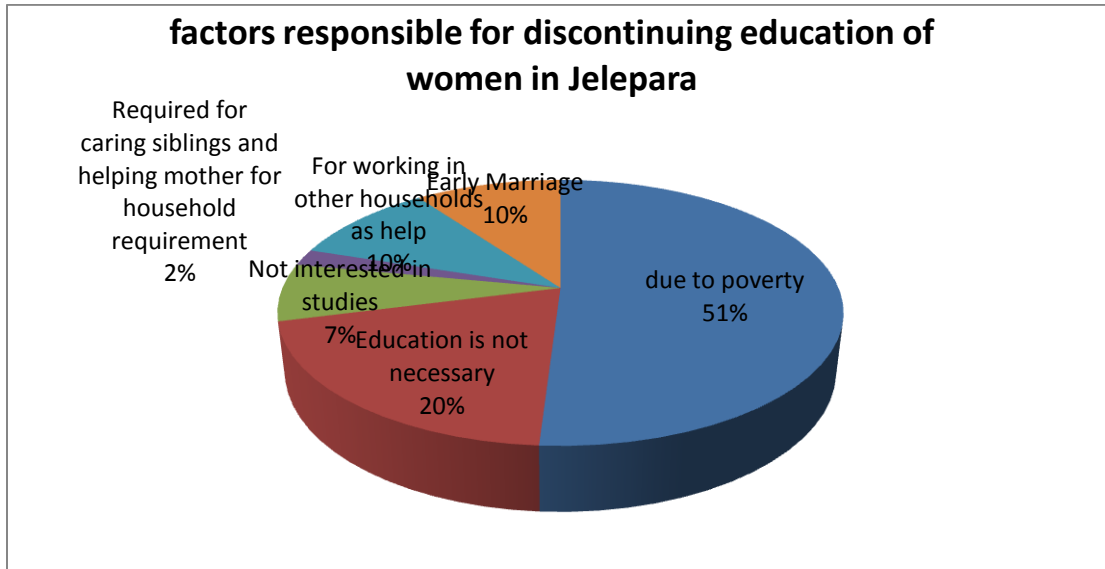
During field visits in Jelepara, the following factors were found for non attendance of women in formal education:-

¹⁰⁶ Sen, Kalyani Menon and A K Shiva Kumar (2001), 'Report Commissioned by the office of UN resident Co-ordinator in India', Mensa Computer Pvt. Limited, 4.

¹⁰⁷ Roy, M. and Henery David V. (2002), 'Reducing risk and vulnerability to climate change in India: the capabilities approach', in Rachel Masika (eds) *Gender, Development, and Climate Change*, Oxfam GB, Oxford, UK..

¹⁰⁸ Child labour laws do not cover children doing domestic work or children working in unorganized sector.

Figure .4.5. – Factors responsible for discontinuing education of women in Jelepara



Source: - Diagram developed by researcher based on field visit

During the field visit it has been observed that most of the girls do not complete their primary education. The main cause for this is primarily poverty. In Jelepara, 51% of girls cannot go to the school for poverty; although poverty is the only reason behind all the reasons for not getting education in Jelepara. 20% of the people do not consider education as a basic need, they think being fisher folk, they do not need education, and in case of girls, this sense is even acute. According to women of Jelepara, women are basically trained for domestic activities and trained in such a way that they are confined in the four walls of their houses. 7% of girls are not interested to get education because there is nobody to grow interest in them; they see their mothers as illiterate that's why they also want to carry the legacy. 2% of girls in Jelepara stay back in their houses for caring their siblings and for helping their mothers in household duties. It has been observed that 10% of girls are going to work in other households as domestic help. 10% of the girls are getting marriage after completing primary level education only, due to poverty. So it is very clear that the main root causes for not getting education are poverty and social structure like patriarchy.

Because of lack of education and poverty children between the age group 8 – 15 are attached towards juvenile delinquency and further deteriorate the environment.

Observations from the field also reveal that the acute sense of disinterest towards education and also focuses on the failure of development process.

Case Study 6

Tapasi Bachar, 40 years old, wife of a fisherman Madhu Bachar, working as Help in other households, never went to school and got married at the age of 14, due to poverty her parents could not educate her.. She has two children, daughter is older than her son, the story got repeated, her daughter got education upto class 4 and married at the age of 14, due to poverty and after facing tortures in her in laws house. Her son also studied upto primary level, he is also a poor fisherman of 22 years old, he also is married to Tusi Bachar they have one son. Because fishing is overpopulated, fish catches are also affected, even if they want to get involved in other occupation but not able to find any suitable alternative due to lack of education.

If Tapasi got education then she would have educated her son and daughter.

In India, where Constitutional guarantee¹⁰⁹ has been given to the citizens for securing education, the gap between men and women in education is the sensitive indicator of social exclusion and marginalisation. This is clear from Tapasi's case.

To change women's lives, it is crucial to educate women and girl children about their rights and to give them the means to become autonomous decision makers. It is also vital to educate men, so that they can realise the value and importance of women's rights. This involves their taking responsibility for their own attitudes and assumptions and educating their sons about the necessity of a true and lasting equality¹¹⁰.

Though India has contributed a lot in the sector of education but still Jelepara is lagging behind. The education system at all levels was thrown open to all – rich, poor, and middle – income classes, men and women, rural and urban populations, and backward and non – backward segments of the population. Secondly, as a consequence, there has been a

¹⁰⁹ Right to education is the latest fundamental right of the Constitution of India. The 'Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act' or Right to Education Act (RTE), is an act of the parliament of India enacted on 4 August 2009, which describes the importance of free and compulsory education for children between 6 and 14 in India under Article 21 A of the Indian Constitution.

¹¹⁰ Horsbrugh – Porter, Anna (2009), *Created Equal*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, xii – xiii.

veritable explosion in numbers – student numbers institutions and teachers. Thirdly, institutions of excellence have been developed, producing highly specialised human capital. Lastly, it could produce the second largest (next only to China) educated and skilled manpower in the world, and the third largest scientific and technical manpower. All this contributed to economic growth, development and self reliance in manpower in every area, including policy planning, administration, and governance of the huge economy¹¹¹. This is the need of the hour that education should be use as the tool to bring social change and development.

4.7.7. Health Care:

Health is a universal human aspiration and a basic human need. The development of society, rich or poor, can be judged by the quality of its health, how fairly health is distributed across the social spectrum, and the degree of protection provided from disadvantage as a result of ill – health¹¹². According to the World Health Organisation, the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, sex, religion, political beliefs, economic or social conditions¹¹³.

The ability to live out a normal life, and not to risk a premature death, is a basic prerequisite for the realisation of the full potential of a human being as Martha Nussbaum mentioned in her Capability Approach as Life and Bodily Integrity. A long life implies good health – the capacity to avoid illness and to be able to function in a way that makes life worth living. Good health is not just about doctors and drugs. A pure and clean living environment with access of safe and pure drinking water and proper sanitation, adequate food, protection from disease and a decent standard of living- are the preconditions of a good health and well being.

¹¹¹B.G.Tilak, Jandhyala (2006), ‘Education A saga of Spectacular Achievements and Conspicuous Failures’ in *India Social Development Report*, Council for Social Development, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

¹¹²Chhabra, Satbeer (2010) ‘Transformative Concepts of Women’s Health and Empowerment for community Development’ in Archana Sinha (ed) ‘Sustaining Communities Strategies for Sustainable Community Development’, Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, 235 – 36.

¹¹³ WHO (1996), *World Health Organisation: Ethics and Health, and quality in health care*, report by the director general, Geneva, WHO (Document No. EB 97 /16).

Women's health is vital for the well-being and development of a country. It is an important factor in gauging the empowerment of women in a country. There are diverse factors like social, economic, cultural, emotional, etc. which determine the women's health and the right to health. In India, the cultural traits found almost in all regions of the urban and rural life depict, that the women are subjected to malnourishment, leading to an intergenerational cycle of pregnancy and child-bearing. One of the most important parameters of good health is provision of adequate nutrition. Life expectancy at birth is a commonly used indicator of the levels of health in a country. It is not just a quantitative measure of health, but also an indicator of the quality of life of citizens in a country.

On the average, women can expect to live five years longer than men. In European countries, this difference is 6.4 years. In Canada, women live six years longer than men do. Even in Sub-Saharan Africa, one of the poorest and most deprived regions in the world, women live three years longer than men do. In India, women outlive men by only one year. The association between economic prosperity and infant survival among girls is not necessary. For example, infant girls have better life chances in West Bengal than in Punjab, even though the average income of a family in Punjab is nearly twice that of a family in West Bengal.

It is not only poverty alone that forced to reduce the life expectancy. The choices made by her parents and family have a far greater role to play in curtailing her life. Custom and tradition shape these choices and when resources are scarce; these can make the difference between life and death. The most vulnerable infants are those born to poor women – women who, along with being deprived of education, also have to contend with reduced capabilities on many other fronts.

The accurate data on health of women are difficult to come by. Most of the women from marginalised communities such as fishing community, suppress their illness, so they are unreported or unrecognised. Non availability of female doctor is another reason in the remote and interior areas in India. Women are reluctant to share their problems to a male doctor and allow themselves to be examined physically by a male doctor. The 'social distance' between a woman and a health centre, created by her caste and class status, is even greater than physical distance. Culturally, also women are nurtured to suffer

silently from childhood. Very often, women think of going to a doctor or health centre only when they feel they can no longer carry on.

Mostly, women in the community are the primary health care providers. Many women are experts in using of herbs and alternative systems of medicine. Others simply use common sense and traditional knowledge passed on to them by mothers and grandmothers. Even though there are far fewer women doctors than there are men, women form the bulk of professional health care providers. The majority of health workers in government and non – government programmes at the grassroots level are women. Almost all nurses and midwives are women.

Anemia is one of the few ‘female diseases’ can be a debilitating disease, increasing women’s vulnerability and limited their capacities to function as full human beings, its symptoms – constant tiredness and lack of energy, loss of appetite and breathlessness – are usually dismissed as ‘laziness’ or ‘imagination’. According to the NFHS 4 report, (2015-16) more than 50% of all married women in India suffer from anaemia. Lack of care, proper food especially in the times of pregnancy and illness, untreated gynecological conditions, early and frequent childbirth – all these probably contribute to the high prevalence of anaemia. In West Bengal the figure of anaemic women is 62.5% according to the National Family Health Survey,¹¹⁴ 2015-2016. Only 42% of births in the country are supervised by health professional. Most women deliver with help from women in the family who often lack the skills and resources to save the mother’s life if it is in danger. Upgrading the small knowledge and skills can increase the ability to recognise the danger signals, and the availability of transport and all weather roads so that a woman in labour can be rushed to a hospital adequately equipped to deal with complications.

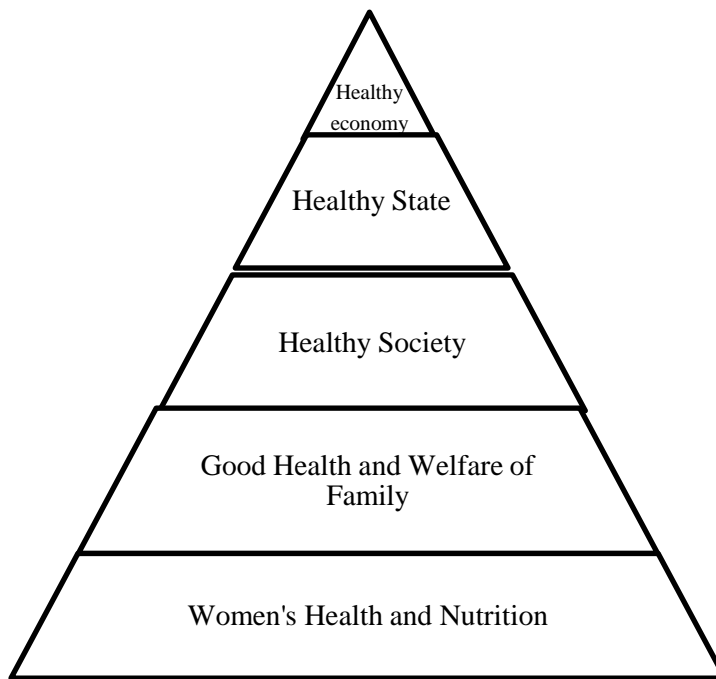
The women in India are found with a multitude of health problems, which affects the efficiency and productivity levels in the economy. With the gender and class disparities,

¹¹⁴ National Family Health Survey (NFHS) is the survey conducted throughout India since 1992 -93 to gather information on fertility, child mortality, family planning, child health, reproductive health ,etc.

pressure of procreation, low self- esteem etc., makes them physically and psychologically vulnerable to ill health¹¹⁵.

The Women's wellbeing is of utmost importance for the nation's growth and development as depicted in the following pyramid which is showing women's health leading to healthy economy:

Figure .4.6. Health of a Nation Depends on Health of Women:



Source - Anuradha, S.V.L. and A. Gokhale, 2014, 'Right to Health and Women's Empowerment – A Case Study of Adolescent Girls In The City Of Ulhasnagar' in *Human Rights International Research Journal*, Volume 2, Issue 1,530.

In the above diagram it has been shown that the women's good health and nutrition lead the society towards healthy economy through good health and welfare of family, healthy society, healthy state and at last healthy economy.

An important question arises is that, does a woman have the right to decide whether she wants to be a mother or not? As the majority of women are expected to marry as an

¹¹⁵ Anuradha, S.V.L. and A. Gokhale, 2014, 'Right to Health and Women's Empowerment – A Case Study of Adolescent Girls In The City Of Ulhasnagar' in *Human Rights International Research Journal*, Volume 2, Issue 1,528.

arrangement of families (nearly 90 %) the choice of being a mother is left generally to the husband's family. The message given to her is that it is necessary to be married and children are the blessings of a fruitful marriage. Many young women have no desire to be mothers soon after their marriage. The young woman is, however, aware that as a new entrant in the family, her status will depend in the majority of cases, on her ability to bring children to the family. The family thinks it is natural and normal to produce children, everyone has the capacity to do it and there is no need to check if a woman is ready for motherhood or not in the medical sense.¹¹⁶ This case is true for Jelepara also.

Indian society has always recognised the need for special consideration for women in its traditional health sciences. In ancient India, it was *rishis* or *sages* who composed the medical treatises. Among one of the earliest such treatises is Charak Samhita,¹¹⁷ believed to have been composed in the 5th century BC. It contains special sections on women's health and how to treat their specific medical problems. The Susruta Samhita supposed to have been composed in the 4th century BC and the Kashyap Samhita of 2nd – 3rd century BC also contains remedies for the treatment of women specific ailments. Unani¹¹⁸ system of medicines came to India along with the Muslims after the first millennium. Both these systems of medicines have been available for centuries in India through hereditary *vaidyas*¹¹⁹ and *hakims*¹²⁰. Women had easy access to them among all sections of the population¹²¹.

The health status of a population is a reflection of the socio – economic development of the country and is shaped by a variety of factors – the level of income and standard of living, housing, sanitation, water supply, education, employment, health consciousness,

¹¹⁶Seth, Mira (2001), *Women and Development The Indian Experience*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 172.

¹¹⁷ Charaka Samhita is a Sanskrit text on Ayurveda composed by Charaka in between fourth century BCE to the second century CE, but it is not known that Charaka was a group or a single person. It consists of eight books and one hundred twenty chapters. It describes ancient theories on human body. The Charaka Samhita also includes sections on the importance of diet, hygiene, prevention, medical education, the teamwork of a physician, nurse and patient necessary for recovery to health.

¹¹⁸ The Unani System of Medicine originated in Greece (Unan). Hippocrates (460 – 377 BC), the 'Father of Medicine' freed medicine from the realm of superstition and magic and gave it the status of science. It is the term of Perso – Arabic traditional medicine as practiced in Mughal India and in Muslim culture in South India and later on in Central Asia.

¹¹⁹ A person who is expert in ayurvedic treatment following *Charak* and *Sushruta Samhita*.

¹²⁰ A person expert in treatment using the Unani System of medicine.

¹²¹ Seth, Mira, 2001, *Women and Development The Indian Experience*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 157.

personal hygiene, and by the coverage, availability, accessibility, and affordability of health care delivery services. It is widely accepted that the poor health status is the product of inadequate nutrition, lack of a protected water supply, and overcrowded and insanitary housing conditions.

The relationship between health and poverty or health and development is complex, multifaceted, and multidirectional. Poverty in its various dimensions could be a manifestation, as well as a determinant, of an individual's health. In its most basic form – as a state of food deprivation and nutritional inadequacy- poverty has a direct bearing on the morbidity and longevity of people. Deprivation such as lack of access to critical amenities including safe water, sanitation, non – polluting domestic fuels, connectivity of life support services and most importantly to education and general awareness contribute to reinforcing ill – health and morbidity and higher mortality levels.

The neglect of women's health is also reflected in poor reproductive health indicators like Birth rate, Death rate, Infant mortality rate, maternal mortality rate and life expectancy at birth. In these maternal mortality is very high in India. A major reason for the poor maternal health outcomes are the high levels of malnutrition among women. In 1998 – 9, 52% of all women in the reproductive ages were found to be anaemic, and 36 percent were chronically malnourished¹²².

In Jelepara, 70% (based on field) of couples do not use contraception but it does not mean that married women do not want to use contraception. The embarrassment associated with consulting a male doctor, the lack of privacy in PHCs, unwillingness of men to use condoms – all these are factors that prevent women from accessing the contraception techniques so they are choose the path of abortion as contraceptive method of choice because they have no other available options. However, very few women can go to the doctor for that, most of the women who seek an abortion, do not have the privilege of safety. It seems, there is a long way to go before any of the targets comes in sight. The goals of women's health will become 'receding targets' on the national

¹²² International Institute of Population Sciences (IIPS) and ORC Macro (2000), *National Family Health Survey* (NFHS – 2), 1998 – 9, India, International Institute of Population Sciences, Mumbai.

agenda, as the goalpost are moved further away again and again. Regrettably, shifting goal post and receding targets are usually taken for granted in the social sectors. It pushes women further towards the margins.

The condition is also not aberration in Jelepara, women are not aware of their health care due to lack of proper education and deprivation of capabilities. As they are over pressurized for their survival they hardly get any time for concentrating on their deteriorating health. 70% of women through field visits are found anaemic in their reproductive ages, within 15–45. Most of the girls in Jelepara are get married at the age of 15 -18. They become mother as soon as after their marriage. After becoming mother at a tender age, their health deteriorates severely. Even before marriage, the conditions of their health are not so much good due to lack of proper food and nutrition, proper sanitation and proper housing and drinking water supply. Many women deliver their babies in pre mature stage because of having infection due to open defecation. During flood time most of the women have urinary tract infection and other vaginal infections. Because of the nature of occupation they always have skin diseases in their foot and hand with fever but they never visit any PHC (Public Health Centre) for the cure, it is an irony that in the face of development. These women find difficulty to complete the undue formalities attached to government hospitals and avail the health care facilities.

Sometimes their male counterparts bring medicines from medical shops for their fever, after two – three days. It can be some kind of infection but they overlook this and their male counterparts as well. Thus the situation of the women of the Jelepara is precarious enough to be marginalised. Only 40% women are there who have institutionalized child birth and rest of the women deliver their babies at home with the help of trained or untrained nurses. These practices affect them and their lives lifelong. Although Nussbaum mentioned about the ability to lead a healthy life, even then the women of Jelepara are deprived of utilizing this ability. Narration from the field has also reiterated the concept of Nussbaum and Amartya Sen.

Case Study 7

Mamta Mondal, a respondent of the field, reported headache and chest pain on continuous basis but is unable to visit doctor for poor financial condition. She wants to work for her family because her husband is a marginal fisher man. But due to the illness she is not in a position to support her family financially. With this illness she has to manage all necessary household duties. She has narrated, that it is been ages that the entire family has not taken proper meal (rice and fish curry) due to poor financial status. They consume rice with water, salt, onion and chili on daily basis. It was very painful for the researcher to know that most of the ladies like Mamta skip her meal so that the rest of their family can go off to sleep.

Thus, women of Jelepara are deprived from the capabilities, which lead towards decreasing their quality of life.

Poor Sanitation practices, such as open defecation, are affecting pregnancy outcomes of Indian Women, especially, premature birth. It is found that, compared to women who used a sanitary latrine; women who defecated in the open faced a significantly greater risk of getting adverse pregnancy outcomes and preterm birth. It remains possible that the women who defecated in the open may have to share some unknown, unaccounted characteristics that were primarily responsible for their increased risks, rather than their sanitary practices¹²³.

4.7.8. Political Participation and Decision Making Process:

Political equality to all citizens regardless of birth, sex, colour, etc., is one of the basic premises of democracy. Political equality includes not only equal right to franchise but also, most importantly, the right to access to the institutionalised centres of power. Thus, political participation of women means not only using the right to vote but also power sharing, co-decision-making, and co-policy-making at all levels¹²⁴. The active participation of women in political sphere is integral to the empowerment of women in

¹²³ Chhavi Tyagi, July 8, 2015, 15:46 IST/ IANS 'Poor sanitation linked to premature birth', The Hindu.

¹²⁴ Singh, J. P.(2000), 'Indian Democracy and Empowerment of Women', *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 46, no.4, 617-30.

political sphere is integral to the empowerment of women as well as the process of national development.

A 'women's democracy', that is one that is responsive to women's issues and accommodates her historical inequality, is an urgent requirement for the twenty – first century. The past century was so dominated by warfare and militarism, resulting in the deaths of probably 100 million people, that alternative models must be sought and implemented. The political slogan for the twenty first century, 'Give Women a Chance they can't do any worse than the men', has come in front. The goal of women's democracy taking pains to integrate women into the local development process, thus empowering women at the grassroots level has been established as a key feature of International development agency policies¹²⁵. Women's democracy is not simply about equalising education for girls and women but ensuring that educational achievement is transformational, leading women irrevocably towards increased and informed participation at all levels of society.

The representation of women in Panchayat Raj Institutions reflects the empowerment of women at the grass root level. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment acts seem to have been effective. In the elections to Panchayat Raj Institutions held between 1993 and 1997 women have achieved participation even beyond the mandatory requirement of one – third of the total seats in some states, such as Karnataka (43.4%), Kerala (36.4%), and West Bengal (35.4%)¹²⁶. However, it has been noted that at the national level their representation is still below one – third of the total seats.

The minuscule representation of women in the political institutions is often attributed to lack of education and awareness and women's distaste for politics. Rationalisation has to be placed against the political culture and environment existing in the country and vulnerability of women candidates therein in winning the elections. This is perhaps why despite politically correct manifestos and rhetoric, most political parties are hesitant in

¹²⁵ Eade, D. (2000) *Development with Women*, London, Oxfam.

¹²⁶ Government of India (2002), *National Human Development Report 2001*, Planning Commission, March.

fielding women¹²⁷. The National Human Development Report candidly admits that women (along with other marginalised groups) can effectively be part of the countervailing efforts to check deteriorating governance, but vested interests and stubborn and often regressive institutional barriers and practices will have to change, which can be done by increasing women's presence on the political scene by means of 'legislative initiatives through acts of positive discrimination, for instance, by undertaking reservation for women...at all levels...' ¹²⁸.

In Jelepara, women are not able to participate in casting their vote as per their choices. They have to cast their vote according to choice of their male counterparts. In the household activities also, very few women of Jelepara have their freedom to take part in decision making. The women who are working are also not in a position to involve in any decision making activities. They have to spend all money in household expenses and they are bound to give the rest of the money to their male counterparts for their expenditures like liquor, gambling or for their fishing activities. So after earning some money they are still deprived from their capabilities in Jelepara.

Some efforts are seen at community level to raise voices of these women by local ward commissioner¹²⁹ for minimizing vulnerabilities in Jelepara. However, women may not be benefited from such community- led change unless these local and informal institutional arrangements are shaped by the specific and often different needs, roles, and responsibilities of men and women. Lack of participation by women indicates that political freedom, one of Sen's five freedoms¹³⁰, is not generally available to women, thus restricting what they are able to do and to become. Moreover, the absence of political freedom is critical, as it is a prerequisite for many of the changes necessary for

¹²⁷Sharma, R. (2001), 'The Women's Reservation Bill: A Crisis of Identity', *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 47, no. 4, 51 – 66.

¹²⁸ Government of India (2002), *National Human Development Report 2001*, Planning Commission, March, 130.

¹²⁹ Through various Interviews which have been taken at regular intervals from July 2014 to October 2016.

¹³⁰ Political freedom, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and protective security are necessary for women to gain a better quality of life according to Amartya Sen.

women to take an active part in shaping overall development that meets their needs¹³¹. Narration from the field has also reiterated the concept of Amartya Sen.

Case Study 8

Sampa Mondal, working as a domestic help in three other households, wife of a fisherman, earns 1500 approx in a month. But she is not able to spend a single penny for herself, she has to give whole her wage to her husband and in laws. While interviewing focusing her decision making capacity, she has expressed her ignorance in the area that her husband decide for her.

In Jelepara, it is not only the case of Sampa but most of the women express similar version.

Legitimizing gender equity in the minds of people at large and not amongst a select few feminist scholars/ activists is an extremely complicated process and women's empowerment per se may not provide the solutions. Social development fractured along the gendered lines has to become a concern for society as a whole. The process of women's empowerment is located in broader structural, social, and political structures in this specific context, men are greater assigned affectivity than women to engineer social changes in institutional rules. Although women are seen as a primary agency for change¹³².

4.8. Conclusion:

Continuous gender inequalities and oppressions are rooted in Indian socio-cultural practices. The consequences of inequalities between men and women in domestic resources and responsibility, education and health status pushed women into the disadvantaged and excluded position as compared to men. Underestimated the vital role of women in economy, women have been bonded with household activities, child bearing

¹³¹Chopra, K. and A.K. Duraiappah (2001) 'Operationalising Capabilities and Freedom in a Segmented Society: the Role of Institutions', paper presented at a conference on '*Justice and Poverty: Examining Sen's Capability Approach*', Cambridge, UK, June 2001, Winnipeg, International Institute for Sustainable Development.

¹³² Raju, Saraswati (2006), 'Locating Women in Social Development', in *India Social Development Report*, Council for Social Development, Oxford University Press, New Delhi,92.

and nurturing and caring the family. Women Education and basic health care are the prime things for development. Women are the main agents of change. To provide equal opportunities and technical skills for men and women, successful implementation of planning needs. Many more successful integrated developments are to be promoted for gender awareness and knowledge among the socially and economically deprived groups to build their self esteem and confidence. It needs political help and commitment, social cooperation and equal opportunity with linkages for sustainable gender friendly society.

World community recognized that there cannot be a single cure for a social ailment that may be commonly shared by many societies. Common problems need not necessarily have common solutions. One must think globally but act locally. There is a clear recognition of the cultural specificities and a recommendation that solutions to problems of social development should be sought in those specificities. What may, work in a given situation, may not work in another¹³³.

Gender equality is still a distant dream, when the trend towards increasing gender equality in legal and human rights was reinvigorated in 1985 with the signing of CEDAW by so many countries: because signatories must bring their country's laws into line with CEDAW principles. Women represent 50 percent of the world's population and one third of the official labour force, they work nearly two thirds of all working hours, receive only one tenth of the world income, and own less than percent of world property. By following the Global Standard of Capabilities for Female Well- Being, women can be included in the main course of the society like equal educational access, protected human rights, freedom from violence, quality healthcare, and equal economic access. As Rabindra Nath Tagore in his famous poem '*Chitto jetha bhoyshunyo*' (Where the mind is without fear) has claimed "*narrow domestic walls*" which would include the parameters of home and the domestic periphery where women reside. Thus breaking the boundaries of these narrow domestic walls for the emancipation of women is one of the most essential factors in the development of the overall society.

¹³³ Atal, Yogesh (2003), 'Socio – Cultural Dimension of Development' in *Nucleus : An Interdisciplinary Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. III No. 1 Jan – June 2003 , 4.

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high.

Where knowledge is free.

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments

By narrow domestic walls.

Where words come out from the depth of truth.

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection.

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way

Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit.

Where the mind is led forward by Thee

Into that heaven of freedom, my father,

Let my country awake¹³⁴.

-Rabindranath Tagore, '*Chitto jetha bhoysunno*'

(Where the mind is without fear).

¹³⁴ '*Chitto jetha bhoysunno*' is a poem by Rabindra Nath Tagore, included in the 1910 Nobel prize winning collection of *Gitanjali*. The poem has written in the form of prayer to God for the true freedom of the country, highlighting women's emancipation for a new and awakened India.

Chapter 5

Development of Women in Fishing Community in Jelepara

5.1. Introduction:

The chapter focuses on the strategies of overall development of the weaker sections in the society, National and International efforts for empowering women, strategies for uplifting urban poor by Hooghly – Chinsurah municipality including the people of Jelepara, role of SHGs in empowering marginalized sections in general and women of fishing community in particular, welfare schemes of the Department of Fisheries, West Bengal, for the development of the fisher folk families and the role of Capability Approach in reducing vulnerabilities and empowering marginalized communities like fishing communities.

Development is a universal phenomenon; it is a worldwide concept which means about freedom of thought and speech, freedom to participate in decision – making, and freedom to work without social bondage. The Brandt Commission rightly observed ‘Development never will be, and never can be, defined to universal satisfaction.’ For some, development means increase in national economy, for others, it implies social development, for still others, it is another name of modernization.

However, development is a multi – dimensional process involving changes in structures, attitudes, and institutions as well as it also demands equality of opportunity, that is, equal access to economic, social, political, and cultural opportunities to all citizens. It is different from the conventional economic model of equating progress and development with per capita income or growth in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). While income and economic growth are necessary conditions, for improving the quality of people’s lives, they are not always sufficient. It is also important to focus on the condition of women and their share of equity vis a vis men¹; as well as acceleration of economic growth, reduction of inequality and eradication of poverty.

¹Sen, Kalyani Menon and Ak Shiva Kumar (2001), ‘Women in India How Free? How Equal?’, Mensa Computers Pvt. Ltd.

The broad objective of the development programme is to improve the quality of life of the people. But the development² can only be sustained when the people will build their own capacity to solve the problems and take decision in the management of their own resources. In a society people are managing their own resources according to their norm. But unless this management is not conducted in a planned sustainable manner, the scarcity of the resources will become an issue. For sustainable development³ two things are important – one is the systematic utilization of natural resources and the other is the systematic utilization of human resources.

In Simple words, development means improving the conditions of life. In development, all the modern advances in science, technology, democracy, values, ethics, and social organisation fit into the single humanitarian project of producing a far better world. In its strong sense, development means using the productive resources of society to improve the living conditions of the poorest people. Development means more of everything for everyone in the context of a lot more for a few.

Development can be understood in terms of empowerment. Empowerment can be understood by “recognizing the capacities of such groups (the marginalized and oppressed) to take action and to play an active role in development initiatives”⁴. Oakley identifies five key uses of the term empowerment in development studies. These are: empowerment as participation, empowerment as democratization, empowerment as capacity building, empowerment as capacity building, empowerment through economic improvement and empowerment at the individual level⁵.

²The development means capacity building, expanding one’s ability and energy to bring about desired (as far as possible) change at individual, community, national or global level. It addresses equity or distributional issues so that increasing development and increasing productive capacity mean broadening levels of well – being for many people, not just a few (Barbara Thomas Slayter, 1955).

³ Sustainable development refers not only to economic development based on sustained yield of renewable resources, but also to a process of social change which secures human welfare while maintaining the natural resource base.

⁴Siwal, B.R. (2010) ‘Empowerment of Women: Conceptual Framework’ in Archana Sinha ed *Sustaining Communities Strategies for Sustainable Community Development*, Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, 202.

⁵Ibid.

Naila Kabeer refers empowerment as the “process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such ability”⁶. This definition makes clear that only those previously denied such abilities can be considered to be empowered and also that the choices in question are strategic. Kabeer defines strategic choices as ones “which are critical for people to live the lives they want (such as choice of livelihood, whether and who to marry, whether to have children etc)” as opposed to “less consequential choices which may be important for the quality of one’s life but do not constitute its defining parameters”⁷.

Naila Kabeer (1994) subscribes not so much to ‘power over’ but to ‘power within’ that needs to be strengthened; power within needs recognition by experience and analysis of the subordination of women. According to Kabeer, such power cannot be given; it has to be self – generated and taken. Empowerment is a process where women are able to change from a state of powerlessness (‘I cannot’) to a state of collective self – confidence (‘we can’)⁸. Development of women, safeguarding their interest is to ensure that they are brought into the mainstream to take advantage of the general development activities. The various efforts and activities for the development of women are based on the empowerment strategy and policy making.

Policy making for women involves the usual formal or informal channels of planning, as in the case of other areas of national development, which concern government. The formal channels are the legislative, the executive, both political and bureaucratic, and the Planning Commission (now NITI Aayog). The informal and very influential groups of policy making are the political parties and non – governmental organizations. In the case of policy for women, the voluntary organisations for women, eminent women in different walks of life and women activists do play a very important role in policy formation⁹.

⁶Kabeer, 1999, ‘Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women’s Empowerment’ in *Development and Change*, Vol. 30, 437.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸Siwal, B.R., 2010, ‘Empowerment of Women: Conceptual Framework’ in Archana Sinha ed *Sustaining Communities Strategies for Sustainable Community Development*, Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, 214.

⁹Seth, Mira (2001), *Women and Development The Indian Experience*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 52.

Although women has been given rights under the Hindu Succession Act, 1956¹⁰, for inheriting an equal share of their husband's property along with their mother – in – law and children. They also inherit an equal share of their fathers' property as also their sons'. In fact, there is no country in the world which gives women better inheritance legislation. Under the Hindu Marriage, 1955, a woman has the right to monogamous marriage and to divorce.

The National Commission for Women Act, 1991, sets up a statutory body to act as an advocate of women's interests. Finally, the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, 1993, provides for reservation of seats for women in Panchayat Raj institutions.

Health and market opportunities are closely interlinked as pointed out by Amartya Sen and yet health interventions continue to perceive women as largely confined to the reproductive domain. Further, they are still considered as secondary earners despite evidences that their participation in income generating activities often pull families out of the poverty trap. Such stereotypical construction of women gets reflected in women's highly marginalised access to productive resources such as education, training, and skill formation.

Development means Capacity Building, expanding one's ability and energy to bring about desired (as far as possible) change at individual, community, national or global level. Development addresses equity or distributional issues so that increasing development and increasing productive capacity mean broadening levels of well being for many people, not just a few¹¹. Development is not only to economic development based on sustained yield of renewable resources, but also to a process of social change which secures human welfare while maintaining the natural resource base¹².

¹⁰The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted to amend and codify the law relating to unwilld succession among Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs. According to the law, any property possessed by a Hindu female is to be held by her absolute property.

¹¹Tyagi D. and M. Chatterjee (2005), 'Women in Development' in Narayan Reddy, V. et al (eds) *Women in Development: Challenges and Achievements*, Serials Publication, New Delhi, 35-43.

¹²Raj D. Sunder et. al. (2005), 'Women and Empowerment : A Perspective' in Narayan Reddy, V. et al (eds) *Women in Development: Challenges and Achievements*, Serials Publication, New Delhi, 57-58.

At present, the limited educational/ training/ vocational opportunities available largely cater to the needs of the formal labour markets contrary to where women workers are actually concentrated. Women are treated as equally important claimants and partners in labour market opportunities and the interventions are informed by ground realities. That is in informal sectors like fisheries sector, where women fisher folk have not given recognition ever by the government. Empowerment of poor women is a process that enables individuals and groups to realize their full identity and powers in all spheres of their lives. This process provides opportunities for greater access to knowledge, skills and resources.

For institutionalizing the issues, it is essential that both men and women are aware of their rights and responsibilities. Only the government orders cannot bridge this lack of awareness, leaving open the possibility that the gender roles can become a controversial issue, which affects the sustenance of the total programme. A comprehensive campaign is therefore, required to overcome this lack of awareness. Here, Non – Government Organisations can play an important role by organising workshops and seminars to make people, especially women, aware of their potentialities and catalyse them in taking greater role jointly in development work so that development can be of the people, for the people and by the people¹³.

The right to lead a long and healthy life irrespective of gender is fundamental to the idea of human development. The denial of access to productive resources, basic education, health care facilities to the women, is in effect, is the denial of the basic freedom to build a better future. Since 1995, UNDP has been measuring the gender disparities in human development to identify the extent of its variation across various regions, social groups and communities. In fact, while studying the level of development of a region, it is essential that one takes into account the fact that the development outcomes should spread evenly across all sections of the society. It is almost a well accepted notion that nowhere in the world do women enjoys equal opportunities compared to men. However, along with the progress of socio-economic development in some spheres and in many

¹³ Tyagi and Chatterjee, 2005, 'Women in Development', in Narayana Reddy, V. et.al eds *Women in Development Challenges and Achievements*, Serial Publications, New Delhi, 42-43.

countries significant progress has been made towards achieving gender equality in development. Still, it is often observed that women, particularly, lag behind their male counterparts in many aspects.

The latest Human Development Index (HDI) 2015 report themed on how access to work in a digital era labour market can improve lives termed India's National Rural Employment Guarantee act a 'milestone' that has ensured 'greater social protection'. Despite the progress, India's 2014 HDI score was 0.609, which is below the average of the medium development nations (0.630), according to the report published by the Human Development Report office of the United Nations Development Programme. Although India, the world's ninth richest country, look to be scaling up the rankings rather quickly, the picture is not all rosy. When adjusted for equality, the country's actual improvement is just one rank since last year.

This means that development has been highly skewed, and causes an overall human development 'loss' of 28.6% under scoring the need for policies that will enable wider, more secure and sustainable employment. The findings show gender inequality is a growing risk. For every 1000, live births, 190 women die from pregnancy – related causes every year in India. The figure for Bangladesh and Pakistan is lower at 170. Only 27% of adult women reach at least a secondary level of education in contrast to 56.6% of their male counterparts in India. In India, the world's largest democracy by size and population, 12.2% seats in Parliament are held by women, while 20% parliamentary seats are held by women in Pakistan. The maternal mortality ratio of women in war torn Syria is better at 49 than India. Iraq too, despite a lower rank, tops India on maternal deaths (67 per 1000 births against India's 190).

The HDI report calls upon countries to increase access to employment in a labour market transformed by digital technology and globalization. Indian farmers and fisher folk who compare wholesale prices and track weather on mobile phones increased profits 8%. Better internet access will enable more people to work from home increasing living standards.

Given globalization and technological changes, employment terms tend to be skewed against workers, 46% of them are vulnerable in India. The HDI report says newer forms of trade unionism and worker organizations, such as India's Self Employed Women's Association of India, widely known as SEWA, strengthen social protection and need to be supported¹⁴. According to the Gender Development Index (GDI) 2014, female HDI value for India is 0.525 in contrast to 0.660 for males and Gender inequality Index (GII) value is 0.563.

Gender equality in society implies a society in which women and men enjoy the same opportunities, outcomes, rights and obligations in all spheres of life. Despite many developmental efforts, women are still much more likely to be poor and illiterate than men. They usually have less access to medical care, property ownership, credit, and training and in employment. They are far less likely to be politically active and far more likely to be victims of domestic violence compared to men. Women in Hooghly district are well placed in gender development ladder of West Bengal. As per West Bengal Human Development Report, 2004, the district attains third position in terms of gender development index, although, in overall human development ladder it ranks sixth among the districts of West Bengal. The rising level of women's education, the growing SHG movements and Panchayat's participation in empowering women have been increasingly reducing the discriminatory practices against the women in the district. However, it does not mean gender inequality is non-existent in the district. In fact, the existence of gender disparity is more visible at the sub-district level indicators of development. In spite of the initiatives taken by the Government of West Bengal, benefits have not been percolated down to the marginalized sections of Jelepara, which warrants immediate policy intervention.

The discourse of development is incomplete without the overall development of women in all fields including healthcare, economic independence and education. There are several measures for addressing the problems of marginalized sections of the society

¹⁴Haq, Zia, Dec 15, 2015, 00.09 IST, 'India at 130 among 188 countries in human development, up 5 slots', *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi.

especially for women at international, national and local levels but still there are lacunae in the policies and their implementation for the women folk of the fishing communities.

5.2. International measures for the development of women:

In Capitalist Societies development is conventionally measured in terms purely of the size of the economy, as the Gross national product (GNP) that is, the value of the “total final output of goods and services produced by an economy, the higher the annual growth of GNP/Capita, the more rapidly a country is said to “develop”.

An alternative measure that takes into account social and cultural variable more attuned to development than just economic growth alone is the “Human Development Index” (HDI) calculated by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Stemming from an alternative conception of development, “enlarging people’s choices”, especially in terms of increasing access to knowledge, nutrition and health services, security, leisure, political and cultural freedoms, the HDI measures “development” in terms of longevity (life expectancy at birth), knowledge (adult literacy and mean years of schooling) and income sufficiency (the proportion of people with sufficient resources to live a decent life). According to UNDP human development can be achieved by promoting more equitable economic growth and by using participatory, democratic political methods.

The United Nations Development Program’s (UNDP) Human Development Report (1995) states ‘Investing in women’s capabilities and empowering them to exercise their choices is not only valuable in itself but is also the surest way to contribute to economic growth and development’ as Amartya Sen also explained the same about the development. The report reaffirms that ‘human development is impossible without gender equality. As long as women are excluded from the development process, social development will remain lopsided. Sustainable human development implies engendering the development paradigm, and here is the importance of women empowerment.’

5.2.1. International Conferences on Women:

Legislating for women’s right was a gradual process throughout the twentieth century. In 1933 the Convocation on the Nationality of women was adopted at the Seventh

International Conference of American States in Montevideo, Uruguay. It allowed a woman to retain her own nationality if she married a man of another nationality. This was the first International treaty ever adopted concerning the rights of women; it was also the first international conference that women were allowed to attend as part of the delegations.

Twelve years later, in 1945, the UN Charter, the founding document of the United Nations, affirmed the ‘equal rights of men and women’, ‘the dignity and worth of the human person,’ and the realisation of fundamental human rights for all as core UN principles and objectives ¹⁵. Then in 1979 came one of the most important international conferences on women’s equality – the United Nations Convocation on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). A legally binding treaty that dealt comprehensively with women’s rights, it defined discrimination in the following way:

“Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.”¹⁶

The most valuable aspect of this convention was the critical accountability mechanism it included. When states ratify the CEDAW, they also assume responsibility for enshrining the principle of equality between men and women in their constitutions and legislative systems. In other words, they have to make sure that their laws are enforced¹⁷. In September 1995, the fourth United Nations World Conference on Women was held in Beijing and brought together 189 states and 2,600 nongovernmental organisations. The conference ended with the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and a “Platform for Action,” which encouraged all signatory states to take specific legal and cultural

¹⁵The UN Founding Charter of 1945, www.un.org/aboutun/charter accessed on 23.10.2016.

¹⁶UN convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1979, www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw.

¹⁷Amnesty International, ‘Respect, Protect and Fulfill Women’s Human Rights: State Responsibility for Abuses by ‘ Non – state Actors,’ August 31, 2000, AI index number 10R 50/001/200 accessed on 23.10.2016.

measures to protect women's rights.¹⁸ Violence, the effects of armed conflict on women, mainstreaming gender in all development activities and overcoming the constraints which women face in accessing opportunities in terms of dedicated programmes for women were specifically targeted as areas of concern. However, being a signatory of the convention and in spite of increasing the education budget to 6 percent of GDP, universalizing mother and child care programme and setting up a commission for protecting women's human rights named National Commission of Women, in the country, formulation and operation them is a far cry.

Promotion of equality between women and men and the empowerment of women is central to the work of the United Nations. Gender equality is not only a goal in its own right, but is also recognized as a critical means for achieving all other development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, Eradicating poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education and health for all, combating HIV/AIDS and facilitating sustainable development all require systematic attention to the needs, priorities and contributions of women as well as men. The UN actively promotes women's human rights and works to eradicate the scourge of violence against women. The UN also adopts global norms and standards and supports follow-up and implementation at the national level, including through its development assistance activities. The UN has taken some measures for gender equality and empowerment of women which were:-

5.2.2. The Commission on the Status of Women:

The Commission on the Status of Women under ECOSOC, monitors progress towards gender equality throughout the world by reviewing implementation of the platform for action that emerged from the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995). The Commission makes recommendations for further action to promote women's rights, and to address discrimination and inequalities in all fields. The major contributions of the forty five members Commission during more than sixty years of activity include the preparation of and follow up to four world conferences on women, including the Beijing

¹⁸Horsbrugh – Porter, Anna, 2009, *Created Equal*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, xii -xiv.

Conference and development of the treaty on women's human rights- *The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women*.

5.2.3. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW):

It monitors adherence to *The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women*. The twenty three members committee holds constructive dialogues with States parties on their implementation of the Convention, based on reports they submit. Its recommendations have contributed to a better understanding of women's rights, and of the means to ensure the enjoyment of those rights and the elimination of discrimination against women.

5.2.4. The Division for the Advancement of Women:

The Department of Economics and Social Affairs, supports the efforts of the Commission on the Status of Women, the ECOSOC and the General Assembly to advance the global policy agenda for gender equality and strengthen the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in all areas of the United Nations.

5.2.5. The Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women:

It provides advice to the Security General. She plays a leadership and coordinating role within UN on gender equality issues, and provides advice and support on gender mainstreaming in all areas of its works as well as on improving the status of women within the organization – including the achievement of fifty-fifty gender balance. She provides support at the senior level to inter governmental and expert bodies, including to the Security Council, on women, peace and security. The Special Advisor also chairs the Inter Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, which is comprised of the gender equality advisors and focal points from all parts of the UN system.

Beyond the Secretariat, all the organizations of the UN family address issues relating to women and gender in their policies and programs. Women are central to UNICEF's work for children. Much of UNFPA's mandate revolves around women's health and reproductive rights. UNDP, UNESCO, WFP, ILO, and others have programs specifically

focused on women and the promotion of gender equality, while also mainstreaming gender perspectives in their work, generally. In addition, to other entities have an exclusive focus on women's issues: UNIFEM and UN-INSTRAW.

5.2.6. United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM):

Now known as UN Women, it provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programs and strategies to foster women's empowerment and gender equality. Placing the advancement of women at the centre of all of its efforts, UNIFEM focuses on four strategic areas: strengthening women's economic security and rights, ending violence against women, reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS among women and girls, and achieving gender equality in democratic governance in times of peace as well as war.

5.2.7. United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW):

It works together with UN member states, international organizations, academia, civil society, the private sector and others and conducts action oriented research with a gender oriented perspective. Its research promotes the empowerment of women and the achievement of gender equality, by strengthening the capacities of key stake holders to integrate gender perspectives in their policies, programs and projects¹⁹.

5.2.8. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs):

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were established in 2000 to reduce the number of people who live in extreme poverty by 2015. MDGs are quantified targets with many dimensions – income, poverty, hunger, disease, and exclusion while promoting gender equality, education, lack of adequate shelter and environmental sustainability. These targets were developed by the leaders from 191 countries including India.

Of all these late – twentieth- century events, perhaps CEDAW and the MDGs will have the most far – reaching impacts for the development of women. But in India, especially

¹⁹ United Nations (2008) 'The United Nations Today', Department of Public Information, United Nations, New York, 197-198.

the women of marginalized section of the society like fishing communities of Jelepara are far behind from the fruits of these above mentioned programmes of United Nations about the promise of equality and dignity of women are also applicable in the case of Jelepara.

5.3. Programmes and Policies for Development in India:

Several mechanisms have created in the country to work for enhancement of the women's capabilities. Some programmes initiated for the development of women are following:

5.3.1. Constitution of India and Women's rights:

The Constitution of India, which came into force on 26 January 1950, is amongst the most comprehensive constitutions in the world. It contains 447 Articles divided into 26 parts and 12 schedules. The Preamble, Part III of the Constitution consisting of Fundamental Rights, Part IV (A) containing Fundamental Duties, constitute the human rights framework in our constitution²⁰. The Constitution granted equality to women and empowering the state to adopt measures of affirmative discrimination in favour of women.

The Constitution of India guarantees to all Indian women:

- a. Equality before the law. Article 14
- b. No discrimination by the state on the grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of these. Article 15(1)
- c. Special provisions to be made by the State in favour of women and children. Article 15(3)
- d. Equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the state. Article 16
- e. State policy to be directed to securing for men and women equally, the right to an adequate means of livelihood. Article 39(a)
- f. Equal pay for equal work for both men and women. Article 39 (d)

²⁰ South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre (2006) *Introducing Human Rights An Overview Including Issues of Gender Justice, Environmental, and Consumer Law*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 66.

- g. Provisions to be made by the state for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief. Article 42
- h. To promote harmony and to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women. Article 51(A) (e)²¹.

Drawing the strength from the constitutional commitments, the Government of India has been engaged in the continuous endeavour of concretely translating all the rights, commitments and safeguards incorporated in the Indian Constitution for women.

5.3.2. Evolution in the Approach of Five Year Plans for development of Women:

The approach on women development changed from viewing women as beneficiaries of social services to contributors of social and economic development process in nation building. Development approach has attempted to address not only women's immediate needs but also their strategic gender interests addressing inequalities in employment, political participation and cultural and legal status. In the last few decades a significant shift has been apparent in the planning process of country. Approaches towards empowering women which was started with 'welfare' in the fifties, shifted to 'development' in the seventies and has been successfully continued under different Five Year Plans.

A review of Five Year Plans will reflect that by framing different approaches and strategies, the Government has tried to create an enabling environment with various affirmative developmental policies and programmes for women empowerment, besides providing them easy and equal access to all the basic minimum services.

From the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974 – 79) there was a marked shift from welfare to development, recognising women as participants in the process of development. In the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980 – 85) a multi – disciplinary approach, with a special thrust on three core sectors – health, education and employment had been affected. The Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90) stated, for the first time, that confidence building and

²¹Sen, Kalyani Menon and Ak Shiva Kumar (2001), 'Women in India How Free? How Equal?,' Mensa Computers Pvt. Ltd. Sen, Kalyani Menon and Ak Shiva Kumar (2001), 'Women in India How Free? How Equal?,' Mensa Computers Pvt. Ltd.7.

awareness of their rights among women must be accelerated so that women realize their own potential for development and their rights to a share from this process. It also spoke, for the first time, of the need for initiating integrated development projects for women covering health, education, nutrition, application of technology and science and creation of employment²².

In the Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97) the emphasis was on training and skill development programmes to make women economically independent and self – reliant. Empowerment of women was recognized and accepted as a distinct strategy. In the Ninth Plan, which runs from 1997 to 2002, the empowerment of women is one of its nine primary objectives. Also, the Plan attempted convergence of services available in both women – specific and women – related sectors. This was the first plan which involved women’s groups from around the country in a consultative process. However, the Ninth Five Year Plan refrained from making any commitment for achieving any specific goal or target. This was overcome to some extent in the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007), which emphasized on empowerment of women and also views development of children as the most desirable societal investment with a rights – based approach to their development²³. The Eleventh Plan (2007-12) has also laid great emphasis on removing gender disparities by ensuring access to basic physical infrastructure as well as health and education services to all. It has recognized gender as a crosscutting theme across all sectors and commit to respect and promote the rights of the common people²⁴.

5.3.3. The National Commission for Women:

Owing to the overwhelmingly patriarchal structure of Indian society, women have been relegated to a secondary status and have been subject to various legal and social discriminations. The framers of the Constitution recognized the need to remove such inequalities, and made special provisions to redress the same. The need was felt for a structure to uphold the rights and implement the provisions of beneficial legislations in an

²²Seth, Mira (2001), *Women and Development The Indian Experience*, Sage Publication, New Delhi,63.

²³ Raju, Saraswati (2006) ‘Locating Women in Social Development’, in *India Social Development Report*, Council for Social Development, Oxford University Press, New Delhi,80.

²⁴ Somasekhar, K. (2014) ‘Empowerment of Women Need for New Initiatives’, in Nagaraju Battu (ed) *Empowerment of Women in India New Strategies*, Regal Publications, New Delhi, 64-65.

organized and institutionalized manner. The National Commission for Women (NCW) is a statutorily constituted body under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990²⁵. The Commission highlighted the problems and position of disadvantaged groups like Scheduled Castes and Tribes, widows, prostitutes and women living in slum areas²⁶.

5.4. Government policies for the development of the marginalised people in India in general and West Bengal in particular:

The empowerment of the poor and the marginalized is a multistage process and all the different sections of poor including women should be enabled through a series of measures like leadership building, legal knowledge, livelihood security, and better access to information. The active participation of the poor and the marginalized communities in the development process has been deemed to be a prerequisite for improving their socio – economic status. Reservations in the political bodies at various levels for the socially and economically disadvantaged groups enable them to take part in the decision making, and thus protect their interests. To make them effective in all endeavors, the Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) activities are essential. Through these IEC activities, systematic efforts can be made to sensitize and educate people and communicate such information for ‘empowering’ the poor. The ‘Right to Information’ Act is a right step in this direction. The process of policy making and planning is a continuous process, which is always evolving. The success of this endeavor would finally be judged when full gender equality is achieved in all development programme of the country.

5.4.1. Measures for improving Housing and Living conditions:

The provision of drinking water and sanitation has been one of the major concerns of the government since Independence. The problem understandably is more serious in urban centres due to their rapid population growth. Several programmes have been launched

²⁵ South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre (2006) *Introducing Human Rights An Overview Including Issues of Gender Justice, Environmental, and Consumer Law*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 145.

²⁶ National Commission for Women (1996), *Annual Report, 1992 – 93 to 1996*, National Commission for Women, New Delhi.

often with time bound targets in different Five years plans to cover sizeable sections of the population but the success has at best been limited. The goal of covering the entire urban population with minimum basic amenities was set right at the beginning of the planned era. Ambitious targets were set to provide these services to all sections of the urban population, especially the urban poor. Unfortunately, these were not matched by a corresponding allocation of resources or by the launching of major programmes to achieve the desired targets. The inability of the government to provide minimum basic services to all sections of the population was explicitly noted by various Task Forces set up by the Planning Commission/ Ministry of Urban Development as also in the Five Year Plans. Following are the policies that have been implemented for the development of the poor people in general and women in particular:-

5.4.1.1. International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade:

A master plan was adopted for Water Supply and Sanitation during the 1980s and the decade was declared as International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade. Despite these, the targets to cover the entire population could not be met due to inadequacy of resources under the programmes and lack of efficient management and coordination among the various agencies. It may indeed be difficult to provide basic services to all sections of the population within the next decade or so, especially to the economically deprived classes.

After a long period of Independence, state governments have gradually taken over the responsibility of providing basic services such as water supply, sewerage, sanitation, solid waste disposal, and street lighting from the local governments. Many of the state governments had set up semi – independent and autonomous corporations and boards in their respective states in the 1960's to undertake the preparation of long – term plans for urban water supply and carry out capital works that were until then undertaken by the state governments own public works departments.

Major changes in the organisational structure and supporting financing system have come up in the 1990s. The Eighth Plan (1992-7) had clearly envisaged cost recovery to be built into the municipal finance system, which has been reinforced in the subsequent plan

documents. Cities and towns were given clear directives to make capital investment in water supply and sanitation facilities, besides covering their operational costs. These are to be undertaken mostly through institutional and private finance rather than budgetary support. The allocations for government departments and agencies, like Housing Boards, Water Supply Corporations, Development Authorities, etc., allowing them to undertake capital projects, have been cut down drastically²⁷. Martha Nussbaum also accumulates the ability to have proper living conditions in her Capability Approach.

5.4.1.2.74th Constitutional Amendment Act for empowering urban local bodies:

The passing of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) in 1992 had a significant impact on the system for managing basic services for empowerment of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), through the formation of District Planning Committees (DPCs) and Metropolitan Planning Committees (MPCs) to take up developmental activities. The Creation of wards committees in cities having population over 300,000 as per the Act has also been interpreted and incorporated in the administrative orders differently in different states, mostly to meet their political convenience. Only Kerala and West Bengal have established separate committees for each ward. Only a few states and union territories have taken the steps to constitute the DPCs. The situation is worse with regard to the MPCs. It is only in the state of West Bengal that the MPC have actually been formed.

5.4.1.3. Housing and Urban Development Corporation Limited (HUDCO):

HUDCO was set up in the late 1960s by the Government of India, to provide funds for infrastructural development to bring about balanced urban development in the country. However, an analysis of HUDCO's loans over the last few decades shows that there have been shifts in the pattern of devolution and that about 80 % of the loans have in recent years been given to a few large cities located in the developed states²⁸. In the water supply sector, HUDCO has been advocating innovative 'payment by users instruments'

²⁷Kundu, Debolina (2006), 'Globalisation, Decentralisation and Crisis in Urban Governance Providing Drinking Water and Sanitation Facilities', *India Social Development Report*, Council for Social Development, Oxford University Press, New York, 50- 55.

²⁸ Kundu, Debolina (2001), 'Provision of Basic Services in Urban India in the context of the Changing Perspective of Governance: A Regional Analysis', Unpublished Theses, Centre for the Study of Regional Development (CSR), Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

like advance registration charges, connection charges, enhancement of water tariff, water tax, etc. In Jelepara, It has not been applied.

Important physical and social development programme have been launched in urban areas since the 1970s which has upgradation of basic services as a key component. Environmental Improvement of Urban Slums (EIUS), Urban Basic Services for the Poor (UBSP), Integrated Development for SMTS (IDSMT), Low Cost Sanitation (LCS), Shelter and Sanitation for Pavement Dwellers (SSPD), Urban Transport Project, Mega City Project, and Accelerated Urban Water Supply Programme are some of them.

5.4.1.4. Low Cost Sanitation Programme (LCS):

Low Cost Sanitation Programme (LCS) was started with the announcement of the UN Decadal Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation. The goal of this programme was to provide sanitation facilities to 80 percent of the urban population. It covers all households which have dry latrines and those having no latrines including slum and squatter settlements. Under this scheme, loan, which is guaranteed by state government and central subsidy are both channeled through HUDCO.

5.4.1.5. National Slum Development Programme (NSDP):

The National Slum Development Programme (NSDP), initiated in 1996 as a scheme of Special Central Assistance for slum improvement, has been providing additional central assistance to state governments to provide water supply and sanitation among other facilities to the slums. The focus of the scheme is on community infrastructure, the provision of shelter, etc. The tenth plan has pointed out that its performance has not been satisfactory because of the delays at the state level for releasing funds to the implementing agencies. The Ministry of Urban Development monitors the progress of the scheme.

It is important to point out that city authorities do not have the adequate technical competence to assess the cost implications of the contractual arrangements for the people or urban economy in the long term. There has been no effort on the part of the state government to create an information base or provide technical assistance to Urban Local

Bodies (ULBs) for assessing. Even when the cities have been successful in getting the private sector involvement in basic services, they face problems in providing basic amenities to the poor. These people get priced out of the projects, launched through investment in private or joint sector through subcontracting arrangements and through this management contracts the inequalities within the cities would sharpen.

5.4.1.6. Community Based Pro-poor Initiatives Programme:

The Community Based Pro-poor Initiatives Programme (CBPPI), which is supplementary to SGSY, lays greater focus on women. For instance, 'Women's Empowerment for Sustainable Natural Resource Management' aims at capacity building of women and the management of resources like land and water. Similarly the 'Strengthening Livelihoods for Women's Empowerment' programme is to strengthen women's organizations working for community action to address issues relating to the livelihood systems. Another programme entitled 'Harnessing Women's Collective Strength for Poverty Alleviation' aims at strengthening women's groups for livelihood security and economic empowerment of SCs and STs. The programme of 'Capacity Building of Women for Effective Governance' deals with training of women's groups in the field of planning and monitoring and also to carry out the gender audit of development initiatives²⁹.

5.4.2. Self Employment Programme:

The *Swarna Jayanti Gram Swrojgar Yojana* (SGSY) programme was operationalised in April 1999 after restructuring and combining the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) with allied programmes into a single self – employment programme. It aims at mobilizing the rural poor to organize themselves into self – help groups (SHGs), initiate thrift and credit activities, link the SHGs with banks, and promote microenterprises through credit, training and market support.

Under the SGSY, since inception, about 4.83 million SHGs were formed till March 2004 and 4.60 million *swarozgaris* (self – employed persons) received financial assistance.

²⁹RadhaKrishna, R. and K. HanuMantha Rao (2006), 'Poverty, Unemployment, and Public Intervention', in *India Social Development Report*, Council for Social Development, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 12.

Credit to the tune of Rs. 63.3 billion was mobilized and was made available to the *swarozgaris* during the five year reference period 1999 – 2004. Studies revealed that in several states the progress of SGSY was slow, mainly due to the failure to form and nurture SHGs of the poor, poor quality of social mobilization approaches, and lack of clarity on the operational aspects.

Nongovernmental Organisations have been financially supported to take up social mobilization and organizing the poor and women at the rate of Rs. 10,000 per self help group (SHG) to nurture and develop over a period of 3 years under this scheme. Training programmes to build the capacities of women have been organized by the government, NGOs, and also with the support of international agencies like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Children's fund (UNICEF). On the other hand it has been revealed through the field visits that there are only two NGOs registered and functioning in Hooghly District, working for the welfare and addressing the problems of the fisher folk but not a single NGO is working in Jelepara, whereas in this area fishing folk concentration is huge.

5.4.3. Employment Generation Programme:

Employment programme has become important instruments for alleviating poverty and smoothening consumption during critical periods including drought and flood situations. Three major employment programmes existed: Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS), which guaranteed 100 days of employment to the rural poor, Food for Work (FFW) programme that provided temporary employment with food grains as wages, and *Jawahar Gram Samridh Yojana* (JGSY) with emphasis on creation rural economic infrastructure as the prime objective. These programmes were replaced in 2001 by the *Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana* (SGRY), scheme combating the various features of EAS, FFW, and JGSY. The main aim of SGRY remains the same as for previous employment programmes: providing wage employment in rural areas and the creation of durable community, social and economic assets.

5.4.3.1. The Food For Work programme:

The Food For Work programme (FFW) is one of the oldest wage employment programme launched during the 1970s. The programme was designed to ensure employment and food security to the rural people affected by natural disasters like droughts and floods. The experiences of this programme helped in the design of many other wage employment programmes by the government.

In November 2004, the National Food for Work programme (NFFWP) has been launched in the 150 most backward districts. The districts were identified by the Planning Commission in consultation with the states and Ministry of Rural Development. It is a 100 percent centrally sponsored scheme and aims at generation of supplementary wage employment and assurance of food security through creation of need based economic social and community assets.

5.4.3.2. Integrated Child Development Services:

The Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS), launched in 1975, is a centrally sponsored, state administered nation-wide direct nutrition intervention programme, which integrates supplementary nutrition with primary health care and informal education. It provides six services to under six – year old children and mothers, supplementary feeding³⁰, immunization, health check – ups, referral services, health and nutrition education to adult women, and non – formal pre – school education to 3- 6 year olds. The *anganawadi* child care centre is the focal point in the delivery of services at the village level covering 1000 population. Currently, 34 million children, consisting of 23 percent of children in the relevant age group, and 4.8 million mothers are being provided with supplementary nutrition. The low coverage could be due to very meager public spending by Central and state governments on nutrition.

³⁰ The ICDS provides food ration for 300 days, containing 300 kcal and 12.5 gms protein, to a child and food ration containing 500 kcal and 12 – 15 gms protein to pregnant and lactating women.

5.4.3.3. Mid – day Meal Programme:

The National Programme of Nutritional support to Primary Education (NPNS), commonly known as Mid –day Meal Programme launched in 1995, is another nationwide central scheme intended to improve enrolment, regular attendance, and reduce dropouts as well as improve the nutritional status of primary school children. It provides to a child aged 6- 14 years cooked food comprising 100 gms of food grains (rice or wheat) per school day or 3 kg food grains per month. India's mid – day meal scheme has been classified as biggest school feeding programme benefiting 105 million beneficiaries or 15 % of India's population.

5.4.3.4. Nehru Rozgar Yojana (NRY) and Prime Minister's Integrated Urban Poverty Eradication Programme (PMIUPEP):

Besides, the Nehru Rozgar Yojana (NRY) and Prime Minister's Integrated Urban Poverty Eradication Programme (PMIUPEP) were two important direct poverty alleviation programmes in urban areas. Although their thrust was on employment and income generation for the urban poor, they had components for the provision of basic services as well. PMIUPEP was launched in the year 1995 - 6 with the objective of employment generation, shelter upgradation, social development, and community empowerment. However, during 1997, the three programmes of UBSP, NRY, and PMIUPEP have been merged into a single employment generation programme called Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY). Still there are a huge gap between policy formation and enactment due to lack of willingness.

Poverty alleviation programmes should go beyond their present minimal concerns of providing safety nets. There should be a substantial investment in human resource development for enhancing people's capabilities. Along with this, there should be attempts to create more economic space for the poor by equipping them with assets and skills for livelihood outside agriculture. The existing poverty alleviation programmes are essentially top – down venture that are heavily dependent on the bureaucracy. There have been moves towards strengthening the participants of the people through PRIs, NGOs and SHG in the planning and implementation of the programmes.

Development is the best contraceptive and such development needs to be labour intensive and broad based. The reforms also offer new opportunities and pose certain challenges. A people – centred decentralization with participatory institutional structures cannot only enlarge the social capital of the poor in the short run but also make them partners in the socio – economic transformation of the Indian economy in the medium term³¹.

5.4.3.5. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA):

MGNREGA is considered as world's largest public works programme by World Bank (World Bank Group's report 'The State of Social Safety Nets 2015'). India is among the five middle income countries³² running the world's largest social safety net programmes and reaching over 180 million people. India's rural employment guarantee programme MNREGA has been ranked as the world's largest public works programme, providing social security net to almost 15 percent of the country's population³³. The latest HDI report –themed on how access to work in a digital era labour market can improve lives – termed India's National Rural Employment Guarantee Act a 'milestone' that has ensured 'greater social protection'.

According to the World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim and Executive Director of International Labour Organisation, Guy Rider, and 'The World Bank Group and the ILO share a vision of social protection for all, a world where anyone who needs social protection can access it at any time'. The group's Senior Director for Social Protection and later Arup Banerjee said, 'There is strong body of evidence that these programme ensure poor families can invest in the health and education of their children, improve their productivity, and cope with shocks'. It is also said that the safety net Programmes must be more efficient and effective to close the coverage gap.

³¹Radha Krishna, R. and K. Hanu Mantha Rao (2006), 'Poverty, Unemployment, and Public Intervention', in *India Social Development Report*, Council for Social Development, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 13- 16.

³² The World's five largest social safety net programmes are all in middle – income countries (China, India, South Africa and Ethiopia) and reaching over 526 million people.

³³ Trivedi, Bhutnath (July, 07, 2015), 'MNREGA world's largest public works programme : World Bank', Times of India.

5.4.3.6. India Vision 2020:

India Vision 2020 document, while discussing about women in the labour force has, inter alia, mentioned that secure child care support services are necessary for working women. The 1th Five Year Plan document of the Planning Commission incorporated various schemes and programmes for women and child development. It also mentions about the setting up of crèches in unorganized sector and restructuring and revamping of the existing Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme for the children of working mothers.

5.4.4. Measures for Improving Health Standard:

Sustainable socio – economic development is possible only if the health and education are given top priority in the process of planning. The issue of health and the right to health is considered in all developing countries and developed countries as an issue of fundamental importance. As per the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) everyone has the right to adequate health and well being. The article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 (UDHR) encapsulated the ‘Right to Health’ in the following words:

1. ‘Everyone has a right to a standard of living adequate for the health and wellbeing of himself and of his family including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
2. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Viewing women in a much larger role, there has to be a swing back to planning and policies. Also, preventive, curative, and promotional health services have to converge. More importantly, women’s health has to be seen as a social issue closely interlinked with other spheres of their existence framed by patriarchal structures.

. In the case of the many developing nations, the basic indicators of health are found to be unsatisfactory. People live below the standards expected to maintain good health. When

the target was fixed as the 'Health for all by 2000 AD', all nations planned to achieve it as targeted.. Of the three areas of health, the promotive, the preventive and curative, the promotive aspect was given the priority³⁴.

Promotion of health would assure a high quality life, active participation, good habits, and high input of work, healthy mind, sound thought and happy interpersonal relationship leading to a healthy society. To work on health promotion, education of the masses and spreading of health information among them is very much essential. Health information could be disseminated in the community fast with the help of media. But this is feasible in the case of developed nation where the educational and economic statuses are high. But the situation in the traditional/developing societies is different. These societies require active participation of human resources than the application of mechanical media. Interpersonal contacts, awareness campaigns, persuasion through persistent contact only will help in disproving the existing traditional mode of health practices³⁵.

Health is one of the central elements of human security because it refers to the welfare of individuals and present at the core of their survival. Women's health is the foundation of a healthy nation. A healthy women as Martha Nussbaum's Capability Approach, who is able to lead a complete healthy life in healthy circumstances till the end of life. One of the greatest health challenges confronting the fisher folk families may become HIV/AIDS. Fishermen appear to be particularly vulnerable because of their ignorance of the disease and the time spent away from their families. Access to affordable treatment and education on safe sex is, therefore, the fishermen and their wives must be aware of their rights to protect themselves³⁶. A woman's sociological, economic and health implications are affected by the malnourishment and long working hours. Government of India has taken various steps for improving the condition of women's health, especially for the women who belong to the marginalized communities of the society. Some of them are :-

³⁴Nalini, B. And S. Elango, 2005, in Narayana Reddy, V. et.al eds *Women in Development Challenges and Achievements*, Serial Publications, New Delhi,231.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Williams, M.J., S.B. Williams and P.S.Choo (2014), 'From Women in Fisheries to gender and fisheries' in *SPC Women in Fisheries Information Bulletin*, 24 – July 2014, 6-9.

5.4.4.1. National Health Policy:

National Health Policy which was adopted in 1983 was to attain the goal of Health for All by the year 2000 by establishing an effective and efficient health care system for all citizens, in particular vulnerable groups like women, children and underprivileged. Other major priority areas were: close coordination of health- related services and activities like drinking water supply, sanitation, and nutrition, the active involvement and participation of voluntary organizations and provision of essential drugs and vaccines. The target was attained more or less in all states..

In the year 2002, a new National Health Policy was again formulated. The major concerns were the determinants of health- water, food, sanitation, and environment. There are 137,271 sub-centres functioning in the country of which the Centre finances 97,757 and the states the balance. The Public Health Centre (PHC) is the first contact point between the village community and the medical officer, and there are 22,975 PHCs operational in the country. The PHC, as the name suggest, has facilities mainly for primary out – patient care with minimal arrangements for in – patients, while the Community Health Centre (CHC) has facilities for secondary care, with specialists and in – patients beds. There are 2935 functioning CHCs³⁷.

These developments imply major challenges for the reproductive health agenda. The following issues need to be addressed: 1) affordable cost and access to services, 2) decentralization and devolution to panchayat raj institutions (PRIs), 3) community need based planning, 4) sustainability of infrastructure and workforce, and 5) improved quality of services. There is growing consensus in the country over the need to acknowledge the rights to and needs of adolescents, girls and boys, married and unmarried, to education, health, empowerment, livelihood, and social mobilization.

5.4.4.2.National Urban Health Mission (NHUM):

National Urban Health Mission (NHUM) encourages the participation of the community in the planning and management of the health care services. It would promote an urban

³⁷Nanda A.R. and Almas Ali (2006), 'Health Sector Issues and Challenges', in *India Social Development Report*, Council for Social Development, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 26.

poor settlements (USHA) (one USHA for 1000 – 2500 urban poor population covering about 200 to 500 households), ensure the participation by creation of community based institutions like Mahila Arogya Samiti (20 -1000 Households) and Rogi Kalyan Samitis. It would proactively reach out to urban poor settlements by way of regular outreach sessions and monthly health and nutrition day. It mandates special attention for reaching out to other vulnerable sections like construction workers, rag pickers, sex workers, brick kin workers, rickshaw pullers, boat man communities, fishing communities, etc.

The NHUM would promote community health risk. Health insurance, as measures for protecting the poor from impoverishing effect of out of the pocket expenditures. For promoting community risk pooling mechanism slum women would be organised into Mahila Arogya Samiti. The members of the MAS would be encouraged to save money on monthly basis for meeting the health emergencies. The group members themselves would decide the lending norms and rate of interest. The NHUM would provide seed money of Rs. 2500 to the MAS (@ Rs. 25/- per household represented by the MAS). The NHUM also proposes incentives to the group on the basis of the targets achieved for strengthening the savings.

The NUHM would promote an urban health insurance model which provides for the cost of accessing health care for surgery and hospitalisation needs for the urban population at reasonable cost and assured quality, while subsidizing the insurance premium for the urban slum and vulnerable population. The mission recognizes that state specific, community oriented innovative and flexible insurance policies need to be developed.

Urban Community Health Insurance Model by National Urban Health Mission (NHUM):

Objective: To ensure access of identified families to quality medical care for hospitalization/surgery;

Beneficiaries: Identified urban poor families, for a maximum of five members, Smart Card/Individual or Family Health Suraksha Cards to be proof of eligibility and to avoid duplication with similar schemes;

Implementing Agency: Preferably ULBs, possibly state for smaller cities;

Premium Financing: Up to a maximum of Rs.600 per family as subsidy by the central govt. Additional cost, if any, may be contributed by state/ULB/beneficiary.

Benefits: Coverage for hospitalisation/surgical procedure, Coverage of surgical care on a day care basis, Pre-existing conditions/diseases, including maternal and childhood conditions and illness, to be covered, subject to minimal exclusion.

The National Urban Health Mission promotes the role of the urban local bodies in the planning and management of the urban health programmes. The NUHM would also incorporate and promote transparency and accountability by incorporating elements like health service delivery charter, health service guarantee, concurrent audit at the levels of funds release and utilization. NUHM would aim to provide a system for convergence of all communicable and non-communicable disease programmes including HIV/AIDS through an integrated planning at the city level. The objective would be to enhance the utilisation of the system through the convergence mechanism, through provision of a common platform and availability of all services at one point Urban health Centre (UHC) and through mechanisms of referrals. The existing IDSP structure would be leveraged for improved surveillance.

The management, control and supervision systems however would vest within the respective divisions but urban component /funds within the programmes would be identified and all services will be sought to be converged /located at UHC level. Appropriate convergences and mechanisms for co-locations and strengthening would be sought with the existing systems of the Department of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturotherapy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy (AYUSH) at the time of operationalisation.

The effective implementation of the above strategies would require skilled manpower and technical support at all levels. Hence the National Urban Health Mission would ensure additional managerial and financial resources at all level. An estimated allocation of approximately Rs. 8600 crores from the Central Government for a period of 4 years

(2008-2012) to the NUHM at the central, state and city level may be required to enable adequate focus on urban health. The

National Urban Health Mission would commence as a 100% centrally sponsored scheme in the first year of its implementation during the XIth Plan period. However, for the sustainability of the Mission from the second year onward a sharing mechanism between the Central Government State/Urban local bodies is being proposed³⁸.

5.4.4.3. The Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY):

This is a maternity benefit programme introduced in 2010 by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India. This is a conditional cash transfer programme for pregnant and lactating women of 19 years of age or above for first two live births. In 2013, the scheme has been brought under National Food Security Act, 2013,³⁹ for implementing the provision of cash maternity benefit of Rs. 6000. Presently 200 'high burden districts' are under consideration for this scheme.

According to the National Family Health Survey (2015 – 2016) only 28.7 women received Janani Suraksha Yojana for their health benefits in West Bengal. Infant Mortality Rate is 27% and 32% in the case of the children under five years according to NFHS 2015-2016. The figure of already mothers or pregnant at the age of 15 – 16 is 18.3% in West Bengal in general and 25% in the case of Jelepara during the field visits. Only 21.8 mothers had full antenatal care during their pregnancies. 62.5% women are still anaemic in West Bengal and the percentage is higher in case of Jelepara which is 80%.

Although the World Bank ranked the Janani Suraksha Yojana with 78 million beneficiaries as the topmost social security programme with conditional cash transfers. Also it ranked the Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme as the second largest unconditional cash transfer social security programme in the world.

³⁸Government of India,(2008), 'National Urban Health Mission 2008 – 2012 Meeting the Health Challenges of Urban Population especially the Urban Poor (with Special Focus on Urban slums)', Urban Health Division, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, 3 -8.

³⁹The National Food Security Act 2013, passed by the parliament of India, to provide subsidized food grains to two third of the Indian population. It includes the Midday Meal Scheme, Integrated Child Development Services Scheme and the Public Distribution System.

In spite of all these mechanisms women are still neglected in Jelepara. Neglecting the women is the root cause of getting failure of the processes of development. Empowerment of women through capacity building is the key to socio –economic development to the community in bringing women into the mainstream of the national development.

5.4.5. Measures for improving the Education level especially of women:

The best thermometer to the progress of a nation is its treatment of its women. The great Aryans, Buddha among the rest, have always put woman in an equal position with man. For them sex in religion did not exist. In the Vedas and Upanishads, women taught the highest truths and received the same veneration as men. – Swami Vivekananda

Education, especially female education, is generally considered a key factor to development. It is related to demographic parameters and other indicators of health and socio – economic conditions of a population, or a nation as a whole. It not only helps in the development of half of the human resources, but in improving the quality of life at home and outside. Educated women not only tend to promote education of their girl education, but also can provide better guidance to all their children. Moreover, educated women can also help in the reduction of infant mortality rate and growth of the population⁴⁰.

Female education is believed to have a great influence on the maternal and child health as it enhances the knowledge and skills of the mother concerning age at marriage, contraception, nutrition, prevention and treatment of diseases. It also means that the higher infant and child mortality rates among the poorly educated mothers are due to their poor hygienic practices and lack of connection with the modern medical facilities. Moreover, maternal education is related to child health because it reduces the cost of public health programmes relating to information on health technology, increases

⁴⁰Khongsdier, R.,2005, ‘Maternal Education in Relation to the Indicators of Health and Development in Northeast India’, in V. Narayana Reddy, S. Vijaya Kumar, and B. Nalini eds *Women in Development Challenges and Achievements*, Serials Publications, New Delhi.

household income and productivity of health inputs. So it is necessary to increase in investment in formal education of female, for the best health development agenda⁴¹.

An International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, held in 1994, has strongly recommended that all countries should take immediate steps to achieve the goal of universal primary education before the year 2015, and to ensure that girls and women should get the widest and earliest possible access to secondary and higher levels of education.

It is envisaged that only education empowering poor backward women and thus they will be able to participate fully in social, economic and political process, which affect their lives and be able to take control of them.

According to the World Population Report (1990), 'A mother's education is the single most important factor in keeping her family small and her children alive. Education is the first line of defense for women faced with the life threatening situation that traditional life styles perpetuate. It encourages the sense of control over personal destiny. It opens the door to choices that are not beyond bound by tradition. With an education, the women's status steps beyond the confines of motherhood. Further, the quality of life in the family of educated women becomes a priority'⁴².

A large number of women in India are actively engaged in unorganised sector within them a large number of women are engaged in unpaid agricultural work (like fishing) for their families. It has been revealed that fishing is that occupation in unorganized sector which have not any strong data regarding women's participation in fishing based activities. So, women of this community are marginalized due to various factors in which education is one. Through education they could be aware about their conditions. Women's lower status is reflected not only in their work being underpaid, unrecognized, and undervalued but also in their limited access to productive resources and support services such as health and education. In this context, the major problem identified as

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Sadik, Nafis (1990), *State of World Population 1990*, United Nations Fund for Population Activities, New York.

hindrances in the way of empowerment of women are categorised as individual and family related, community level problem, social – political and cultural problems and economic problems that often overlap and are interlinked.

The Government of India for the first time accepted the concept of ‘investment’ in education in its 1968 Policy and quantitatively fixed a target of six percent of national income to be invested on education from the public exchequer by 1986. Some efforts have been initiated in recent years towards mobilization of non – governmental resources, mainly for secondary and higher education. The measures include introduction of cost recovery measures, introduction and revitalization of student loan programmes in higher education, and mobilization of community resources for primary education. These are in addition to measures being taken towards privatization of education and thus again marginalized sections of the society are lagging behind in the process of development through education.

Though several measures were being taken for improving the education level of women; still the country yet to realize its goal in this section. Some of the measures were:

5.4.5.1. Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS):

A novel scheme called Education Guarantee Scheme has been viewed as an effective answer to the problem of physical access to schools. This is an important initiative that the government has taken at the national level in 1999 – 2000. The purpose of this programme was to provide an opportunity to the rural poor, especially those belonging to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other backward classes to secure education for their children. The scheme is meant for those areas where no school currently exists within a radius of 1 km. These areas could be the areas where the poorest of the poor live. The EGS envisages the poor local community to a) come forward, expressing demand for a school, b) specifically provide the premises required for a school, c) provide for a local part time teacher and d) maintain the school at least for two years with the gram panchayat mobilizing contributions in cash and kind from the local community. Now it

has been made a part of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan⁴³. Instead of these measures women of fishing communities are not getting fruits of them.

5.4.5.2.Operation Blackboard:

The government of India has initiated the Operation Blackboard programme, as a follow – up of the National Policy on Education 1986 to improve the infrastructure facilities, and quality of primary education. The scheme was started in 1987 – 88 and aimed at substantial improvement in basic facilities in all primary schools run by government and local bodies. It consists of three different components: a) a building comprising at least two reasonably large all weather rooms with a deep verandah and separate toilet facilities for boys and girls, b) at least two teachers in every school, as far as possible one of them a woman and a third teacher if the enrolment in a school is above 100, and c) essential teaching learning material including blackboards, maps, charts, toys and equipment for work experience including teacher’s material and miscellaneous facilities (water facilities), etc. The Revised National Policy on Education (1992) suggested an expansion of the scope of Operation Blackboard to provide three reasonably large rooms and three teachers in every primary school, and to extend the scheme to upper primary level.

5.4.5.3.Free Elementary Education:

To reduce the households direct costs of schooling of children, like many other countries had resolved long ago to provide free elementary education- specifically tuition fee free. The Government of India has also recommended in the Programme of Action, expansion of the existing schemes more intensively to the target population groups. For example, it suggested the provision of two sets of free uniforms, free text books and stationary, and attendance incentives to the girls of all families below the poverty line, and provision of free transport in state roadways buses and local trains to children attending elementary schools, etc. In fact, the Government of India has promised, in the Programme of Action, that ‘a comprehensive system of incentives and support services will be provided for girls and children of the economically weaker sections of society’.

⁴³Tilak, Jandhyala B.G.,2006, ‘Education A Saga of Spectacular Achievements and Conspicuous Failures’ in Council for Social Development’s *India Social Development Report*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

5.4.5.4. Decentralization of Education:

An important development of the 1990s refers to significant efforts of the government to decentralize educational planning and administration and the involvement of the community at various levels(like School Committee, Panchayat Education Committee, Municipal Education Committee, District Education Committee with two boards, one at the district level called District Education Board and state level board called State Advisory Board for School Education) in planning, administration, financing, monitoring, and supervision of the working of the school system. Following the Constitutional Amendment in favour of Panchayati raj institutions and also the launching of externally aided projects in primary education, village education committees at various levels have been set up. Local, more specifically district primary educational plans are being formulated at decentralized levels. Their performance with respect to education development is well known. But there may not necessarily be a one to one relationship between decentralization⁴⁴.

5.4.5.5. Encouragement to Private Schools:

With respect to private schools, the present tendencies indicate that government favours in the name of 'building partnerships', the growth of private schools – both schools that are financially supported by the State as well as self – financing private schools. But the number of government aided school is decreasing. With the growth of such schools, the government might not feel the need for opening new government schools and as a result, the access of the poor to schools would be seriously affected. The Private schools promote dualism in education – an expensive system for the rich and a poor quality one for the poor⁴⁵. There is a strong need for the governments to substantially increase their spending on education with a strong political will⁴⁶.

⁴⁴ Tilak, Jandhyala B.G.,2006, 'Education A Saga of Spectacular Achievements and Conspicuous Failures' in Council for Social Development's *India Social Development Report*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 39 - 45.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Dreze, J., and A.K. Sen, 1995, 'Basic Education as a Political Issue', *Journal of Educational Planning and Administration*, vol. 9, no. 1, January, 1-26.

5.4.5.6. Sabla / Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls:

This is a scheme for the empowerment of the adolescent girls, launched in 2012. 200 districts of the country have been undertaken for the same. The scheme offers a package of benefits to the girls at risk of the age of 10–19 for becoming self reliant, including nutritional supplementation and education, health education, life skills and vocational training.

5.4.5.7. Kishori Shakti Yojana:

Kishori Shakti Yojana is a Programme in which young girls between the age of eleven and eighteen are promoted and provided education and knowledge regarding their environment, social status, social problems, health, hygiene, marital status etc. It also teach vocational skills by which they would be empowered and become self sufficient. This scheme helps to make young women productive and contributive social beings in the society.

5.4.5.8. Kanyashree Prakalpa for girls, 2013 (West Bengal):

Ministry of Women and Child Development of West Bengal, Introduced Kanyashree Prakalpa a scheme for girls; the two main objectives of this scheme are to encourage girls for secondary education and to reduce the prevalence of child marriage under 18. The scheme assures an annual scholarship of Rs. 500/- to girls based on the following criteria-

- 1) The girls are between the age of 13 and 18.
- 2) The girls are unmarried.
- 3) The girl is enrolled in Classes 8 to 12 in a formal school or equivalent.
- 4) Annual income should not exceed Rs. 1, 20,000/- of the girl's parents/guardian (no bar in case of the death of both parents of the girl).
- 5) The girl is not the beneficiary of any other scheme or applied for any other financial assistance.

Under the present scheme there is also a criterion for one time grant of rupees 25000/- based on the following criteria-

- 1) The girl's age should be 18 to 19 but not exceed the age of 19.
- 2) The girl is unmarried on attaining the age of 18.
- 3) The girl is enrolled in school/college/institutions/open school or university or in vocational or technical training institution which should be recognised by the concerned recognition authorities or is inmate of any home registered under J.J. Care and protection Act 2000.⁴⁷
- 4) The girl's parent/guardian's income does not exceed Rs. 1,20,000/- per annum whereas no income bar in case of girls who lost their both parents or are housed in Shelter Homes under J.J. care and Protection Act 2000⁴⁸.

In Jelepara, 10 girls got the chance to avail the Kanyashree Prakalpo till now. This act of the Government helped many girls for getting education and marry after 18.

5.4.5.9. Sabuj Sathi Scheme (West Bengal):

This is a project of bicycle distribution among all students of the state of West Bengal who are studying between Class 10 to 12 in Government. Or Government aided Schools or Madrasahs. The project was started in August, 2015 for promoting education among poor and marginalized class of the society. The project was started only for girls initially but after that the Honorable Chief Minister of West Bengal declared for all students for going schools from their places and the scheme *Sobuj Sathi* that means green companion. 22.5 lakh cycles distributed under *Sabuj Sathi* scheme in the financial year 2015- 2016 to the student of West Bengal and thus the state ranks first in the country in the bicycle distribution⁴⁹.

5.4.5.10. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojana:

The Census (2011) data showed a significant declining trend in the Child Sex Ratio (CSR), calculated as number of girls for every 1000 boys between age group of 0-6 years,

⁴⁷The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000, an act which is for consolidation and amendment of the laws relating to juveniles and children in need of care and protection. To provide care and protection for their development needs, and to adopt a child – friendly approach in the adjudication and disposition of matters established under this enactment.

⁴⁸Ministry of Women & Child Development, West Bengal, www.newincept.com/westbengal/kanyashree-prakalpa-2013.html, accessed on 19.07.16 at 14.30 pm.

⁴⁹Goswami, Tarun, 19 February 2016, '22.5 lakh cycles distributed under Sabuj Sathi scheme', www.millenniumpost.in/News Content.aspx?NID=238102, accessed on 19.07.2016 at 19.30 pm).

with an all time low of 918 in 2011 from 976 in 1961. This is an alarming indicator for women disempowerment. It reflects both pre birth discrimination manifested through gender biased sex selection, and post birth discrimination against girls. Alarm by the sharp decline of girl child,

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojana (save daughter, educate daughter) has been launched which is a scheme of Government of India, introduced by the Honorable Prime Minister in January 2015 for saving and empowering the girl child. In the scheme it has been announced that the village which has balanced sex ratio, will be awarded Rs. 1 crore. The scheme has focused on 100 Districts of the country which have low Child Sex Ratio to ensure survival, protection and education of the girl child⁵⁰.

In spite of the forceful intervention by a bastion of female privilege, feminist critics, constitutional guarantees, protecting laws and sincere efforts by the state governments and central government through various schemes and programmes over the last 66 years and above all, the United Nation's enormous pressure with regard to the uplift of the plight of women in terms education is still in the state of an enigma in India.

The 2011 census report indicates that literacy among women as only 54 percent it is virtually disheartening to observe that the literacy rate of women India is even much lower to national average, i.e. 65.38. The growth of women's education in rural areas and urban slums (including Jelepura) is very slow. This obviously means that still large women folk of our country are illiterate, the weak, backward and exploited. Moreover, education is also not available to all equally. Gender inequality is reinforced in education which is proved by the fact that the literacy rate for the women is only 54% against 76% of men as per 2011 Census⁵¹.

5.4.6. Sustainable Development as a new vision of Education:

The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, explicitly highlighted the collective

⁵⁰Government of India, 2015, '*Beti Bachao Beti Padhao*', Ministry of Women and Child Development.

⁵¹Kiran Das Naik, E. and M. Aravinda Kumar, 2014, 'Education and Women Empowerment in India' in Nagaraju Battu et al eds *Empowerment of Women in India New Strategies*, Regal Publications, New Delhi.

responsibility of all mankind to advance and strengthen the interdependent and mutually – reinforcing three pillars of sustainable development – economic development, social development and environmental protection – at the local, national, regional and global levels (United Nations,2002). This notion essentially implied a need for significant change in scope and orientation for environmental education, and for the emergence of a new vision of education for sustainable development.

In 2002, the proposal for establishing the decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) was endorsed at the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg. The UN General Assembly later adopted the decade by consensus, designating the years of the decade as 2005 – 2014. The decade provides an opportunity for a concerted effort to integrate the various values inherent in Sustainable Development into every aspect of learning, through all forms of education, training and public awareness raising, to encourage changes in behaviour that allow for a more sustainable society. Internationally collaborative work is under way aiming at the development of the International Implementation Scheme and subsequently the Regional Implementation Strategies⁵².

There is a wide agreement that education has an important role to play in motivating and empowering people from community like fishing community, to participate in the changes towards more sustainable lifestyles. It was a quarter of a century ago, that education was described ⁵³ as the ‘greatest resource’ for achieving a just and ecological society.

‘The extent to which women are free to make decisions affecting their lives may be the key to the future, not only of the poor countries but of the richer ones too. As mothers, producers or suppliers of food, fuel and water, traders and manufactures, political and community leaders, women are at the center of the process of change...The most effective route to smaller families is to provide women with the means of social and economic self- determination, full rights in the family and society, access to income and

⁵²UNESCO (2005a, 2005b) retrieved from www.unesco.org accessed on 10.04.16.

⁵³Schumacher, F. (1973), *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Really Mattered*, Abacus, London.

career development, education and health care, and a real say in the decisions that their lives of which one of the most important is family size'⁵⁴. This is the way how a society can take itself towards Sustainable Development.

Awareness and concern about environmental, economic, and equity issues must become firmly rooted in public consciousness. To produce that understanding, women need to know how natural systems work and appreciate natural cycles. An understanding of the inter – dependence of economic, social, political and ecological conditions in rural and urban areas as well as locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, also needed.

Education is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of the people to address environment and development issues. The Brundtland Report,⁵⁵ argued that teachers had a crucial role to play in helping to bring about the extensive social changes necessary for sustainable development. The 1980 World Conservation Strategy was more explicit about the role of education in bringing about such changes. It was argued in Chapter 36 on 'Promoting education, public awareness and training' was one of the few aspects of Agenda 21⁵⁶ which did not provoke contention at the Earth Summit. Both economically developed and developing countries agreed that education of women is essential for promoting sustainable development and increasing the capacity of the people to address environment and development issues⁵⁷.

5.4.7. Sustainable Development involving all forms of Education:

Sustainable Development is a complex undertaking with connections to every part of life. Capacities required for sustainable development are enormous and can only be enhanced by engaging all possible measures of education, training and awareness- raising opportunities. Education for sustainable development should take place within a

⁵⁴UNESCO (1992) *United Nations Conference on Environment and Development: Agenda 21*, UNESCO, Switzerland.

⁵⁵World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) (1987) *Our Common Future*, Oxford University Press, United Kingdom, 2 – 5.

⁵⁶ UNESCO – UNEP (1996) *Education for Sustainable Development*, Connect Vol. XXI No. 2 June.

⁵⁷Kainth, Gurusharan Singh (2010), 'Environment and Education: A Pathway to Sustainability' in Archana Sinha (ed) *Sustaining Communities: Strategies for Sustainable Community Development*, Indian Social Institute, New Delhi.

perspective of lifelong learning, encompassing all modes of education initiatives, formal, non – formal and informal, from early childhood to adulthood.⁵⁸

Formal Education:

It carries a particular importance in providing basic education to the majority of the population mostly women, with the perspective of ‘education for all,’ which is the key to a nation’s fundamental development, particularly through the improvement of literacy and numeracy.

a) Non – Formal Education:

In the past, non – formal education demonstrated an impressive development in its scope and magnitude of delivery, in particular, in the field of environmental education (EE). It was developed in response to local needs and priorities, and thus closely linked to the development of the required human capacities within the local context. NGOs and community- based organisations have been widely recognised as the primary providers of non – formal environmental education and are gaining greater responsibilities and influence in the development of education of this particular mode.

b) Informal Education:

This mode of learning takes place in the family, community, workplace and social interaction, as well as through the media (newspapers, television, radio, etc.) and a diversity of indigenous methods and processes, such as religious, informal beliefs, cultural activities, popular art, theatre and music. Informal learning generally raises public awareness on socio – economic and environmental implications of human activities, and shares relevant information for important decision making. Some religions like Hinduism and Buddhism, promote respect and cultural belief related to nature conservation and sustainability issues.

Different modes of educational efforts must be unified and integrated. Formal, Non – Formal and Informal Education should be recognised as indispensable components of

⁵⁸ Ibid.

education for Sustainable Development, which should be linked with education of health, environmental awareness and other sustainable development concerns.

5.4.8. Integrated Approach Involving All Forms of Education:

Sustainable development is a complex undertaking with connections to every part of life. Capacities required for sustainable development are enormous and can only be enhanced by engaging all possible measures of education, training and awareness- raising opportunities. In fact, education for sustainable development should take place within a perspective of lifelong learning, encompassing all modes of education initiatives, formal, non – formal and informal, from early childhood to adulthood. A lifelong learning perspective sees all the different modes of education as a continuous and interactive process, to collectively promote the societal changes towards sustainable development.

Communities like fishing communities should take a stronger interest in educating their people for sustainability, recognizing that current and future generations will need to be well – educated in order to bring about a sustainable future. Educating for sustainability does not follow academic theories according to a single discipline but rather emphasizes connections among all subject areas, as well as geographic and cultural relationships. Part of sustainability education is learning citizenship skills and understanding that citizens have the power to shape their lives and their communities in the light of their vision of a healthy and prosperous future⁵⁹.

5.5. Developmental programmes and policies of Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality for marginalized section including Jelepara:

In the Hooghly-Chinsurah municipality the service sector and small businesses are growing at a fast pace within the municipal area and constitutes the main economic base of the municipality. Population is fast increasing which resulting in higher and higher density of population. Lack of large-scale industry implies that the municipality has to be run on taxes collected from the middle class residents. Very little taxes are collected from the slums and poor colonies. So, it is very difficult to improve this municipal area only on the basis of

⁵⁹Chakravorty, T. (2016) ‘Education and Sustainable Development of Women of Fishing Community : An Experience from West Bengal’, in *Himalayan Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 6, Issue No. 1, April 2016.

municipal taxes. Hooghly-Chinsurah Municipality now comprehends the situation and plans to supplement this revenue through other sources.

74th Amendment of Indian Constitution in 1992 has conferred the Urban Local Bodies of the country with the constitutional status as third tier of Local Self Government in urban areas. By way of incorporating the 12th Schedule, in the Indian Constitution, under Article 243W, Urban Local Bodies have been empowered to carry out the various functions which include Urban Planning along with Town Planning, Planning for Economic & Social Development and Regulation of Land-use. Besides, the 12th Schedule has also empowered the Urban Local Bodies to deliver various civic services like water supply, public health, solid waste management, road network, slum improvement, urban amenities, registration of birth and death, urban poverty alleviation as well as to safeguard the interest of the weaker section of the society.

Considering the local context the Local Economic Development ⁶⁰(LED) approach has been addressed for Development from three angles - firstly identifying natural resources, which have the potential for exploitation economic resources like designating the stretch of river Hooghly for a viable fisheries project creating engagement opportunities for the unemployed youth. Secondly, providing promotional and facilitative support to unorganized sector activities for strengthening their resource base. Thirdly, promoting urbanization linked local long-term projects in the area of economic development in association with the private sector.

With the enactment of the West Bengal Municipal Act, 1993 and other legislations controlling the various Municipal Bodies of the State, the 74th Constitutional Amendment has been translated into reality and it has been experienced by the passage of time that all the Urban Local Bodies of this State are gradually becoming the Third Tier of the Local Self Government in its actual term. By way of incorporation of Section 297 in West Bengal Municipal Act, the preparation of Draft Development Plan for the period of every 5 years has been made mandatory for the Urban Local Bodies of the State, thus providing the legal back-up of preparation of Development Plan for the city.

⁶⁰ Aim of the Local Economic Development (LED) is to grow up the economic capacity of a particular local area, to improve its economic future and the quality of life for all.

Subsequently with the introduction of Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission⁶¹ (JnNURM) in mid of the last decade, the preparation of the City Development Plan has become mandatory for sanction of the projects, with particular focus on economic and social infrastructure, strategies that deal specifically with the issues affecting the urban poor, strengthening of municipal governance along with financial accounting and budgeting systems and procedures, creation of structures for bringing in accountability and transparency along with land-use concept. The process of preparation of the City Development Plan has also been emphasized in the 12th Five-year Plan Document and it is well apprehended that the urban infrastructures programmes which are likely to follow JnNURM will have similar requirement of the City Development Plan for each city or town, as the case may be.

5.5.1. Objectives for City development of Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality:

- a) Strengthening the existing institutional structures in the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) created by the various Government plans and programmes;
- b) Strengthening the community structures and increasing the coverage, reach and network of these existing community structures;
- c) Provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the urban poor by identifying innovative micro enterprise opportunities for the self help groups in the ULB;
- d) Improving operational transparency of all schemes for poverty alleviation;
- e) Coverage in Social Security Programmes like Old Age Pension, Disability Pension, Widow Pension etc.

Other Initiatives:

- a) Planning livelihood programmes for the homeless, shelter less squatters and informal settlers who do not receive benefits from the existing government schemes/programmes;

⁶¹ Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal mission was launched for massive city modernization and for improving the quality of life and infrastructure in the cities under Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India on December 3, 2005.

- b) Participatory planning in managing livelihood development initiatives in slums/squatters and informal groups;
- c) Partnering with organisations to facilitate growth in wage employment in the ULB;

5.5.2. Improvement of Slum Infrastructure: reflecting Jelepara:

The Slum Infrastructure sub-component refers to planning for the ‘in-slum’ infrastructure development in the ULB. It aims at providing basic minimum services to the slum population. There are 140 slums within the municipal jurisdiction covering about 3.5sq km. in aggregate. About 59,000 population lives in these slums. Thus, about 32% of municipal population is accommodated on 20.24% of land area. The development objectives which the Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality (HCM) seeks to address through their Slum Infrastructure Improvement Plan are to ensure basic infrastructure services to all slums, irrespective of their tenure status in order to provide a safe and quality of life to the residents and to give priority to the slums having inadequate infrastructure and having poor socio economic condition.

Within the proposed infrastructure improvement in slums, emphasis thus has been on the access to drinking water supply, improved road condition, collection of solid waste and its disposal in appropriate manner, proper drainage to avoid water logging and provide sanitation facility to all. Priority sectors for Prioritized slums have been identified. Sectors / service areas which were considered in descending order of priority are water supply, sanitation, drainage systems and road network. Since the service in the field of Solid Waste Management is provided by the municipality at par with any other area, this was outside the purview of consideration. Project proposals identified for improvement focuses on improvements in operation and maintenance, community participation and projects involving significant capital investments. The nature of assets that will be created are Pipeline network for drinking water, Drains, Roads/ pavements, Community latrines and two pit latrines⁶².

⁶²Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality (2015), ‘City Development Plan 2014 – 15 -2018 -19’, HCM, Chinsurah, 72.

In Jelepara, no household is connected with water supply. There are total 71 households in Jelepara including two slums, only 5 houses (as per the field survey) are built under the programme Basic Services for Urban Poor (BSUP). Women collect water from the street taps for their day to day needs. As the fisher folks of Jelepara are considered as urban poor slum dwellers, there are no special developmental plan which are designed for these people and they are excluded from most of the developmental programme initiated by department of fisheries of the state.

5.5.3. Other Programmes in Jelepara:

Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOPS), Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS), Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS) are the programmes running for the development of the slum dwellers. In Jelepara, 8 people out of 808 are getting Pension Rs. 400 under Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme. 10 women out of 396 are getting Rs. 600 under Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme. No one is being benefited by Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension of Rs. 600 in the study area.

5.5.4. Self-Help Group and Women's Empowerment:

Women empowerment is an important tool for social development and this can be achieved when the society recognizes women as one among the social partners, provided them equal rights, facilitated them with equal education, health and out of all these allow them to participate equally and effectively. Participation has become an important issue in all development programs. Significant efforts were also made by the government agencies as well as by the non – governmental agencies to sensitize and motivate women to participate in the development programs.

Due to the lack of agency, power and social barriers, poor people especially women, are often unable to take advantage of the opportunities that are meant for them for availing their own rights⁶³. These problems can be better solved through group efforts and Self Help groups are one of these groups. Self Help groups have become the vehicle of change for the poor and the marginalized. Therefore, creating multiple opportunities for building

⁶³.As per the survey conducted by Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality, 2015.

social capital is a challenging task. So interventionist policies of states and intermediate civil society groups can play transformative role in supporting poor people's capabilities for their development⁶⁴.

Bangladesh Grameen Bank founded in 1975 by Mohammed Yunus is considered to be the pioneer of the origin of the concept of self-help groups and micro-finance to combat the problems of rural finance and rural poverty and to empower the vulnerable women. Since 1990's this concept has been adopted to reduce rural poverty and to empower the women. Many countries of the world have started working on this concept to uplift the socio-economic conditions of the people in general and especially of the women.

In India NABARD was set up in 1982, but, the real effort was taken after 1991-92 from the linkage of SHGs with the banks. An SHG is a small economically homogeneous affinity group of the poor voluntarily coming together to save small amounts regularly, which are deposited in a common fund to meet members' emergency need and to provide collateral free loans decided by the group. The basic principles of the SHGs are: group approach, mutual trust, organization of small and manageable groups, group cohesiveness, spirit of thrift, demand based collateral free lending, women friendly loan, peer group pressure in repayment, skill training, capacity building and empowerment.

The movement of SHG and micro-finance based economic activities has emerged in a substantial way in the district of Hooghly. In recent years, the district witnessed an unprecedented interest in micro-credit and micro-finance in the form of group-lending. Hooghly district has taken a challenge and formed 27,550 SHGs covering 1,79,030 women under NABARD scheme exclusively with co-operative banking and disbursed Rs. 50.51 crore loans to improve the life of the rural poor. A number of NGO's all over the district are actively involved in bringing the economically weaker sections of the population in the SHG net for meaningful participation in economic activities. With the instructions of the NABARD, commercial banks of the district are taking active role in forming effective SHGs to help the rural poor. Government sponsored rural development

⁶⁴Sarmah, Jayanta, K. and Mofidul Islam, 2015, 'Role of Self Help Groups in Capacity Building of Women: An Empirical Study in Assam' in *Man and Society: A Journal of North – East Studies*, vol. xii, Winter 2015, ICSSR, Shillong,70.

schemes like SGSY, PMRY, REGP etc. are being performed satisfactorily in the district in collaboration with the banking linkages. These schemes have generated meaningful employment to the weaker sections of people in the district especially to women⁶⁵.

These SHGs of district Hooghly have been understanding economic activities and establishing linkages with formal credit institutions and markets in the process emerging as self – reliant bodies. The external agencies (government and NGOs) have been taking several measures for the capacity building of SHGs and supporting them with necessary managerial and trade related skills. Thus, the SHGs of the poor, offer great promise for the socio – economic upliftment of the poor in a sustainable manner⁶⁶.

Self help groups have emerged as an alternative mechanism to promote savings habit among poor and to provide small and short term loans to its members at lower interest to meet their necessities, consumption and income generation activities as aqua culture. Women are considered as appropriate tool for implementing community and self development programmes. SHGs are very successful as a large number of people have accepted the system and taken up fish production as their main means of livelihood and source of main or additional income⁶⁷.

The overall empowerment of women is dependent on their economic empowerment. SHGs in this area, work in various fields including agriculture, fisheries, forestry and aquaculture seeking income generation activities with the help of micro credit. In other words, SHGs are activity specific and women are considered as appropriate tool for implementing community and self – development programmes.

5.5.4.1. Self Help Groups, Capacity Building and Capability Approach:

SHGs play a significant role in capacity building to the women belonging to the weaker sections of the society. The members of the SHGs in the district have received various

⁶⁵Government of West Bengal (2011), 'District Human Development Report Hooghly 2010', Department of Development and Planning, Kolkata.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Nune, Subba Rao, 2008, 'Role of Aquaculture in Poverty Reduction and Empowerment of Women in India Through the Medium of Self – Help Groups', *IIFET 2008 Vietnam Proceedings*, 1-6.

training programmes to enhance their capabilities⁶⁸ like agriculture based training like goatery, piggery, etc., training on organic farming, land and watershed management training, aquaculture etc. Undoubtedly, the movement of SHGs in the district including in Jelepara has brought about significant changes in the lives of women belonging to the weaker sections of the society.

According to Amartya Sen, there are five instrumental freedoms that, if present, and if women have access to them, will provide opportunities for women to act in their own self – interest and reduce their vulnerability. Access to these instrumental freedoms, namely political freedom, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and protective security – is necessary for women to gain a better quality of life and acquire the capabilities they need to act as their own agents of change⁶⁹.

Commonly referred to as the ‘capabilities approach’, Martha Nussbaum (2000) describes this approach as, ‘an approach to the priorities of development that focuses not on preference – satisfaction but on what people are actually able to do and to be. Central to this approach is the idea that freedom is more than citizens having rights on paper: it also requires that citizens have the resources to exercise those rights. Thus, the capabilities approach goes beyond asking about satisfaction of people’s preferences to ask what women opportunities and liberties actually are, as well as how the available resources work or do not work in enabling women to function.

According to Sen, this ‘capabilities approach’ to development has considerable potential for enabling and empowering poor women. ‘These different aspects (women’s earning power, economic role outside the family, literacy and education, property rights and so on) may at first sight appear to be rather diverse and disparate. But what they have in common is their positive contribution in adding force to women’s voice and agency-through independence and empowerment’⁷⁰.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Sen, A. (1999) *Development as Freedom*, Anchor Books, New York, 191-2.

⁷⁰Ibid.

5.5.4.2. Self Help Groups in Jelepara:

In Jelepara, there are 12 SHGs running successfully for the development of the fisher folk families. The names of the SHGs are *Shubhra Swanirbhar*, *Mamata Swanirbhar*, *Karunamayi*, *Puja*, *Pheluda Swanirbhar*, *Bholebaba*, *Lakshmi*, *Saraswati*, *Debi*, *Mitali*, *Provati* and *Swarnalata* run by the women of Jelepara. Each and every SHG has 10 – 11 women members of Jelepara. SHGs are funded by Allahabad Bank and the bank funding upto Rs10000 to each woman. Women of Jelepara are using this money for the support of their family; in meeting the expenses in fishing etc. The following success story from the field has reiterated this fact.

Case Study 1

Shobha Yadav (Mondal), (real name of the respondent) 45 years old women, daughter of a fisher man, was get married at the age of 16 with her choice, after one month of marriage her husband started to show his real character, started to beat her, broke her front two teeth, forced her to have sex with him anytime, without using any contraceptives means, she got pregnant eleven times and gave birth to eleven babies but she failed to protect her babies from diseases, malnutrition and natural hazards, nine out of eleven babies were lost and only two survived, after sometimes she started to refuse him then he started to go towards another women.

After struggling for surviving as working in pen factory, fishing boats, distilled water units and brick factories, as having rice juice as meal, getting hurt by husband by spoiling one eye and after the death of nine children, she survived with two children after taking care of them by imparting education. She works as mid day meal cook in Hooghly Girls School, Hooghly. She is leading a SHG named SWARNALATA in Jelepara, She runs a small grocery shop in her house by investing Rs 10000. She is helping her son in fishing by mending nets and arranging money. Shobha filed a case against her husband in local police station for torturing her through her life, but there is no trace of her husband since 7 years. She wants to change her surname and go back to her maiden name but lack of documents she is unable to do.

Thus, through SHG and with strong fighting mentality with the circumstances, like Shobha, other women can also develop their condition by taking lesson from the Shobha's success story. Though it is true that patriarchal structure of the society always hinder the path of women's development, Shobha wants to change her last name and go back to her maiden name but she is unable to do because she has not any document as proof of her maiden name. This is very strange and sad that the parents who brought up their daughters with care, after marriage coincidentally if her last name changes and she wants to take her maiden name back; she has to give proof for the same. Shobha has the capabilities and abilities to get all the freedoms of life. She fought against the abnormalities with courage and now she is the famous lady in Jelepara for her success but still she is struggling.

5.6. National Level Policies especially for women:

As Swami Vivekananda said, *'There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of woman is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing'*.

There are initiatives from Government of India for uplifting the condition of women. Some of them are:

The Department of Women and Child Development was set up in 1985 as a part of the Ministry of Human Resources Development is the nodal department in the Government of India to look after advancement of women and children;

The National Commission for Women (NCW) was established by an Act of Parliament in 1992 to safeguard the rights and interests of women. It acts as a statutory ombudsperson for women. The annual report of NCW containing recommendations is placed in Parliament by the Government of India with a detailed compliance report;

The National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development assist the Department in the areas of training and research. Objectives of the Institute include the development and promotion of voluntary action in social development. It has developed innovative gender training / sensitization modules;

Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (National Credit Fund for Women), established in 1993, has as its main objective facilitation of credit support or micro finance to poor women, as an instrument of socio – economic change and development;

Central Social Welfare Board is an umbrella organization networking the activities of State Social Welfare Boards and voluntary organizations. It implements a number of schemes including Family Counseling Centres, Short Stay Homes, Rape Crisis Intervention Centres, Crèches for children of working mothers, etc;

State Departments of Women and Child Development, State Commissions for Women and State Social Welfare Boards form part of the institutional system in most of the states. Women's Development Corporations (WDCs) have been set up in most of the states to help the government implement the programme;

Women's Cell as Gender focal points have been formed in the ministries in the development sector, including Education, Rural Development, Labour, Agriculture;

The Panchayati Raj Institution and urban local self – government bodies provide a framework for women's empowerment in political participation and decision making all over the country;

A Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women was constituted by the *Lok Sabha* in 1997, and reconstituted in 2004, to review the effectiveness of measures taken by the central government for the empowerment of women. The Committee has 30 members from *Lok Sabha* and *Rajya Sabha*;

The Planning Commission carries out periodical reviews of programmes and policies impacting on women; Commissions and Committees are set up from time to time focus on specific areas. A focal point on the human rights of women has been set up in the NHRC (National Human Rights Commission);

A number of institutions are in place to help women get speedier justice like wider recruitment of women police officers, establishment of women police cells in police stations and exclusive women police stations. Also Rape Crisis intervention Centres have been set up in police stations in some big cities. Help lines for women in distress have

been set up. The States are being requested to set up Family Courts and earmark one Fast Track Court, if there is more than one in a district, to deal exclusively with cases of sexual abuse and cruelty in marriage relating to women;

Development of Women and Children in Urban Areas (DWCUA) aims at helping groups of urban poor women in taking up self – employment ventures. The group should consist of at least 10 women. The ceiling subsidy under the scheme is Rs. 1,25,000 or 50% of the cost of the project. Where the group sets itself up as thrift and credit society in addition to its self employment venture, it will be eligible for an additional grant of Rs. 25,000 as revolving fund at the rate of Rs. 1,000 maximum per member. The fund is meant for purchase for raw materials, marketing, infrastructure support, onetime expense on child care activity, expenses up to Rs. 500 on travel cost of group members to banks, payment of insurance premium for self / spouse/ child by maintaining savings for different periods by a member and any other expense allowed by the State in group's interest. The revolving fund can be availed by a group only after one year of its formation;

Apart from these initiatives there some other initiatives, there are:

Valmiki Ambedkar Awas Yojana is centrally sponsored scheme for providing shelter to the urban poor and land title is given in the name of wife and husband jointly, or preferably in the wife's name alone;

The *Indira Awas Yojana* stipulates that houses under the scheme are to be allotted in the name of the female member of the beneficiary household. During 2003 – 04, as against the target of 1.48 million, 1.25 million provisional houses have been either constructed or renovated⁷¹;

The *Mahila Samakhya* Programme (Education for Women's Empowerment) started in 1989 focuses on socially and economically disadvantaged and marginalized groups of women. 'Education' is understood as the process of learning to question, critically analyse issues and problems and seek solutions. The programme sees education as central to the effort of empowering women to achieve equality. To move towards this objective,

⁷¹Government of India, 2005, 'Platform for Action 10 years after, India Country Report', Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Human Resource Development, New Delhi, 14.

the programme emphasizes the process of learning, and seeks to bring about a change in women's perceptions about themselves and the perception of society in regard to women's roles. It is now operational in over 12000 villages in 59 districts across nine states⁷²;

The *Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya* Scheme has been launched by Government of India for setting up 750 residential schools at the elementary level for Marginalised and Backward communities of the country, in difficult and hard – to – reach areas with the aim of providing quality education to girls. The schools are proposed to be set up in 2656 identified educationally backward blocks in 298 districts by the end of 2007 where female literacy is below the national average and gender gap in literacy is more than the national average.

5.6.1. Skill and Capacity Building Programmes:

The strategy for women's development has been multi – faceted, it could not have been otherwise as women had to be given their share in all spheres of development and now the emphasis continues to be multi – sectoral. Although many schemes have been made for women in different ministries and departments, the agencies for executing them have been the same and they give women a certain consideration. From the eighties there has been an effort to give women an integrated approach and to provide health, family welfare, non- formal education, create awareness of their rights and skill training at the same time. This was conceptualized in the Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWACRA) programme which is essentially an employment programme for women⁷³.

In 1991, Community Based Convergent Services (CBCS) was started as a component of DWACRA where the community is involved in raising the social consciousness of poor women where they can articulate their felt needs and orient the community towards raising the social and economic status of women. A programme of skill training and employment (STEP) for women initiated in 1985 was also based on this integrated

⁷²Government of India, 2005, 'Platform for Action 10 years after, India Country Report', Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Human Resource Development, New Delhi, 19.

⁷³Seth, Mira (2001), *Women and Development The Indian Experience*, Sage Publication, New Delhi, 83.

approach where inputs for skill and employment are combined with sensitization of women in the fields of health, education, family planning, non – formal education and awareness of legal rights, providing training to poor and asset – less women in traditional sectors like agriculture, animal husbandry and handicrafts. The Department of Women and Child Development developed an integrated women’s project called Indira Mahila Yojana in 1990 where health, family welfare and employment services along with non – formal education and skill training would be combined and delivered by the government agencies cover all districts of the country⁷⁴. Such programmes for skill development as;

Swalamban train women for employment in traditional and non – traditional trades. The new areas in which women seek training are Computer / Typing, Beautification, Handloom/ Embroidery/Toy making, Food Processing, Mushroom Cultivation , Readymade Garments/ Handicrafts and Paramedical;

Swa- Shakti, rural women’s development and empowerment project;

Swayamsiddha, the integrated Women’s Empowerment Programme, launched in 2001, aimed at all round empowerment of women by ensuring their direct access to and control over resources through a sustained process of mobilization and convergence of all the ongoing sectoral programmes;

Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), launched in April 1999, is a holistic programme covering all aspects of self – employment. The rural poor are organized into self – help groups (SHGs), and access to training, credit, technology, infrastructure and marketing is facilitated. About 40% of the benefits under this programme are earmarked for women. The objective of SGSY is to bring the assisted poor families (swarozgaries) above the poverty line in three years by providing them income- generating assets through a mix of bank credit and government subsidy.

5.6.2. Partnerships:

The agencies listed above draw in persons from the voluntary sector, and the women’s movement. Such partnerships have been essential to the formulation and implementation

⁷⁴Ibid.

of approaches to gender equality. The country wide network of more than 12000 voluntary organizations has played a very significant role in the development of women and children as they share the major burden of implementing governmental policies and programmes. NGOs have demonstrated viable alternatives in the areas of women's literacy, support services, micro – credit for poor women, employment and income generation, gender sensitization, organizing women into SHGs, fight against atrocities, etc. The various programmes and schemes of the Department are based on the concept of SHG that have been set up with the cooperation of organisations at the grassroot level.

Different Departments of the government also work in partnership with bilateral, multilateral and UN agencies on women – specific and women related projects. Such as UNIFEM's role in gender budgeting and gender statistics, the role of State Human Development Reports with the assistance of UNDP in the same.

5.6.3. Stree Shakti Puraskars:

Instituted in 1999, these national awards are in the name of five eminent women personalities. The awards are given in recognition of services of an exceptional nature in the areas of education, health, agriculture, rural industry, protection of forest and environment, awareness generation and consciousness on women's issues through art and media. Each award carries a cash prize of Rs. 100,000 and a citation.

5.6.4. Gender Mainstreaming:

Gender mainstreaming emerged in the early 80s as a concern of the women's movement to move women's issues from the periphery to the centre of development decision making. Gender mainstreaming has been a major approach to ensuring gender justice especially through creating an enabling environment for making women equal partners and beneficiaries of all socio – economic activities and development in the country. The Eighth Plan (1992 – 97) spoke of the need to ensure a definite flow of funds from the general development sectors to women. The Ninth plan introduced the Women's Component Plan to ensure that 30% of funds/ benefits under various welfare and developmental scheme were to be earmarked for women.

The Tenth Plan reaffirms the major strategy of mainstreaming gender perspectives in all sectoral policies, programmes and plans of action. Women specific interventions will be undertaken to bridge existing gaps.

State Human Development Reports (HDRs) have emerged as a powerful tool for advocacy for gender justice since their inception in 1995. Gender mainstreaming of the HDRs has been done both in the form of specific chapters on gender as also highlighting gender concerns in the sectoral analysis of education, health, livelihoods and governance. The ownership of the State HDRs rests with the State Governments and the exercise is supported by the Planning Commission, Government of India and through the Human Development Resource Centre (HDRC), UNDP.

5.6.5. Gender Budgeting:

Gender responsive budgeting or gender analysis of budgets is a very useful tool being used in India to promote gender mainstreaming. It refers to presentation of budgetary data in a manner such that the gender sensitivities of budgetary data in a manner such that the gender sensitivities of budgetary allocations on the overall socio – economic status of women in the country. The Tenth Plan states that ‘the Tenth Plan will continue the process of dissecting the Government budget to establish its gender differentiated impact and to translate gender commitments into budgetary commitments...’ The Tenth Plan will initiate immediate action in tying up these two effective concepts of Women’s Component Plan and Gender Budgeting to play a complementary role to each other, and thus ensure both preventive and post facto action in enabling women to receive their rightful share.

At a national level, a task force was set up in 2000-01 to examine this issue. On its recommendation, a sub – group was set up to suggest a framework for introduction of gender budgeting in the Government.

While initial gender budgeting efforts were limited to education, health, nutrition, access to resources and public services, etc. the Department of Women and child has recently (2004) prepared checklists to assist all departments in gender budget exercises and in using these to develop a gender perspective in planning. The sub - group has

recommended that Gender Budgeting Units be set up in identified departments, as well as an Interdepartmental Steering Committee to identify issues for gender budgeting that cut across departments, budgetary allocations related to domestic violence, micro – finance, homelessness, etc. These check lists are not only for the conventional social sector Ministries and Departments but also seek to involve so called gender neutral Departments but also seek to involve so called gender neutral Departments like Transport, power, Home, etc.

Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD) took the lead in partnership with UNIFEM to initiative gender mainstreaming in macro fiscal policy frameworks by initiating a two year process of gender budgeting within the Government of India. In partnership with the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP), Ministry of Finance, the Department supported a study on ‘Gender Budgeting in India’. The study analysed the existing degree of gender inequality in economic policy issues and identified policy alternatives to build in a gender sensitive national and state level budgeting processes. For the first time, gender as a category was included in the National Economic Survey in 2001 – 02 and 2002 – 03.

5.6.6. Gender Sensitisation:

DWCD initiated a series of meetings with the representatives of line Ministries and concerned organizations for scaling up gender sensitization and development of standard parameters for training in the areas of ‘Gender and Police’, ‘Gender and Administration’, and ‘Gender and Judiciary’.

If the entire gamut of policy formulation and planning for women’s development in India have been reviewed, one thing strikes most sorely is the lack of much effort in planning or policy formulation and proper implementation for women in the states. There is almost no conceptualization about the needs of women and what should be done to give them a bigger share of development. A few states have made schemes for women’s development, but they are extremely inadequate and do not meet the needs of the women. The state of West Bengal is not different from this. There is a gap between policy formulation and its implementation due to lack of interest and willingness. So the benefits

of the policies are not percolated down to the marginalized women of Jelepara. In a Federal State, unless the state governments fully realize their responsibility for making a herculean effort to raise the status of women, it will be difficult to achieve universal success. In these processes, grassroots level organizations have to be involved to a much greater extent through the political process⁷⁵. This is applicable for Jelepara also.

5.7. Development Plan and Welfare Schemes for Fisher Folk in West Bengal:

The contribution of fisheries sector in West Bengal towards state domestic product is 2.44% (2012-13) which is 2nd in the state after agriculture. The state contributes about 16.5% of fish production, 23.4% of inland fish production and 40% of fish seed production of the country. The fish production has increased from 2.73lakh tons in 1982-83 to above 14.90 lakh tons during the year 2012-13, which has been increased as 16.17 lakh tons in the year 2014-15(Hand book of fisheries statistics, 2014-15). In export arena also achievement is not less significant. In the year 1983-84, amount of foreign exchange earned through export of sea fish food products was only rupees 44.12 cr where as at the end of 2012-13 the figure has been estimated at Rs 1825.12 cr meaning there by more than 42 time increase within a span of only 30 years. Due to the large yield gap and increasing demand, there is adequate scope of development in this sector. Different disciplines and directions are involved in boosting up fisheries in allied activities as well as development of rural and urban economy and to motivate the fisher folks of the state and create more employment generation. The Department of Fisheries, Govt. of West Bengal with its following 5 functional organizations, is making all efforts for increasing fish production by exploiting potential resources including rivers, beels, canals, tanks, reservoirs, hill-streams, estuaries, sewage – fed water bodies and brackish water – areas.

- The Directories of Fisheries
- The West Bengal Fisheries Corporation (WBFC)
- The State Fisheries Development Corporation (SFDC)
- The West Bengal State Fishermen's Co operative Federation Ltd (BENFISH)

⁷⁵.Seth, Mira (2001), *Women and Development The Indian Experience*, Sage Publication, New Delhi, 66 - 67.

- Fisheries Data Mapping Centre

5.7.1. Important Welfare schemes of the Department of Fisheries:

- i) **Development of Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture** -Subsidy disbursed for inland fisheries: 933.71 ha, Jhora Fishery 83 units and other 4 schemes are under progress with financial achievement of Rs. 253.33 lakh during financial year 2012-13.
- ii) **Development of Social Fisheries (Minikit distribution)** - To supplement stock as well as to restore the breeding ground of indigenous carps and endangered fish species in natural water bodies; 9 lakh of fingerlings were released in 500 water bodies with financial involvement of Rs. 58 lakh during the financial year 2014-15.
- iii) **Setting up Demonstration Centres**- To increase fish production by adopting intensive fish culture method and to disseminate the technology among the farmers 14 nos of Demonstrations Centres have been completed in different districts with a production of 6 – 8tons/hectare. Setting up of 45 nos of DCs is being implemented during the financial year 2012-13. Fisher folk of Jelepara are not included in this programme as it is considered as urban slum and these programmes are for rural fisher folk.
- iv) **Economic Upliftment of Tribal People**- Renovation of water bodies with infrastructural facilities and composite fish culture are being executed in the tribal areas of different districts. So far 326 nos of beneficiaries covered with financial achievement of Rs. 87.12 lakh during financial year 2012-13.
- v) **Replenishment and propagation of the indigenous local fish species through stocking of beels** - An amount of Rs. 12.72 lakh has been sanctioned during the financial year 2012-13 to implement the scheme in 212 units are being implemented⁷⁶.
- vi) **Rastriya Krishi Vikash Yojona (RKVY)**- To increase annual growth rate in fisheries sector following achievements have been made under RKVY schemes:

⁷⁶Annual Report, 2012- 13,Dept of Fisheries, Aquaculture, Aquatic Resources and Fishing Harbours, GOWB, 13.

Culture of indigenous fish and IMC ⁷⁷ in backyard ponds and ponds excavated under MGNREGA ⁷⁸ in 2012-13, 941 units of water bodies are brought under culture [backyard :370 units (Rs 111.10 lakh), MGNREGA: 571 units (Rs 57.10 lakh)];

Distribution of fingerlings under seed mahotsav ⁷⁹: in 2012-13; 200 units (Rs 100.00 lakh) have been covered;

To maintain quality of fish; hygienic insulated box have been distributed to 6710 (Rs 201.30 lakh) nos of fish vendors in 2012-13;

To analysis soil and water of ponds of farmers in block; construction and commissioning of block level laboratory cum training centre in 21 blocks was taken up in 2012-13;

Upgradation of 3 Departmental Training Centres (Namkhana, Junput and Barasagar Dighi) in the year 2012-13 (Rs 42.00 lakh) took place;

Development of 3 Departmental Farms (Junput, Barasagar Dighi and Kalyani) as in 2014-15 (Rs 60.00 lakh) was taken up in 2012-13. Government Fish Technological Station, Junput consisting 40.70 hectares water area, Barosagar Dighi fish farm, Malda consisting 80.20 hectares water area and Kalyani Fish Farm consisting 47.112 hectares water area;

Hilsa conservation programme was taken up in the year 2012-13 (Rs 10.00 lakh).

- vii) **FFDA programmes for Inland Fisheries**- Fish Farmers Development Agency have been taken up with the assistance of Government of India since 1981-82. FFDA schemes have been implemented in all the twenty districts of the state to increase the production and productivity of Inland Fisheries. Till 2014-15, 129413 hectare of water area has been covered in the state. The average productivity in inland has been

⁷⁷ Indian Major Carp- the major Indian carps include Catla catla, an economically important South Asian fresh water fish, Cirrhinus Cirrhosus, the Mrigal carp, a ray-finned fish of the carp family native to rivers in India and Labeo Rohita, the Rohu(Rui), a fish of the carp family found in the rivers of South Asia.

⁷⁸ Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act – MGNREGA targeting rural household adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work of 100 days wage employment in a financial year to enhancing the livelihood security.

⁷⁹ Distribution of fish seeds among fisher folk by the department of fisheries, West Bengal.

increased from 600-800kg / hectare /annum in the year 1981-82 to 4000-4700 kg/hectare/annum by 2014-2015. But the fisher folk of Jelepara are not getting any benefits of this programme.

- viii) **Short Term Credit Programme** – STCP was introduced in the year 2004-05 by the Department of Fisheries in West Bengal. Under this programme 2631.90 hectare area of sanctioned water was involved in STCP, 3606 number of cases were enrolled, Rs.1069.55 lakhs involved in STCP as Bank Loan, 1535 number of beneficiaries were enlisted and Rs. 684.75 lakh was disbursed under STCP as Bank Loan to fisher folk.

Whereas, in the year of 2014-15, the sanctioned area of water under STCP was 400.01 hectare, 1441 number of cases was enrolled, Rs 7697.59 lakh was involved in STCP as Bank Loan and the number of beneficiaries was 1417 but the final disbursal amount has not been officially declared by the department till now. The fruits of this programme are not reachable for the fisher folk of Jelepara.

- ix) **Employment Generation under Fish Farmers Development Agency (FFDA) Schemes** – The rural economy of West Bengal depends mainly on Agriculture and allied activities such as fishery. The fishery department plays a significant role in this regard. It aims not only towards increased fish seed production but creates employment generation too. There were 886931 number of people was benefited under the said schemes in the year 2011-12 except the fisher folks from Hooghly and Malda districts. In the year 2012-13, 892385 numbers of people were employed under the FFDA scheme including Malda district but Hooghly district was not included. In the year 2013-14, 1174596 numbers of people were benefited under the scheme except Malda and Hooghly districts. Whereas, in the year of 2014-15, the total number of beneficiaries was 885839 including Malda, and Hooghly districts has also been included with the number of 3005 people as beneficiaries⁸⁰. But the fisher folk of Jelepara are not included in this employment generation programme.
- x) **Training of Fishermen-** To transfer the scientific pisciculture methodology among the fish farmers, block, district and state level training programmes are being

⁸⁰The Handbook of Fisheries Statistics, 2014-15, Department of Fisheries, Government of West Bengal, 32-33.

implemented. In the year 2012-13 training programme for 7680 fish farmers and 180 FFA⁸¹ are being implemented. There are 4 different bodies for fish farmers training like State Plan, National Fisheries Development Board, Tribal Sub Plan and Marine Plan. In the year of 2014-15, 14382 number of people benefited under these organisations. There are total 261 number of Block Level Fishery Laboratory and Training Centre in West Bengal as per Handbook of Fisheries Statistics, 2014-15⁸². It has been revealed that urban bodies are not included in these training programmes included Jelepara, as Jelepara is also an urban slum and thus the people of Jelepara are marginalised.

- xi) **Co – Operative Societies for Fisher Folk** – To bring the large water bodies such as ox-bow lakes, beels, baors etc, the state has encouraged 3-tier co-operative societies. i) APEX society (BENFISH) as state level. ii) CFC (Community Fishery Centres) at District level and iii) PFCS (Primary Fishermen Co-opt. Societies) at primary level. Total number of primary fishermen co- operative societies as on 31.03.2015 is 906. There are total 35 numbers of PFCS in the districts of Hooghly & 1 CFC. 2115 number of members is enrolled in these co-operative societies. Total 202 hectares water area is affected under these co-operative societies as on 31.03.2015 according to the Handbook of Fisheries Statistics 2014-15⁸³. The fisher folk of Jelepara are not connected with any co –operative society.
- xii) **River Ranching Programme**- A unique River Ranching programme, in the country was launched during 92-93 in West Bengal. Selected stretches of the River Bhagirathi and its tributaries are ranched by liberating 20 lakh fingerlings every year. This has helped in restoring breeding ground for indigenous carp and boost up in production in beel and reservoir fisheries. Encouraging results have been observed spawns and table fish are seen in increasing number in Bhagirathi and her tributaries and other selected beels. In 2006 – 2007, 13 lakh fingerlings stocked in different water bodies whereas in the year 2014 – 15, 562.25 lakh fingerlings stocked in the

⁸¹ FFA is a regional advisory body of FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture. Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) providing support to its members for the conservation and management of living marine resources.

⁸²The Handbook of Fisheries Statistics, 2014-15, Department of Fisheries, Government of West Bengal, 32-33.

⁸³Ibid,91.

water bodies according to the Handbook of Fisheries, 2014-15⁸⁴. But due to the overfishing and receding of the river, fisher folks of Jelepara are not getting the benefits.

- xiii) **Housing Scheme** - Apart from the production oriented schemes, State Government decided to implement large number of welfare programmes for the fisher community. Fisheries Department started providing housing facilities to 50 poor fishermen families through state budget. 17985 houses have been constructed under Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) (Later termed Indira Awas Yojna). Development of model villages for fishermen and tribal people under the Centrally Sponsored National Welfare Fund schemes was initiated and later another housing scheme namely 'Geetanjali' as has been introduced in the year 2011-12. Number of 33638 houses has been provided to needy fishermen so far. In the district of Hooghly, 444 fisher folk families availed the housing facilities. Whereas in the case of East Midnapore the figure is 2042 according to the Handbook of fisheries Statistics, 2014-15⁸⁵. But the inhabitants of Jelepara are excluded from this programme.
- xiv) **Pension Scheme**- Old age pension scheme was started in the year 1991-92 to extend help to old and infirm fishermen. At present pension of @ Rs. 1000/month /person is provided under this scheme. In 2014 – 2015, 8500 number of old fishermen achieved pension under the scheme. In which 365 persons are from the district of Hooghly. But the fisher folk of Jelepara are not included in the scheme.
- xv) **Personal Accident Insurance**- Fishermen group personal accident insurance for active fishermen scheme was started in the year 1984-85. The families of fishermen are issued for a sum Rs 1 lakh for the death or permanent disablement and Rs 50000/- for partial disablement due to accident. The premium is Rs 28/- only /annum /head on 50:50 share basis by State and Central Government. There were 1250000 fisher folk families who received personal accident insurance benefits under the scheme. It has been revealed through the study that fisher folk of Jelepara are excluded from this scheme.

⁸⁴Ibid,77.

⁸⁵Ibid,78.

- xvi) **Issuance of Identity Card**- From the year 1991-92, identity cards are being issued to fishermen. During 2014-15, 46913 numbers of identity cards have been issued to the fishermen in which 887 fishermen are from Hooghly District.
- xvii) **Self Employment and Skill Development Programme** – Total Target of this scheme were 24517 people in the year 2014 – 15, whereas, 33165 numbers of people were benefitted in the year. But in the case of district of Hooghly, 1512 number of people was targeted and 1051 number of people achieved the target. There are only 57 Self Help Groups sponsored by the Department of Fisheries in Hooghly District out of 14799 in the overall West Bengal.

Despite all these developmental efforts, Jelepara is still excluded because of the location and the communication gap between the Department of Fisheries, Government of West Bengal and the Hooghly- Chinsurah Municipality, under which Jelepara is located. Women fisher folk of West Bengal in general and of Jelepara in Particular are excluded from these schemes and programmes.

In India, Bengal occupies the topmost position in contributing to inland fish production and for this purpose the state has been offered the national productivity award for consecutive nine years. Despite increasing importance of inland fishery, several fishery co –operatives/ groups are beset with untoward socio- cultural and economic features⁸⁶.

5.7.2. Hilsa Conservation as Sustainable Livelihood Management:

Hilsa Conservation and Research Centre is an important initiative by the Department of Fisheries, Government of West Bengal, for management interventions towards sustainable Hilsa fishery with an ecosystem approach in the state.

Hilsa (*Tenualosa ilisha*), better known as '*Ilish*' is an aquatic resource, that has migratory habits and trans-boundary distribution. It is significant component of open –water capture fishery in the state contributing to about 19% of total fish landing in Hooghly-

⁸⁶Rahim, K.M.B. and M. Padhy, 1994, 'Scope and Constraints of inland Pisciculture in West Bengal: A Case Study of Birbhum Districts', 141-158, in S. Giriappa (ed.), *Role of Fisheries in Rural Development*, Delhi, Daya Publishing House.

Matla estuarine system and represents one of the most lucrative commercial fisheries of a single species. Over the years, due to wanton exploitation, pollution and habitat destruction there has been an alarming decline in the availability of Hilsa both in sea and rivers.

In West Bengal, upstream migration of brooders generally takes place with the approach of first shower during monsoon i.e., from July and the migration continues up to October–November. Another smaller batch of migration is reported to occur during January–February. The spawns grow in the upstream waters up to 80 - 110 mm in about four to six months and then migrates downstream (February to June) to sea for further growth and maturity. In course of its upstream and downstream migration, it is caught in abundance by bag nets, seine nets, drift and fixed gill nets.

In the recent times, it has been reported by various workers that there has been a marked reduction in the mean catch size as well as the maturity size of Hilsa. There is a reported trend of Hilsa keeping mostly to the sea showing decline in production trend due to manmade reasons. The unrestricted increase of mechanized fishing boats, use of bag nets/gill nets with small mesh size is destroying the natural cycle of recruitment of the fish.

The fluctuation and gradual decline in the availability of Hilsa is a major concern in West Bengal because there are more than 26000 Hilsa fishers who are primarily dependent on this sector. It's predicted that in the near future the abundance of Hilsa will go down further leading to disruption of this fishery.

5.7.2.1. Initiatives by the Department of Fisheries for Hilsa Conservation:

The declining trend of Hilsa fishery over the past decade has been a major concern both at the national and state level. Presently to salvage the situation the Fisheries Department, Government of West Bengal has undertaken a number of measures to bring to halt the southward trend of Hilsa Fishery. On the administrative side a number of

Amendments in west Bengal Marine Fisheries regulation Act 1993⁸⁷, have been brought about. The salient amendments are -

- A) Protection/ Conservation of juveniles – Ban on:**
 - i) Catching, Marketing, Transportation and Processing juveniles less than 23 cms.
 - ii) Use of monofilament gill nets having less than 90 mm mesh size.
 - iii) Putting up Bag nets, scoop Nets and small meshed Gill Nets along the migratory route during February to April each year.
- B) Facilitating spawning – Ban on: Catching 5 days pre and post full moon during peak breeding period 15th September to 24th October every year.**
- C) Protection of Habitat – Ban on: Bottom trawling, with in 12 nautical miles of the continental shelf.**
- D) Declaration of Hilsa Sanctuaries along Bhagirathi / Hooghly river in the following locations:**
 - i) Lalbag to Farakka (Murshidabad)
 - ii) Katwa to Hooghly Ghat (Burdwan/Hooghly) (Hooghly Ghat is the nearby Ghat of the study area Jelepara).
 - iii) Diamond Harbour to Nischintapur-Godakhali (south 24 Paraganas)
 - iv) 5 sq. Kms around sand bars near Matla, Thakuran, roymangal in Sunderbans and 5 sq kms within Farakka barrage.
- E) Regulations imposed in Sanctuaries – Ban on Fishing during –June to August & October to December and complete ban on fishing within 5 sq kms of Farakka barrage round the year. The Government realizes that mere imposition of ban without any alternate livelihood options would not hold well. Therefore, the issue of alternate livelihood has been taken up with proposal for funding. Various alternatives can be considered like poultry, duckery, apiary, grosser’s shop, tricycle vans etc. However a detailed sketch can only be made on getting the total number of Hilsa fishers and their local resource based preferences.**

Sustainable livelihood framework seeks to ensue both livelihood and environment security. This involves 1) a suite of asset the community possess 2) the dynamics that

⁸⁷Gazette Notification No 718 & 719.

determine the communities' access to these assets and 3) the activities dealing with and without natural resources. Sustainable Alternative Livelihood Approach has its base on the differential capability of families to cope with crisis and partly from necessity for sustainability of ecosystem.

Livelihood security is assessed in terms of income stability, income level, seasonality and degrees of risks. Resilience and sensitivity are the attributes that define the health of livelihood. A general premise of sustainable livelihood is to identify ‘what the poor have’ rather than “what they lack” and strengthen peoples’ own innovative models.

5.7.3. Programmes for development of Fisher Folk by the Department of Fisheries, West Bengal:

The following are the future programs envisaged for further development:

- a) **Water Quality Map:** Improvement in fish production is dependent on water quality, viz. dissolved oxygen content in the water, chlorophyll content in the water, water turbidity, water depth etc. The department is planning to estimate these parameters through multispectral satellite image.
- b) **Fishery Infrastructure GIS database:** Establishing new fishery infrastructure like fishing harbors, fish landing centres, fish markets, link roads, hatcheries, fish – feed plants, ice – plants, fishery offices and units with facilities for database creation of the existing fishery infrastructure are important for development of fish production and distribution in the state. Establishing new fishery infrastructure requires overall distribution pattern of fish production areas and suitable site selection for fishing harbors, landing centers and distribution centers. This could be possible only through activating GIS database and Mapping with associated attributes. Some of the existing fishing harbors have already been mapped with associated attributes.
- c) **People Participatory Program (PPP):** PPP is an accepted method for sustainable development of any venture. The purpose of PPP is to develop through pilot projects an operational method for participation of local fishermen in fish production and fish storage and distribution. It is also aimed at assisting the

local fishermen to organize themselves into self – help groups and co –operatives in order to engage in income raising activities with the access of existing fishing ponds and fishery infrastructure. The digital maps of water bodies will be the basic requirements to develop this to generate rural employment generating opportunities creating thereby the scope for uplifting rural economy.

- d) **Watershed Mapping:** In the drought prone areas of Bankura, Purulia and West Midnapore districts a considerable volume of rain water is wasted as surface run – off. This water if harnessed by small check dams can be used for pisciculture, cultivation and domestic use in the lean season. Thus watershed⁸⁸ development plays an important role in uplifting the rural economy, increasing fish production, agricultural production, afforestation, water, and soil and land management in drought prone areas.

The limitation of this Programme is to identify the real fisher folk belong to fishing communities instead of the people who catch fish for business purpose. The situation is more pathetic in the study field. After having the identification as reserved fishing sanctuary in Hooghly Ghat, which is adjoined with the study area, lot of people apart from fishing communities involve in Hilsa fishing for monetary gain. Therefore the actual fishermen are not getting good catch in the Hilsa season as well. Department of Fisheries, Government of West Bengal, took initiatives for identifying the people from non fishing communities but failed to identify the persons completely because the banned fishing sanctuary is under the Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality whereas the Department of Fisheries works for the blocks only. Alternative Livelihood Measures are not sufficient enough for their day to day lives. After banning to catch small fish they are suffering a lot, specially the people of Jelepara.

⁸⁸ Watershed is defined as the land that contributes water to a given site. It refers to the area from where the water to a particular drainage system, like a river or stream, comes from.

5.8. Increasing Capabilities and Reducing Vulnerabilities through Capability Approach:

As Amartya Sen, mentioned in his five instrumental⁸⁹ freedoms that, if present, and if women have access to them, will provide opportunities for women to act in their own self interest and reduce their vulnerability.⁹⁰ A success story from the field also proves the power of these instrumental freedoms.

Case Study 2

Anima Mondal of Jelepara, working as a 'help' in 7 households, helping her husband in fishing related tasks. Her husband Nakul Mondal is a fish seller. Anima is helping her husband by financing him for buying fish. By working a lot she educates her two sons. Her elder son is doing masters now. Sometimes she has to take Loan for helping her husband and repay this. She has a bank account in Allahabad Bank. Now she has a pucca house and she is willing to furnish it properly.

This true story of Anima really inspires other women who are struggling a lot for meeting their both ends. Anima got the opportunity for flourishing her wishes as Amartya Sen explains in his theory that if a woman gets opportunity then she can go ahead. So every women of our society should get the opportunity for development, for freedom.

5.9. Conclusion:

India has been a pioneer in Asia and elsewhere in efforts to enhance the social and economic role of women in fishery communities. As in other fields India has made tremendous progress in fishery development as well as in rural finance associated with it over the last decade. But it is to be noted that in India about 70% of the population are vegetarian while in contrast in West Bengal state almost 100% people are fish eaters and approximately 12 lakhs are engaged in fishing activity. But still women's role in other fishing communities in general and in Jelepara in particular, are not recognised. Despite of all developmental efforts, the condition of women in Jelepara is still marginalized. The

⁸⁹Political freedom, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and protective security.

⁹⁰Sen, A. (1999) *Development as Freedom*, Anchor Books, New York, 191-2.

gap between the policy and its implementation is widening. There is a need to bridge the gap between these two poles which are block level fishing communities and municipal level fishing communities.

The benefits of these developmental schemes have not been percolated down to the needy citizens of the country. Women are an integral and inalienable part of the society, constituting about half of the total population of the world. The all around development and harmonious growth of a nation would be possible only when women are given their desired place and position in the society and are treated as equal partners of progress with men. The plans and programmes pertaining to women are not charity of an investment in the country's future with high rates of return. Confinement and subjugation of women to routine household work and the denial of productive skills and decision making will do irreparable damage to the nation. It will make the nation weak and insecure, encourage internal domination and exploitation by caste, class and gender, external domination and exploitation.

On the other hand, empowerment of women contributes to social development. Economic progress in any country whether developed or under developed, could be achieved through social development. Empowerment is a process, which generates changes in ideas and perceptions and creates awareness about one's rights and opportunities for self - development in all important spheres of life. It enables individuals and groups to change the balance of power by way of knowledge, know- how and experience to strengthen one's capacity and confidence. It creates circumstances and conditions in which people can make use of their potentialities and abilities up to the maximum level in furtherance of some common objectives. Of all these facets of women's development, their economic independence or economic empowerment occupies an area of utmost significance for a lasting and sustainable development of the society. Women, in direct or indirect association with men folk, contribute a great deal to the growth of Indian economy⁹¹. As Naila Kabear⁹² mentioned that empowerment is not the power over, it is the power which

⁹¹Nune, Subba Rao, 2008, 'Role of Aquaculture in Poverty Reduction and Empowerment of Women in India Through the Medium of Self – Help Groups', *IIFET 2008 Vietnam Proceedings*, 2.

⁹²Kabeer, Naila (1994), *Reversed Realities, Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought*, London.

comes from within. It is the concept of power within. Women of Jelepara should also realize the power which is within them.

Awareness, Dialogue and Action are three actions to be taken for sustainable future. Each recommendation is accompanied by specific actions that articulate the necessary partnerships and activities needed for implementation at local, state and national levels. Awareness is the tool by which women of the marginalised section of the society like fishing community can be empowered by knowing the duties and rights towards the community for sustainability. Dialogue is the process by which they can share their pros and cons with the rest of the society and the outcomes of Awareness and Dialogues would come out as Actions. By which Sustainable Development can be possible. Thus, women's education, especially women of fishing communities, because they are directly connected to the nature, is the only weapon which can be used for Sustainable Development.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.1. Introduction:

‘As long as women do not have the same rights in law as men,

As long as the birth does not receive the same welcome as that of a boy;

So long we should know that India is suffering from partial paralysis,

Suppression of women is inconsistent with principles of ahimsa (non- violence)’.

Mahatma Gandhi

The Genesis of exclusion can be traced to the colonial period when state sponsored programmes were explicitly and implicitly based on the policy of discrimination. The essential task of the socio – political system in a country is to provide legitimate, rational and acceptable bases for inclusion and exclusion of population in various spheres of its activity. The role played by technological advancement in increasing supply of different commodities and services, there has always been a need to restrict or ration the demand which is sought to be achieved through this system. The institution of market be it that for goods or for services. It happens to be the most effective factor which excludes people based on affordability. In case of labour market, too, it is productivity against wages demanded which determines who should be in and who should be out.

There are other factors for inclusion and exclusion that can be, and often are, as powerful, and sometimes even more, as the market. The norms and values in a society, rooted in religious and cultural beliefs, conventions, etc., are extremely effective. These instruments have been considered as useful in providing a framework for a holistic development of society and ensuring the inclusion of several vulnerable groups of people that would fail to do so, on their own.

Many of the socially constructed categories such as gender, ethnicity, religion, caste, etc., that have evolved over a long period in history, often come in the way of certain sections

of people accessing commodity, service, or even entry into the labour market. A society, through social injunctions, threats of direct action, etc., often justified by alluding to scriptures, mythology, and events in history, succeeds in excluding them on a more or less permanent basis which then results in their lack of ‘capability and entitlement’ in the long run. These norms and values are entrenched so deeply in cultural ethos that people often cease to view these as factors of discrimination.

The state is the other actor which intervenes directly and indirectly in the production and distribution system, often to ensure inclusion of people who do not have the affordability or the backing of societal norms, which has to be achieved through legislation, administrative decisions, programmes and schemes, designed to bring about a politically desirable welfare distribution. Constitutional and legal provisions, stipulations for the functioning of public agencies, etc., for example, are often used to extend developmental benefits to persons belonging to certain age groups, social groups, residing at certain places, working in certain levels of education, etc.

India has led the world in ratifying UN Conventions and international covenants like the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action. National plans and policies have consistently reflected a vision of progress that is not narrowly confined to expanding incomes, but gives a central place to the achievement of human rights, freedom and well – being for all. The last few years have seen dramatic increases in the space available for women in Indian Society, but gaps still remain. While some women are emerging as strong and confident individuals, in control of their own lives and capable of raising their voices to demand their rights, others face a very different reality.

Some concerns that arise are that whether freedom and equality mean anything to women in India, whether they exercise their right to live with dignity, whether they have the freedom to develop their potentials and choose what they should do or be, if they have the capability to acquire knowledge, be creative and productive and to live long and healthy lives, if they are protected from the major sources of restrictions of freedom – from violence, discrimination, want, fear and injustice and if they enjoy the same chances and choices as men, equally and on the same terms. Situations are more critical

in the case of the women in the marginalized communities such as the fishing communities.

Women's progress, one must also examine the interconnections between women's subjugations and several other factors. Social customs and attitudes, levels of literacy and health, patterns of economic growth, structures of private and public decision making, political commitment – all these combine to define the functional boundaries of freedoms and choice, equality and exploitation in our society.

Human development is about expanding people's choices, enhancing their capabilities, and promoting their freedoms. Development therefore requires the removal of major sources of subjugation: freedom from discrimination, freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom from injustice. It also requires that people be assured of the freedom to develop and realize their potential, freedom of thought and speech, freedom to participate in decision making and freedom to work without exploitation.

This study is an attempt to bring issues of women of fishing communities and their vulnerabilities more centrally into the arena of public debate – to make them concern of every citizen, not just of activists, researchers or policy makers. Hence this study would be considered successful if any individual of the fishing communities gets profited by it through any means.

Since post harvest activities provide a direct range of livelihood opportunities to poorer women that might disappear if fish production decrease, their access to both money and food is restricted. With their limited resources and control over resources (knowledge, cash and tools), women, especially, female – headed families have only limited capacity to cope and adopt alternative climate, resilient food and income – generating activities. Indirectly, decrease of fish production leads to a decrease of the essential vitamins and minerals in the diet of women, who lead to give food priority to their husband and children¹.

¹ Braun, Melody (2015), 'Impacts on Climate Change on Fisheries and Women in Bangladesh', *CGIR*, Research programme on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security, World Fish Center, Bangladesh, accessed on 10.11.15 at 12.30 IST, http://googleweblight.com/lite_url=https://ecafs.cgiar.org/blog

Women world over, are still demanding for equality and justice because of the widespread discrimination they face in all walks of life. It is this aspect that needs to be closely examined because the future of society in terms of its direction and pace is dependent on this question. Accordingly, many policies and programmes are being drafted with some awareness of their marginalised position. Today, gender analysts must pay special attention to the wide – ranging frameworks regarding the perspective, approach and strategies advocated at different forums for understanding and combating women's unfavourable placement in the society if we have to get rid of gender discrimination².

Poverty and starvation forces women workers from lower strata of the society, to migrate other places where prevailing practices of food and living would even be pitied than by animals. They act as reserve army of labour to be employed at low wages. Most of these women are in their teenage, searching for jobs in fishing camps, carrying their own rations for cooking their own foods from fire of collected sticks, after the back breaking work of other households and fishing camps. Illiteracy is rampant. Their food is wet rice with onions and green chilies and sometimes spoiled fish curry. They wear cheap quality clothes, often soiled dirty with rare opportunities of using oil, soap and hair oil. Fishing camps in remote areas do not have any latrines, urinals and safe drinking water.

The female workers have a substantial difference of wages from their male counterparts. Minimum Wages Act is a dream for them. They suffer from uncertainty of employment. They are victims of social prejudices, considered weak and are male dominated even in work places. They are subject of middleman exploitation. They are exposed to moral dangers. Males are given advance payment and their employers provide food and shelter for them while the females have no such facilities being considered as extra labour suffer this discrimination.

It has also been confirmed that women are productive and efficient when they have access to the right technologies and opportunities. A fair percentage of women activities are carried out close to the home. Small scale aquaculture, low capital fish processing,

² Dagar Rainuka, (1998), 'Intervening for gender Justice', *The Indian Journal of Social Work*, Vol. 59, No. 4.

value added fish product, rice fish farming and rearing of fingerlings are examples of fisheries activity well suited for the women of the region. In addition activities such as handicrafts (weaving mattress from Phoenix leaves, stitching wrappers, seasonal farming, preparing vegetable gardens, small scale animal husbandry) show promise for diversifying, stabilizing, and raising fishing family incomes.

Along with these jobs, she is struggling for their livelihood expenses and management from dawn to dusk. They do all the necessary household duties in their houses like carrying water from the road side water tap with a distance of 0.5 – 1.0 km. for cleaning, cooking, drinking, bathing and washing, nurturing their children and sending them to the school, maximum women of Jelepara, go to the other households as domestic help.

Women are not only the key to patterns of population growth, but are central to the development process itself. Unless women are allowed to decide and plan the size of their families, and have the access to education and employment outside the home, population programmes will fail and development itself will be threatened.

6.2. Findings of the research

The study reveals that the term ‘fishermen’ that is generally used to refer the fishing communities is in itself a gender bias term highlights only the men folk attached to this profession, overlooking the women.

The study reveals that is a great lack of data regarding the position of women in fishing communities. No documentation has been done related to their numerous kinds of work where this community is involved. Women of Jelepara, as research finds out, are doubly marginalized. Although work from dawn to dusk for their families livelihood management, they are unrecognized, unsupported and thus marginalized.

In flood situations, it was found that the inhabitants of Jelepara, especially women, faces health hazards. Due to the shortage of toilet facilities in government camps women have to face so many water born infections and urinary diseases. They shift to the government camps during floods. They have to face difficulties while collecting fuel to cook food and

maintain hygiene on regular basis. Often, they are forced to sleep empty stomach due to poverty after provide minimum food to the rest of the family.

It has found that more than 80 per cent of the households in Jelepara still rely on bio-fuels. Popular bio-fuels used are wood, coal, dung and crop residues. Sometimes they use kerosene also. These generate pollutants like carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, formaldehyde, benzene and carcinogens like benzopyrene. Health hazards are common and intense. Women are extremely susceptible to asthma and respiratory diseases due to the long hours of cooking. Use of dirty fuels is around 50%. The women put in two and half hours to three hours of cooking everyday on an average. Women are exposed to intense pollution continuously for this duration every day implying that they are exposed to much more pollution than an average smoker. There is a much greater threat that women have to face every day. The main cause of this high use of polluting fuels is the lack of availability of clean alternatives and also perhaps the very low purchasing capacity of alternatives due to poverty.

It has been revealed that due to the lack of education women fisher folk are far behind in technical skills and knowledge which are required in competitive workplace. Without knowing new techniques women cannot be able to go ahead towards development. On the other hand men are associated with these technical programmes, and they do not allow women to work with other men in most of the societies, especially in fishing communities in Jelepara.

The study also reveals that Jelepara do not get the benefit of the welfare schemes running by the Department of Fisheries, Government of West Bengal. If the Ward Councilor recommends the Chairman for the benefits, only then through the efforts of the Chairman of the municipality, very few people of Jelepara can avail the benefits. In the block level, Fisheries Extension Officer is taking care of fishing related activities. Whereas in the urban slum like Jelepara, where fisher folks are residing, no Fisheries Extension Officer has been employed in Municipality for the benefit of the fisheries and concerned people. This is how they are excluded from the fruits of normal course of the development for fisheries. It is very surprising to know that the state of West Bengal is the second largest

fish producer in India, while people of Jelepara are struggling to survive with minimum facilities. These scenarios lead them towards the position of subjugation and deprivation.

It has been revealed that poverty has forced the fishing communities of Jelepara to leave their age old profession. Out of the 412³ male population in Jelepara, whose occupation is fishing, 160 people are forcefully shifted their occupation from direct fishing to indirect fishing related activities like selling fish in the market or door to door vending fish or get involve in net making practices with another alternative livelihood options. In this process they also losing their age old practice and the new generation of Jelepara are not inherited and showing interest in this profession. It is an irony that 21009304 people have been employed by the Department of Fisheries, Government of West Bengal, in the year 2014 – 2015⁴ except the fisher folks residing under municipalities including Jelepara.

The study also reveals that the water resource is the key to fisheries, particularly aquaculture systems where investments are made to improve productivity and income. The increasing irregularity and unpredictability of rain results in seasonal variability of water flows in rivers and other water bodies, worsens the situation of riverbeds and increases seasonal salinization of water. The increasing frequency of severe weather events, such as cyclones and floods causes havoc loses in aquaculture systems and damages household livelihoods. The inhabitants of Jelepara cannot get a good fish catch due to shortage of the flowing water in the river Hooghly for seasonal variability and close gate of Farakka Barrage which controls the free river flow and also restricts the fish production.

The study also reveals that the genuine fisher folk do not have any identity card issued by Department of Fisheries, Government of West Bengal, for proper identification. It is an irony that 71 households, only 5 fishermen got identity card with the help of Hooghly - Chinsurah Municipality whereas 887 fishermen got the identity card in overall Hooghly District at block level⁵. This affects the fisher folk's livelihood and forces them to stick

³ As per the survey conducted by Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality.

⁴ Government of West Bengal (2015), Handbook of Fisheries Statistics, 2014 – 2015, Department of Fisheries, Kolkata, 82.

⁵ Handbook of Fisheries Statistics 2014 – 2015, 81.

with the tag of ‘marginalised’. Women are the main victims of this. Fishermen’s inability to earn sufficiently, force them for drinking and wife battering.

The study also highlighted that though Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality is surrounded by many villages, but the fisher folk of Jelepara are not getting any benefits which the fisher folk of other surrounding villages are regularly receiving.

The study also reveals that after banning the use of nets having less than 90 cm gap in the river Hooghly, some people are still using these nets for catching all sizes of fish. Those nets are easily available in the markets and the government has not yet stopped the production of these types of nets like gill nets. So there is a huge gap between policy formulation and its implementation.

The above mentioned research findings are justified according to the hypotheses of the study which is that the Government and Non - governmental initiatives towards development of fishing communities have not yet been effective in West Bengal in general and Jelepara in particular. Although there are plenty of government policies for the increase of fish production in the state even then no effective policy implications has been witnessed so far. Besides it is worth mentioning that although there are policies for increase in fish production, the policies for the fisher folks are comparatively few, especially for the women of the fishing communities.

6.3. Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat Analysis of Jelepara (SWOT Analysis):

The research has used SWOT analysis to highlight the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the context of the marginalized fisher folk of Jelepara which are as follows:

Strength:

Human Resources

Indigenous tradition and culture

Unity among people

Active participation of women in livelihood management

Weakness:

Poverty

Illiteracy and lack of technical skills

Gender Discrimination

Gap exists in immunizing children, maternal health services, in providing access to safe drinking water, sanitation programme and proper housing

Social illusions

Opportunity:

Opportunities for other alternative livelihood options like pulling rickshaws, selling vegetables, doing other household duties as 'help' and most important cleaning sand from the river Hooghly when it is receding up during summer.

Promotion of SHGs and so empowering women

Expansion of small scale cottage industries like matt and fishing net industries

Eco and Cultural Tourism

Threats:

Ending of moral values among teenagers by involving in smoking, drinking, playing cards and disrespect elders specially women because of the lacking of family's education especially mother's education. An educated mother only can teach her children about the values of education and morality.

Lack of willingness in getting involved in fisheries and continue the legacy of the family because of the poor status of their families related to fisheries.

Flood and Human miseries

Erosion and Receding of Hooghly River

Fringe Area

Varieties types of insects and snakes

Illegal migration

Degradation of natural environment by catching small fish.

6.4. Suggestions/Policy Prescriptions in different fronts:

Women in fishing communities play a critical role in family and community stability as well as many forms of natural resources extraction. Therefore, the overall development of communities depends on women's reproductive health, literacy levels, socio – economic conditions and participation and freedom in decision making, all of which have strong connections on family welfare, and therefore community welfare as a whole.

6.4.1. In the front of literacy and training:

On women education Swami Vivekananda said *“Educate your women first and leave them to themselves, then they will tell you about what reforms are necessary for them. Women must be put in a position to solve their own problems in their own way”*⁶.

As the study revealed that the women of fishing communities are highly marginalized. Policies should be focused on their upliftment by increasing their education level. The status of women reflected in their educational attainment, the extent to which they are employed and the nature of their employment, their position in the family and their participation in community and national life. All these have a marked, even decisive, influence on the family size and on the success of family planning programmes. Thus they become empowered through education and can approach state level bodies if need arises. As Mahatma Gandhi observed; ‘Education of a boy means education of a man, education of girl means education of a family.’

⁶ Swami Vivekananda – Rebuild India

Measures that will help in changing social norms and perceptions that affect the well-being of the girl child need to be strengthened. The well being of young girls is closely dependent on the availability of childcare so that older daughters can be released from the burdens of sibling care. To enable girls and women to achieve not just equal access to schools but also throughout schooling, sustained effort is needed to address stereotypical socialization patterns for reducing school drop outs. Some vocational trainings and skill development programmes would be enable for the marginalized women of the society so that they can lead their lives respectfully.

6.4.2. In the front of Health:

Health which is also spelled out as a marker in Millennium Development Goals, is very challenging and serious issue for the women of Jejepera as the study reveals. Serious gender gaps remain in health outcomes such as mortality and morbidity rates. High fertility rates and low mean age at marriage has a debilitating impact on health of girls and women. Diseases like anemia, stemming from nutritional deficiency, asthma persist. Mental and occupational health are concerning issues in Jejepera. In order that the country achieves highest levels of productivity and human development areas concerning with sanitation, drinking water, food security, fuel for cooking etc. should be focused for policy formulation with serious note.

6.4.3. In the front of Self Help Groups as key to empowerment:

Recognizing that women can leverage their strength, increase bargaining power and enhance capacities and skills through joint action, the approach of the government has been to encourage the organization of women into self- help groups (SHGs) and to channel resources to these groups. The SHG movement has been supported through schemes of a large number of departments including Women and Child Development, Rural Development, Urban Development, Handlooms and Handicrafts, Sericulture, Agriculture, Fisheries, etc., at the national and State levels. Although women SHGs are now implementing a large number of developmental initiatives including watershed development, social forestry and employment oriented initiatives but more active performance needed in the case of Jejepera. So that they can become the main vehicle for

providing women credit mechanism with access to savings at a large level including institutions through micro- credit schemes. Through the development of SHGs, women of Jelepara can become more empowered and can take participation in decision making processes. The provision of Women's Component Plan may be provided in the budgets of local self – governance institutions like panchayat raj institutions and urban local bodies and more subjects be transferred to them.

6.4.4. In the arena of all kinds of Violence against Women:

Support services for victims of gender – based violence need to be strengthened. Though laws and legislations are in place there is a need to strengthen enforcement and create better awareness to address issues of gender- based violence. There is a need of gender sensitive approach for more cooperation of police for combating the problems of the poor especially poor women. Beyond all of the suggestions, mindset should also be changed of the people of Jelepara from patriarchal level to community level.

6.4.5. In Migration and Urbanisation front:

A huge migration to the bank of river Hooghly from various places has been witnessed through study. As a result, there is an influx of population in this area depending on fishing in the river and threatens the livelihood of the local inhabitants of Jelepara. The study has revealed that policy planning for alternative income generation activities is needed to address the problems of fisher folk.

6.4.6. In the front of Institutional Mechanisms for the Development of Women:

There is a need to strengthen the capacity of line ministries / departments/ committees and shift their focus from project implementation towards formulation of gender sensitive policies, advocacy and monitoring with emphasis on the more disadvantaged women. Gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting have been introduced with great success at the national level in various ministries and departments. With the devolution of power to the Panchayati Raj institutions and urban local bodies, the need for gender budgeting at the grassroots level needs to be recognized. The government has taken up important steps

to engender data collection. There is a need to strengthen and institutionalize systems of gender statistics and to use this data in planning and advocacy for gender justice.

As the study reveals no documentation has been done related to women fisher folk's numerous kinds of work in which they are get involved. Enumerations and documentations should cover two generations older and the present. The present would give the actual numbers of women involved in fishing related activities and the older one would help to highlight changes and the causes of it. By Having these basic information at least about one of the fishing based states in the country, developmental efforts can be made easily towards others and thus the women's issues of fishing communities can be highlighted comprehensively.

As river Hooghly is receding up day by day, fish production is decreasing. The study reveals that the fisher folk of Jelepara are living at the margins and could not be able to catch fish in the river. It has been suggested through the study that at least one gate should be opened of Farakka Barrage during summer when there is a lack of water in the river Hooghly and thus lack of fish production.

As revealed in this research from the field, it is strongly felt that government of West Bengal must employ 'Fisheries Extension Officer' in the municipalities to address the issues related to the fishing communities living under the urban local bodies⁷.

For alternative livelihood, government can give training and engaging the women fisher folk in ornamental fisheries. Government can also engage men fisher folk in cleaning the sand silt during summer.

Instead of banning of using gill nets in river Hooghly, Due to unawareness and ignorance some fisher folks are using these nets for catching fish in big amount. For protecting their present's need they harm their future's prospect for catching good amount of fish and thus harming their livelihood. Government should restrict the production of gill nets and

⁷ As the study reveals that in the every blocks under each districts of West Bengal, a Fisheries Extension Officer is employed by the Government of West Bengal, for taking care of the fisheries related matters. The officers are directly connected to the Department of Fisheries, West Bengal. Therefore, fish production is increasing in ponds located in the villages whereas fish production is decreasing in the Hooghly River and the condition of the people who depends on it are also vulnerable. Because most of the part of the river falls under the jurisdiction of municipalities and officers are not employed for taking care of these issues.

campaign some awareness programme at huge level so that the fisher folk can be aware of all pros and cons of using such kind of nets.

The study reveals that NGOs are not functioning in Jelepara. There is a need to take up the issues concerning women of fishing communities of Jelepara so that further research can take place and government gives due attention to the unaddressed issues.

6.4.7. Capability Approach and Development:

Capability approach to capacity building ensures that disadvantaged groups advance through self – determined approaches to development. It supports the proposition that capacity – building contributes to sustainable development when it strengthens the most vulnerable creature of the earth. Capability Approach brings together diverse policy – makers, NGOs, and community leaders to enhance the abilities of the marginalized women of the society. The multilateral dialogue offers less – powerful groups the opportunity to describe their own situations, prioritized strategic interests, and implement meaningful adaptations. The most effective capacity building initiatives build long – term partnerships among advantaged and disadvantaged stakeholders.

Quality of life will be enhanced by using the ‘capabilities approach’ to direct development efforts for women in marginalized communities like the fishing communities. By using the capability approach, the well – being of the poor can be improved. This has the potential to go to a long way towards reducing their vulnerabilities. Poor marginalized women, who are already among the most vulnerable, must be specially considered in such development efforts, however, their right to participate in decision – making must be promoted and protected.

6.5. Scope for Future research:

- a) The area of present study is limited. So, the present study has opened up a path for further research.
- b) The Anthropological details of the fishing communities in West Bengal are mostly same with the fishing communities of Bangladesh. There is a

great scope for research in future for comparative study between the conditions of fisher folk in Bangladesh and India.

- c) Further research can be conducted on the status of women in other fishing communities in different fishing pockets of India and can link up with this study.
- d) A study can be conducted to examine the gap of the policies of the government between the rural bodies and municipal bodies as concerning with fishing communities in West Bengal / other parts in India.
- e) A study can be conducted on the role of NGOs for development of fishing communities.
- f) Last but not the least, as Hooghly- Chinsurah Municipality is surrounded by so many villages and thus by block offices as well. But very few policies are implemented for the people of Jelepara in comparison with the people of surrounded villages belong to fishing communities. A comparative study can be conducted on the socio – economic conditions of fishing communities of villages under blocks and cities under municipalities.

Swami Vivekananda's idea on women is reflected on the respect of the women that *“All nations have attained greatness by paying proper respect to women. That country and that nation which do not respect women have never become great, nor will ever be in future”*.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire for Government Officials/Stakeholders of Urban Local Bodies

1. Name:
2. Designation:
3. Why there are only three Fishermen Cooperative Societies in Hooghly district whereas the Handbook of Fisheries Statistics 2014- 15 shows many in other districts?
4. Why there is no recruitment of a fisherman through Employment Generation Programme under Fish Farmer's Development Agency in Hooghly District?
5. Why there is no development under the municipality areas whereas so many development in blocks?
6. Whether your department has taken up any steps for the benefits of the fisher folk of Jelepara?
7. Why fisher folk of Jelepara are not getting any benefit after 2009?
8. Why the number of beneficiaries were so small as found from the field visit?
9. What are your suggestions for conserving small Hilsa? Do you have any surveillance system to conserve it?
10. Government of West Bengal is running a programme for Hilsa conservation under which fisher folk cannot use the net which has less than 90 cm gap whereas these types of nets are easily available in the markets. Do you have any mechanism to stop the production of these types of nets?
11. In Hilsa Conservation programme according to the Hilsa conservation and research centre, fishing would remain stopped in the months from February to April. What are your suggestions and steps for protecting the livelihoods of fisher folks in these months?
12. Providing rice to the needy for three months as told by many officials won't help the fisher folks. Do you suggest some other durable measures to address the issues?
13. What are the reasons for non addressing the issues of the fisher folks of Jelepara under Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality?
 - a) Whether the elected ward commissioner has taken up any initiatives for the development of the fisher folks of his ward?

b) Hooghly Ghat, under Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality, has been declared reserve fishing sanctuary by the Government of West Bengal, has not received the fruits of development yet. What are your observations regarding this issue?

14. Do you have any mechanism to locate a genuine fisher folk who are engaged in fishing in the river Hooghly?

If yes

a) Do you have any published data for the survey?

If yes

b) Where can I locate it near future?

15. Do you have any particular policy for the women of fishing communities?

If yes

a) What are they?

If no

b) Why the government is least interested on women fisher folk?

16. Any other information

Schedule for the Women of Fishing Community

1. Name –

2. Age-

3. Marital status

a) Age at marriage

1) 14 – 16

2) 16 – 18

3) 18 – 20

4) 20 – 22

b) If they marry early then what are the reasons behind their early marriage?

1) Lack of food

2) Lack of education

3) Lack of security

- 4) All the above
 - 5) None of these
- c) If none of these then what are the reasons?
- 4. Religion
 - 1) Hindu
 - 2) Muslim
 - 3) Christian
 - 4) Others
 - 5. Caste
 - 1) General
 - 2) SC
 - 3) ST
 - 4) OBC
 - 5) Others

If they come in reserve category:-

- a) Do you know government initiatives and policies towards your uplifting your caste?
 - 1) Yes
 - 2) No
 - 3) Any other

If yes

- b) What have you availed?

If no

- c) Why are you not interested for getting the benefits of the schemes?
- d) Whether you are treated equally by higher castes in case of any interaction?

- 6. Education
 - 1) Uneducated
 - 2) Class v to viii

- 3) Class viii to X
- 4) Class X to xii
- 5) Higher education

(If uneducated)

- a) Why don't you take part in getting education?
 - 1) Due to poverty
 - 2) Due to lack of knowledge about education
 - 3) Due to lack of facilities and conveyance
 - 4) Due to lack of infrastructure
 - 5) Any other causes

(If they educated up to V)

- b) Why did not you continue your education?
 - 1) Due to poverty
 - 2) Lack of interest in education
 - 3) Lack of infrastructure
 - 4) Due to early marriage
 - 5) Lack of parental support
 - 6) Being helping hand in house hold activities
 - 7) Any other causes

(If they educated up to X)

- c) Why did not you continue your education?
 - 1) Due to poverty
 - 2) Lack of interest in education
 - 3) Lack of infrastructure
 - 4) Due to early marriage
 - 5) Lack of parental support

6) Being helping hand in house hold activities

7) Any other causes

d) Have you applied for any job in public / private sector?

1) Yes

2) No

(If yes)

e) For which types of job you have applied?

1) Public

2) Private

f) From which source you came to know regarding the job?

1) Newspaper

2) From any relative

3) Friends

4) Other sources

(If some of them are going college)

g) With whom did you inspire to go the college

1) Parents

2) Husband

3) Friends

4) Govt initiatives and policies

5) From any other sources

7. Which is the primary source of your family income?

1) Catching fish

2) Selling fish

3) Mending/ weaving nets and selling it

4) Other works / activities related to fishing

- a) How much you earn from your primary source of income?
 - 1) Between 1500 – 3000 p.m.
 - 2) Between 3000 – 4500 p.m.
 - 3) Between 4500 and above

If catching fish then

- b) Do you go for catching fish in the river?
 - 1) Yes
 - 2) No

If yes then

- c) Either goes alone or with your male counterparts? (husband / brother/ son/ any other)
 - 1) Yes
 - 2) No
- d) Do you face any type of problem during fishing in the river?
 - 1) Due to lack of expertise
 - 2) Due to lack of equipments
 - 3) Sexual harassment
 - 4) Any other

If lack of expertise then

- e) Have you ever try to know the expertise skills for catching fish?
 - 1) Yes
 - 2) No

If yes then

- f) Why don't you opt for specialised skill if available?

If lack of equipment s then

- g) Why don't you get modern equipments for catching fish?
 - 1) Due to lack of money
 - 2) Due to lack of proper education
 - 3) Lack of knowledge about equipments
 - 4) Domestic issues
 - 5) Any others

If sexual harassment then

- h) Have you faced any sexual harassment while catching fish?
- i) Have you complain / report for sexual harassment in P.S.?
 - 1) Yes
 - 2) No

If yes then

- j) Have you ever lodged any complain?
- k) Whether any action has been taken for addressing the grievances?
 - 1) Yes
 - 2) No

If yes then

- l) Whether police officials has taken any actions for the said offense?

If selling fish then

- m) What are the methods you practice for selling fish?
 - 1) Selling in the fish market
 - 2) Door to door selling
 - 3) Any other practice

- n) From whom you purchase fish for selling?
- 1) Mediocre
 - 2) Brokers / agents
 - 3) Direct from riverside from the “*jeles*” (fisher folk who catches fish)
 - 4) Fish markets
 - 5) Any other sources

If mediocre then

- o) How much amount they take for fish? How much profit they keep?
- 1) 10% - 20%
 - 2) 20% - 30%
 - 3) 50% - 60%

If brokers then

- p) How much amount they take for fish? How much profit they keep?
- 4) 10% - 20%
 - 5) 20% - 30%
 - 6) 50% - 60%

If answer will be higher than 20% then

- q) Why you don't purchase fish direct from “*jeles*” from river side?
- 1) For brokers
 - 2) For ignorance
 - 3) For your unwillingness
 - 4) For distance
 - 5) Any other cause

If ‘*Jeles*’ (fisher folk) then

- r) How much amount they take for fish? How much profit they keep?
- 7) 10% - 20%
 - 8) 20% - 30%

9) 50% - 60%

If fish markets then

s) Are you getting fish on reasonable price from fish market?

1) Yes

2) No

If no then

t) Have you taken any action for that?

1) Yes

2) No

If yes then

u) What are the actions?

If mending or weaving nets then

v) Where do you go for selling nets?

1) Markets

2) Door to door

3) Middleman / agents from home

4) Direct

5) Any other facility

If in markets

w) What are the pros and cons you face while selling your nets?

If door to door selling

x) What are the pros and cons you face while selling your nets?

If middleman then

y) Have you ever tried for bridging the gap between you and fishermen who catches fish?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No

If yes then

z) What are the efforts you made for bridging the existing gaps?

If other activities related to fishing then

aa) What are the activities and how those activities are benefitted you?

bb) What are the sources of your secondary income?

- 1) House hold jobs as 'help'
- 2) Rakhi making
- 3) Mosquito net making
- 4) Any other activity

If household jobs as 'help'

cc) Where do you work?

dd) Whether you are satisfied with your job?

ee) How much time you spend in working in other's houses?

- 1) 2 – 4 hours
- 2) 4 – 6 hours
- 3) 6 – 8 hours
- 4) More than these

ff) How many hours you work in your houses?

- 1) 2 – 4 hours
- 2) 4 – 6 hours
- 3) 6 – 8 hours
- 4) More than these

If *rakhi* (a designed thread which ties in the hands of brothers by sisters) making

gg) From where you get the raw materials for making *rakhis*?

- 1) From agents
- 2) From cooperatives
- 3) From shops by own investments
- 4) Any other source

If mosquito net making

hh) From where you get the raw materials for making mosquito nets?

- 5) From agents
- 6) From cooperatives
- 7) From shops by own investments
- 8) Any other source

If any other activities

ii) What are the activities and how those activities are benefitted you?

jj) Are you aware of any government scheme for your upliftment?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No

If yes then

kk) What are the specific schemes for your upliftment?

8. On what heads you spend the most as mentioned below?

- 1) Health
- 2) Family
- 3) Children's education
- 4) Savings
- 5) All of these
- 6) Any other

If savings then

9. Do you have any bank account?

If yes then

a) Which bank? (in case you could share)

b) Have you managed to get any assistance/ loan from the bank?

1) Yes

2) No

If yes then

c) How do you utilize your loan?

1) Helping husband for fishing

2) Any other house hold expenses

3) Self expenses

4) None of these

5) All of these

d) Do you have any Fixed Deposits in the bank?

1) Yes

2) No

10. Do you have decision making authority in the family?

1) Yes

2) No

If yes then

a) You decide for whom?

1) Children's education

2) About house hold expenditure

3) About savings

4) All of these

5) Any other

11. What are the modern electrical gadgets and appliances you own?

1) Mobile phone

2) T.V.

3) Cable T.V.

4) Refrigerator

5) Gas connection

6) Any other

a) Who has purchased them?

1) Yourself

2) Yours husband

3) Jointly

4) Any other

If you then

b) How you saved money for spending on these gadgets?

12. Do your husband gives you as much freedom to perform your duties?

1) Yes

2) No

If no then

13. What he does if you do something for extra income for the family?

14. Do you feel secure at your home?

1) Yes

2) No

If no then

a) What are the reasons for the same?

15. Does your husband help you in income generational work?

1) Yes

2) No

If no then

a) How do you manage to accomplish your work?

16. What are the reactions of your husband when you return back from your work?

17. Is your husband involve in domestic violence?

1) Yes

2) No

If yes then

a) Have you taken any action against this practice?

1) Yes

2) No

If yes then

b) What are they?

If no then

c) What are the reasons for not taking any steps to stop the violence?

18. Any other information.

Appendix 2

Photographs from the field

Photo 1.1: Women Net Menders in Kakdwip Near Sundarban, South 24 Paraganas



Source – Photograph taken during field study

Photo 1.2: Researcher interviewing woman fisher folk while fish net mending in Diamond Harbour, Sultanpur, South 24 Paraganas



Source – Photograph taken during field study

Photo 2.1: Women Dry Fish Sorters in ShankarPur, Coastline of Bay of Bengal



Source: Photograph taken during field study

Photo 2.2: Interviewing women Dry Fish Sorters in ShankarPur, Coastline of Bay of Bengal



Source: Photograph taken during field study

Photo 3.1: Researcher's mother with women fish sellers



Source: Photograph taken during field visits

Photo 4.1: Researcher with Jele Woman on the way of Jelepara during flood



Source: Photograph taken during field visits

Photo 4.2: Jelepara During Flood



Source: Photograph taken during field visits

Photo 5.1: Living Condition of Fisher Folks in Jelepara



Source: Photograph taken during field visits

Photo 5.2: A 17 years old Jele Woman with her baby girl in Jelepara



Source: Photograph taken during field visits

Photo 5.3: Two women fisher folks in their kitchen in Jelepara



Source: Photograph taken during field visits

Photo 6.1: A woman fisher folk collecting dried coconut leaves for cooking fuel in Jelepara



Source: Photograph taken during field visits

Photo 6.2: A old woman of Jelepara joining small threads for making net



Source: Photograph taken during field visits

Photo 7:1 Interviewing Men Fisher Folk in Diamond Harbour South 24 Paraganas



Source: Photograph taken during field visits

Appendix 3

ID card and Pamphlet issued by the Department of Fisheries

Document 1: Identity Card for fishermen issued by the Department of Fisheries, Government of West Bengal, the fisher folk of Jelepara are yet to receive it.

Sl. No. **277508** Date of Issue:

IDENTITY CARD
(For the Fishermen of the State of W.B.)
Govt. of West Bengal
Office of the Assistant Director of Fisheries

PHOTO

Name (In English):

(In Hindi):

S/o..... Date of birth:

Address (in English): Vill.
P.O., Block/P.S.
Dist., Contact Ph. No.

Address (in Hindi): Vill.
P.O., Block/P.S.
Dist., Contact Ph. No.

Distinguishing Mark:

Fisherman: By Caste/Profession/Livelihood

Type of work (livelihood) engaged to:

Member of
(FCS/FPG/SHG/FA etc.)

Address of the FCS/FPG/SHG/FA etc.

Voter Identity Card No./Ration Card No.

Assistant Director of Fisheries
& Ex-officio Authorized Signatory

Holder's Signature/LTI

Instruction: The Holder of this card is a Fisherman and is engaged to the fishery profession mentioned above for his/her livelihood and to require all whom it may concern to afford him/her every assistance, protection & every facility necessary for undertaking his/her profession.

By Order of the Govt. of West Bengal

ক্রমিক সংখ্যা **277508** প্রদানের তারিখ

পরিচয় পত্র
(পঃ বঃ রাজ্যের মৎস্যজীবীদের জন্য)
পশ্চিমবঙ্গ সরকার
সহঃ মৎস্য-অধিকর্তার করণ,

সাম্প্রতিক
তোলা
স্ট্যাম্প সহিষ্ণ
ফটো

নামঃ

পিতার নামঃ জন্ম তারিখঃ

ঠিকানাঃ গ্রাম

পোঃ অঃ..... ব্লক/থানাঃ

জেলাঃ..... যোগাযোগের ফোন নংঃ

উল্লেখযোগ্য চিহ্নঃ

মৎস্যজীবীঃ সম্প্রদায় সুবাদে/কার্য/জীবিকা সুবাদে

কি কাজের সঙ্গে যুক্তঃ

সদস্যঃ

(এফ সি এস/এফ পি জি/এস এইচ জি/এফ এ ইত্যাদি)

এফ সি এস/এফ পি জি/এস এইচ জি/এফ এ ইত্যাদির ঠিকানাঃ

ভেটোর পরিচয় পত্র নং/রেশন কার্ড নং

সহঃ মৎস্য অধিকর্তা তথঃ
উপযুক্ত কর্তৃপক্ষ

ধারকের সহি/টিপসহি

নির্দেশঃ পরিচয় পত্রের ধারক একজন মৎস্যজীবী এবং তাঁর জীবিকা নির্বাহের জন্য উপরে বর্ণিত কাজের সঙ্গে যুক্ত। এই কাজ করার জন্য যে ধরনের সাহায্য, সহযোগিতা ইত্যাদি দরকার, সংশ্লিষ্ট সবাই যেন তা করেন।

পঃ বঃ সরকারের অনুমত্যানুসারে

Source: Office of the Assistant Director of Fisheries, Meen Bhawan, Hooghly



পশ্চিমবঙ্গ সরকার
মৎস্য দপ্তর

“বাঁচালে ছোটো ইলিশ, মিলবে তবেই বড় ইলিশ” এদের বড় হতে দিন

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সমস্ত জনসাধারণকে জানানো যাইতেছে যে, মৎস্য দপ্তর, পশ্চিমবঙ্গ সরকারের সামুদ্রিক মৎস্য শিকার নিয়ন্ত্রণ আইন, ১৯৯৩ (সংশোধিত ২০১৩, নির্দেশনামা সংখ্যা ৭১৮-ফিস তাং-৪ঠা এপ্রিল, ২০১৩) এবং পশ্চিমবঙ্গ অন্তর্দেশীয় মৎস্য আইন, ১৯৮৪ ও পশ্চিমবঙ্গ অন্তর্দেশীয় মৎস্য বিধি, ১৯৮৫ (সংশোধিত ২০১৩, নির্দেশনামা সংখ্যা ৭১৯ - ফিস, তাং-৪ঠা এপ্রিল, ২০১৩) মোতাবেক নিম্নলিখিত নির্দেশনামা জারি করেছে :

- ইলিশ মাছের প্রাকৃতিক ভাঙার সংরক্ষণের জন্য কোন ব্যক্তি বা ব্যক্তিগণ বা মৎস্যজীবী বা মৎস্যজীবীগণ বা তাদের সহযোগীরা ৯০ মিলিমিটারের কম ফাঁসযুক্ত যেকোন প্রকারের মনোফিলামেন্ট জাল ব্যবহার করে ইলিশ মাছ ধরতে পারবেন না, অন্যান্য মাছের ক্ষেত্রে ৪০ মিলিমিটারের কম।
- খোকা ইলিশ বা জাটকা ইলিশ মাছের পরিযানকালে তাদের ভাঙার সংরক্ষণের জন্য বছরের ফেব্রুয়ারী থেকে এপ্রিল মাস পর্যন্ত নদী মোহনা বা সমুদ্র সঙ্গমে ব্যাগ নেট, স্কুপ নেট, লিফট নেট বা ছোট ফাঁসের ছাঁদ জাল ব্যবহার করা ও ২৩ সেন্টিমিটারের কম মাপের ইলিশ ধরা যাবে না।
- গ) কোন ব্যক্তি বা ব্যক্তিগণ বা মৎস্যজীবী বা মৎস্যজীবীগণ বা তাদের সহযোগীরা কোনভাবেই ২৩ সেন্টিমিটারের কম মাপের ইলিশ মাছ পরিবহন, বাজারজাত বা ক্রয়-বিক্রয় করতে পারবেন না।
- ঘ) সামুদ্রিক জীব বৈচিত্র্য এবং তাদের বাসস্থান সুরক্ষা ও সঠিক পরিমাণে ইলিশ মাছকে বাঁচিয়ে রেখে তাদের বংশবৃদ্ধি করার প্রক্রিয়াকে সুনিশ্চিত করতে সমুদ্র উপকূল থেকে ১২ নটিক্যাল মাইল পর্যন্ত মহাদেশীয় ঢালে তলদেশীয় ট্রলিং বা টানা জাল ব্যবহার করে মাছ ধরা সম্পূর্ণরূপে বন্ধ করা হয়েছে।
- ঙ) ইলিশ মাছের প্রজনন ও বংশবৃদ্ধি করার জন্য বছরের ১৫ই সেপ্টেম্বর থেকে ২৪শে অক্টোবর পর্যন্ত তথা পূর্ণিমার ৫ দিন আগে ও ৫ দিন পরের সময়কালে ইলিশ মাছ ধরা সম্পূর্ণরূপে বন্ধ করা হয়েছে।

উপরোক্ত আইন অমান্যকারীদের শাস্তি ও জরিমানা দুই-ই হতে পারে। ইলিশ মাছ রক্ষায় নিজেসব সামিল করুন। এই আইন বাস্তবায়নে মৎস্য দপ্তরের আধিকারিকরা বিভিন্ন মৎস্য অবতরণ ক্ষেত্র, মাছের আড়তে বা বাজারে নিয়মিত নজরদারী শুরু করেছে। তাঁদেরকে সাহায্য করুন।

ইলিশ সংরক্ষণ ও গবেষণা কেন্দ্র
সুলতানপুর মৎস্য বন্দর
দক্ষিণ ২৪ পরগণা



মৎস্য অধিকর্তা
পশ্চিমবঙ্গ সরকার

Appendix 4

Table 1: Socio - Economic survey of Jelepara

SLUM NAME	Slum Age(in Years)	Slum Area(Sq.metres)	Slum Location	Is the Slum Notified	Year Of Notification	Ownership Of Land
Bhupati nagar 1 (S.Code-0037) Jelepara	45	22000	FRINGE AREA	NOTIFIED	2004	Private
Kalitala Bandher Dhar (S.Code-0175) Jelepara	40	25000	FRINGE AREA	NON NOTIFIED	0	Government of india

Source: Socio - Economic survey conducted by Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality under 'Housing for all' scheme, during 2013-14.

Table 2: Socio - Economic survey of Jelepara

SLUM NAME	Connectivity To Watersupply	Connectivity To Drainage System	Connectivity To Sewerage System	Slum is prone to Flood	Approach road/Lane/Constructed path to the slum	Distance from nearest Road	Internal Road	Streetlight Facility
Bhupati nagar 1 (S.Code-0037) Jelepara	Partially Connected	Partially Connected	Partially Connected	More than a month	Non-Motorable Kaccha	LESS THAN 0.5 KMS-1	Non-Motorable Kaccha	Yes
Kalitala Bandher Dhar (S.Code-0175) Jelepara	Not Connected	Not Connected	Not Connected	More than a month	Non-Motorable Kaccha	0.5 TO 1.0 KM.	Non-Motorable Kaccha	Yes

Source: Socio - Economic survey conducted by Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality under 'Housing for all' scheme, during 2013-14.

Table 3: Socio – Economic Survey of Jelepara

SLUM NAME	Anganwadi	Municipal Pre School	Private Pre School	Municipal Primary School	State Primary School	Private Primary School
Bhupati nagar 1 (S.Code-0037) Jelepara	With distance less than 0.5 kms	Morethan 5.0 kms	With distance less than 0.5 kms	0.5 to 1.0 kms	1.0 to 2.0 kms	With distance less than 0.5 kms
Kalitala Bandher Dhar (S.Code-0175) Jelepara	0.5 to 1.0 kms	Morethan 5.0 kms	0.5 to 1.0 kms	0.5 to 1.0 kms	1.0 to 2.0 kms	With distance less than 0.5 kms

Source: Socio - Economic survey conducted by Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality under 'Housing for all' scheme, during 2013-14.

Table 4: Socio – Economic Survey of Jelepara

SLUM NAME	Municipal Highschool	State Govt Highschool	Private High school	Adult Education Centre	Non formal Education Centre
Bhupati nagar 1 (S.Code-0037) Jelepara	Morethan 5.0 kms	1.0 to 2.0 kms	With distance less than 0.5 kms	Morethan 5.0 kms	Morethan 5.0 kms
Kalitala Bandher Dhar (S.Code-0175) Jelepara	Morethan 5.0 kms	1.0 to 2.0 kms	With distance less than 0.5 kms	Morethan 5.0 kms	Morethan 5.0 kms

Source: Socio - Economic survey conducted by Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality under 'Housing for all' scheme, during 2013-14.

Table 5: Socio – Economic Survey of Jelepara

SLUM NAME	Primary Health Centre	Government Hospital	Maternity Centre	Private Clinic	No of Vocational training centres	No of Streetchildren Rehabilitation Centres	No of Night Shelters	No of Oldage Homes
Bhupatinagar 1 (S.Code-0037) Jelepara	Morethan 5.0 kms	2.0 to 5.0 kms	2.0 to 5.0 kms	0.5 to 1.0 kms	Morethan 5.0 kms	Morethan 5.0 kms	Morethan 5.0 kms	2.0 to 5.0 kms
Kalitala Bandher Dhar (S.Code-0175) Jelepara	Morethan 5.0 kms	2.0 to 5.0 kms	2.0 to 5.0 kms	0.5 to 1.0 kms	Morethan 5.0 kms	Morethan 5.0 kms	Morethan 5.0 kms	2.0 to 5.0 kms

Source: Socio - Economic survey conducted by Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality under 'Housing for all' scheme, during 2013-14.

Table 6: Socio – Economic Survey of Jelepara

SLUM NAME	No of Oldage Pension Holders	No of Widow Pension Holders	No of Disabled Pension Holders	No of Persons covered under General Insurance	No of Persons covered under Health Insurance	No of SelfHelpGroups/ DWCUA groups	No of Slum Dwellers Associations	No of Youth Associations	No of Women Associations
Bhupatinagar 1 (S.Code-0037) Jelepara	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Kalitala Bandher Dhar (S.Code-0175) Jelepara	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Socio - Economic survey conducted by Hooghly Chinsurah Municipality under 'Housing for all' scheme, during 2013-14.

Marginalisation and Development of Women in Fishing Community: A Case Study of Jelepara

Abstract

In a patriarchal society, women are not treated equally socially and culturally. In fact, there is continuous subordination of women by men in all the spheres of life. Women's stereotyped role has manifold and multiplied impacts on their health, nutrition, education and overall development. Gender gaps in access to resources are rooted in social and cultural practices. Women have to bear the tremendous cost for these inequalities but the cost affects harming everyone in the long run of the society. Thus, gender equality is the vital part of development strategy.

In the above backdrop, issues of marginalization, exclusion and development has been analysed with the help of various theoretical tools such as Capability Approach, theory of Structural Violence, Human Development Approach, Sustainable Development and connecting these concepts with the women in fishing communities in India in general and Jelepara in particular.

Marginalisation and Development are two emerging concepts in social sciences and the two sides of the same coin as well. The concept of marginalisation can be defined as some sort of powerlessness and exclusion experienced by a group, resulting from an inequality of control of 'resources and power structures' within society.

Marginalisation and exclusion as a process is conceptualised as cumulatively acquired and spatially related phenomena of social, economic cultural and political denials and deprivations, in – securities and uncertainty, hierarchy and domination which get legitimized and reproduces by the functioning of several normative and societal arrangements to relegate several sections of the population at the social margin despite their protests and resistance. Women are included in these sections of the population who are deprived for living a qualitative life in their whole lifespan.

Development is a universal phenomenon which is another important concept used in this research.; it is a worldwide concept which means about freedom of thought and speech, freedom to participate in decision – making, and freedom to work without social bondage.

Development means improving the conditions of life. In development, all the modern advances in science, technology, democracy, values, ethics, and social organisation fit into the single humanitarian project of producing a far better world. In its strong sense, development means using the productive resources of society to improve the living conditions of the poorest people.

Determinants of capability approach has been a great road map of this study and used all the indicators to analyse the status of women of fishing communities in Jelepara.

It was also found after analyzing the various remedial measures taken by the Government of West Bengal for the fisher folk in West Bengal. It is also revealed from the field study that no appropriate step has been taken by the department of fisheries for uplifting the socio economic status of the marginalized people of Jelepara. The contributions of women fisher folk in fisheries are still unrecognized in West Bengal in general and Jelepara in particular. The detailed account of their plight has been substantiated through field study.

This research has also provided a well researched policy prescription for the interested government bodies and the concerned NGOs for inclusion and capability enhancement of the marginalized women in fishing communities of Jelepara in particular and West Bengal in general.