Socio-economic Condition of Namasudra Community, Bagdah Block, North 24 Parganas, West Bengal, India

Arindam Shakhari
M.Phil. Scholar, Department of Geography, Mewar University, Chittorgarh, Rajasthan, India

Abstract:
Socio-Economic Condition is an important indicator to measure the development level of any community. The Namasudra community of Bagdah block is traditionally occupational Scheduled Caste community. Socio-Economic development associated with Namasudra community is characterized by income, literacy rate, housing and medical facilities, ownership of productive resources and participation primary, secondary and tertiary sectors. The paper focused on the Socio-Economic development scenario analysis of Namasudra community of Bagdah block and tries to reveal some fundamental aspect of Socio-Economic Condition of the community. Bagdah block is situated in lower Ganga plain and beside the Bangladesh Border. Physiographic, climatic conditions and lack of Government initiatives do not support their present conditions. Demographic scenario (total population, sex ratio, child birth and mortality), Economic status (monthly income, dependency ratio, working population and women income) and Social scenario (source of drinking water, religion, caste, literacy rate and language) are also influence this type of research. We have basically focused on the present Socio-economic condition of Namasudra community, Bagdah block based on primary survey.

Keywords: Socio-Economic condition, Namasudra community, Bagdah block, Demographic condition

1. Introduction

The term 'Development' denotes both the process of improvement and progress of community of any region, states or whole country. It provides a superior life style to the people. Development is a multidimensional phenomenon includes level of economic growth, level of education, level of health services, status of women, level of nutrition, quality of housing, distribution of goods, services and access of communication. Socio-Economic condition of Namasudra community of Bagdah block, North 24 Parganas, West Bengal is quite diverse in nature. The term 'Namasudra' is seldom found in any authentic Sanskrit literature. But this term is found mentioning in Shyamacharan Sarkar's Vyasnastha Darpan as subdivision of shudra caste (Lahiri &Dev: 1982:155). And etymologically this term means a group of respected shudra. 'Naman' means respected and shudra is a classified section of people who holds the lower strata in the caste society. Sekhar Bandyopadhyay says that 'The Namasudra community was earlier known as Chandala or Chandals, who mostly inhabited the district of East Bengal were forced to migrate to West Bengal during the partition of India in 1947. In Bagdah block 54.81 percent population are Scheduled Caste. Among them near 48.13 percent people are from Namasudra community. Maximum people of Namasudra community of Bagdah block have forced to migrate from Bangladesh in different time. Namasudra community is an important sub group of Scheduled Caste in Bagdah block. Economic condition Bagdah block, mainly Namasudra community is not well developed. Maximum numbers of people are depending on agriculture, fishery and house building industries. The Socio-Economic condition is a framework for studying the structure of a community. It focused and identified the different characteristics of a society. Education is an important element and role maker for the development of a community. But lack of educational institute literacy rate of Namasudra community is below 76 percent and female literacy rate is very poor (less than 70 percent). Health status is the best indicator of Socio-Economic development and standard of living. But only one rural hospital and three primary hospitals are available in whole Bagdah block. Namasudra Community is traditionally engaged with primary activities (like agriculture, fishery). For these reason, per capita income of this community is very low. And Socio-Economic backwardness is an important feature of Namasudra community of Bagdah block.

2. Study Area

Bagdah block is situated in the southern part of West Bengal and eastern part of India. The eastern and northern side of this block is bounded by the international India- Bangladesh border. It surrounded by Mahespur Upazila in Jhenaidaha district, Chaugacha Upazila and Sharsha Upazila in Jessore district of Bangladesh in north and east, Bongaon block is south and Hanskhali and Ranaghat-II blocks in Nadia district in west. Bagdah is located in North 24 Parganas district in $23^0 13'$Nlatitude and $88^0 53'$E longitude. The block situated

in the northern part of North 24 Parganas district and it is a part of Gangeticdelta, lying east of the Hooglyriver. This block is divided into nine Gram Panchyat (Asharu, Helencha, Malipota, Bagdah, Kaniara-I, Rangat, Bayra, Kaniara-II, and Sindrani). Bagdah block falls within the tropical monsoon climatic region. It is little raised above flood level and little higher than the border of river channels. The total area of Bagdah block is 233.05 square kilometers.
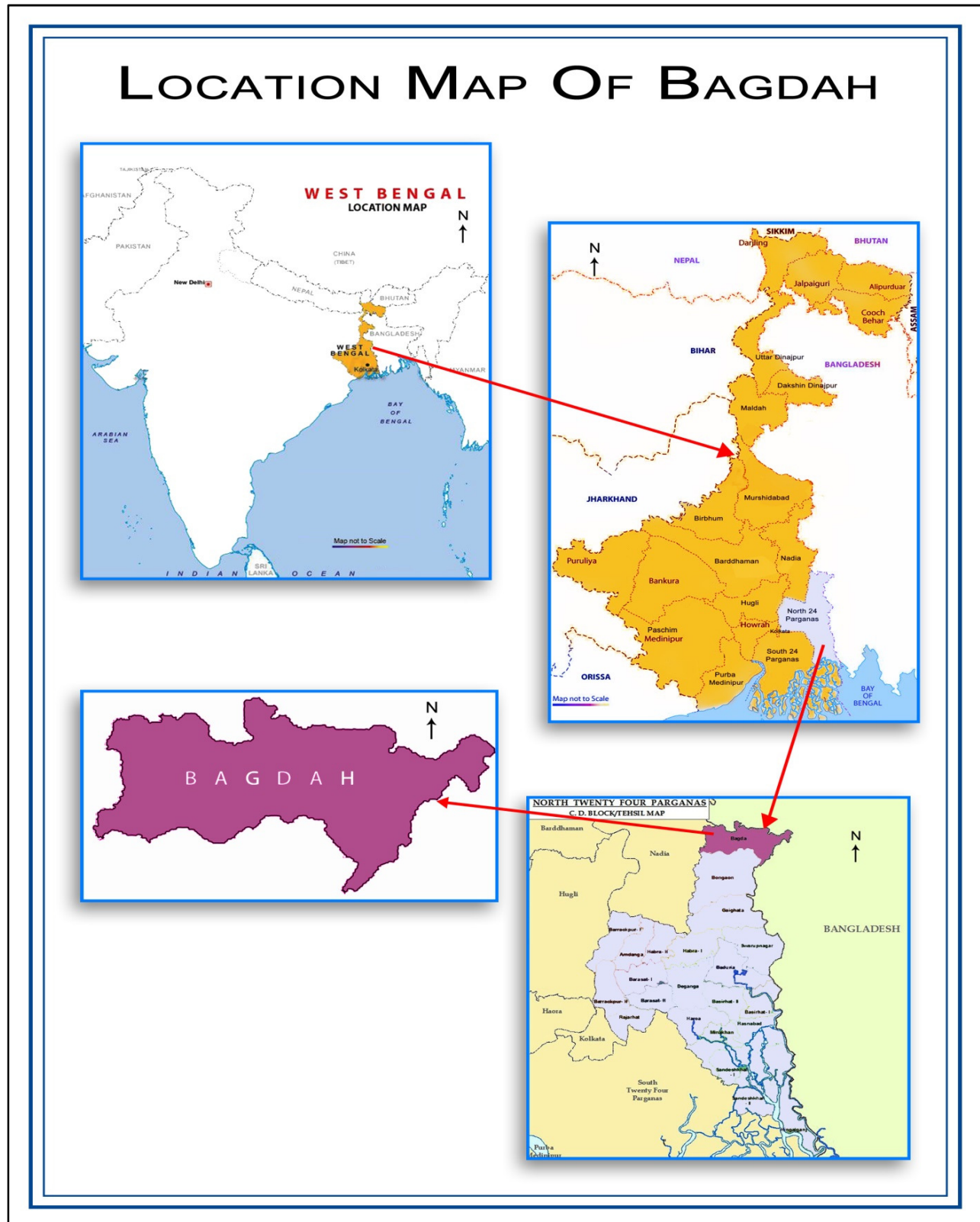

Figure 1

3. Significance of the Study

Socio-Economic status is an important indicator to measure the development of any community. The Socio-Economic problems of Namasudra community in particular are characterized by lack of education, extreme dependency on primary activities (agriculture and fishery) and poor participation secondary and tertiary sectors, absence of ownership of productive resource. The study will focus to analysis development i.e. – education and literacy, medical and health condition, food habits, income and intensity of poverty. Moreover,in view of this study, some suggestions would be prescribed for the solution of the problems associated with the Socio-Economic condition of Namasudra community of Bagdah block.

4. Objectives

The main objectives of the proposed research are –
   i.   To understand the present Socio-Economic scenario of the Namasudra community of Bagdah block.
   ii.   To find out Gram Panchayat wise economic development scenario.
   iii. To assess the level of Socio-Economic development some special indicators.
   iv.   To understand the position of women among Namasudra community.

5. Methodology

This whole research was based on primary and secondary data.Primary data collected through door to door survey of the resident of Bagdah block, North 24 Parganas district. A questionnaire was formed related the topic to collect the primary datafrom the residents. On the basis of their answer the whole project was prepared. Secondary data had collected from Bagdah Block Development Office, District statistical Hand Book 2011-2012, North 24 Parganas, Government of West Bengal, Ministry of Human Resource development, Agriculture Finance Corporation Ltd., West Bengal, and Census of India 2011. When we use statistical method with primary data from we refer it as secondary data. All data was processed, analyzed and then logical, rational, conclusions were made as well presented through table and chart etc. when required.

6. Result and Discussion

6.1. Demographic Condition

For empirical evaluation on the present status of group, demographic characteristic such as size of population, family structure, size of family and sex ratio are very important. The analysis of data reveals that out of 500 households of 9 Gram Panchayat from Bagdah block 1421 (51.83%) persons are male and 1314 (48.17%) persons are female. Total populations of the surveyed area are 2735. Family is the simplest fundamental unit of the society. Primary data reveals that out of 500 households 311 (62.2%) households are joint families and 189 (37.8%) are nuclear families. Sex ratio indicates the status of women in particular area while high sex ratio indicates the higher social status of women in an area. The women percentage of the surveyed families is low (48.04%) which indicating the low status of women of surveyed area.

S.L.No.	Name of Gram Panchayat	No. of Households	Male	Percentage (%)	Female	Percentage (%)	Total
1	Asharu	56	161	52.10	148	47.90	309
2	Helencha	72	201	51.80	187	48.20	388
3	Malipota	42	123	50.83	119	49.17	242
4	Bagdah	52	148	53.05	131	46.95	279
5	Kaniara-I	68	190	51.49	179	48.51	369
6	Ranaghat	50	153	52.76	137	47.24	290
7	Bayra	52	161	52.10	148	47.90	309
8	Kaniara-II	60	175	54.35	147	45.65	322
9	Sindrani	48	109	48.02	118	51.98	227
Total		500	1421	51.83	1314	48.17	2735

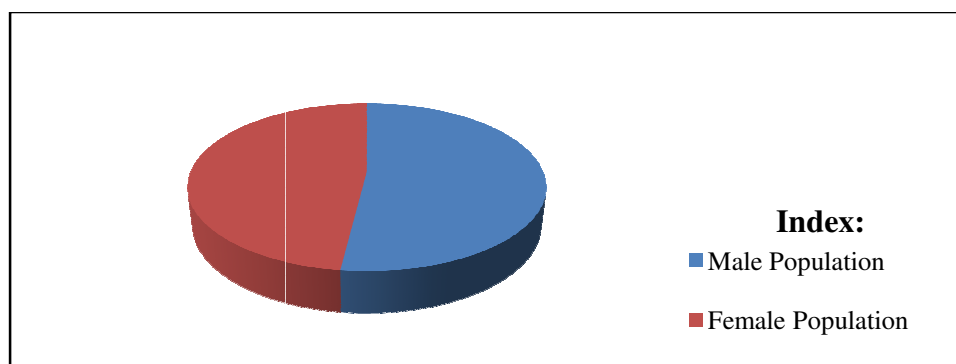*Table 1: Population structure of the sample households of Namasudra community, Bagdah block*

Figure 2: Demographic Scenario (Male & Female) of Namasudra community, Bagdah block
Source: Primary data, 2016

6.2. Occupational Structure

 Occupational structure portraits the various economic activities performed by the people of a society. In thesurveyed area only 35.83 percent people are worker. The total unemployment rate (64.17 percent) of Namasudra community of Bagdah block is very high as compared the district average and participation of female in job very low (21 percent). Major portion of working people (both male & female) of Namasudra community 62.27 percent are engaged in primary sectors (i.e. - agriculture, poultry & fishery) and 28.19 percent working people engaged with secondary sectors (like house building industries & small industries). And the remaining workers (only 9.54 percent) are engaged with tertiary sectors and service sectors (i.e.- teacher, doctor, government employee etc.)

Figure 3: Occupational Structure of Namasudra community, Bagdah block
Source: Primary data, 2016

6.3. Economic Status

Economic status generally refers to the status in which level a household or an organization maintains its economic condition with wealth or assets. In reality economic status of the household can't be maintained without studying the economic condition of all individualmember of the household. So in analyzing the economic status of the surveyed block, researcher tried to obtain the information related to above parameters of the surveyed households. Since the economic status of a person is determined based on two terms like earners and dependents,I have collected information relating to these terms. Earners are those members of the family who havessufficient income to maintain them-selves and their family. Dependents are those membersof the households who are unemployed and have no earning to support their family. According toprimary survey 35.2 percent of household's head having less than Rupees 5000 per capita income each month, presently which is very low and caused by low socio-economic condition of the Namasudra community of Bagdah. The second largest income group (28.8 percent) of household's heads earns only Rupees 5001-10000 per capita income each month. 19.4 percent household's head s having Rupees 10001-15000,following by 14.4 percent in between Rupees 15001-20000 and only 2.2 percent in above Rupees of 20000.

S.L. No.	Name of Gram Panchayat	Total No. of Earners	Percentage (%)	Total No. of Dependents	Percentage (%)
1	Asharu	86	28.86	212	71.14
2	Helencha	185	51.97	171	48.03
3	Malipota	78	28.16	199	71.84
4	Bagdah	156	47.56	172	52.44
5	Kaniara-I	142	47.33	158	52.67
6	Ranaghat	87	28.52	218	71.48
7	Bayra	81	28.72	201	71.28
8	Kaniara-II	66	25.68	191	74.32
9	Sindrani	97	29.22	235	70.78
Total		978	35.11	1757	64.89

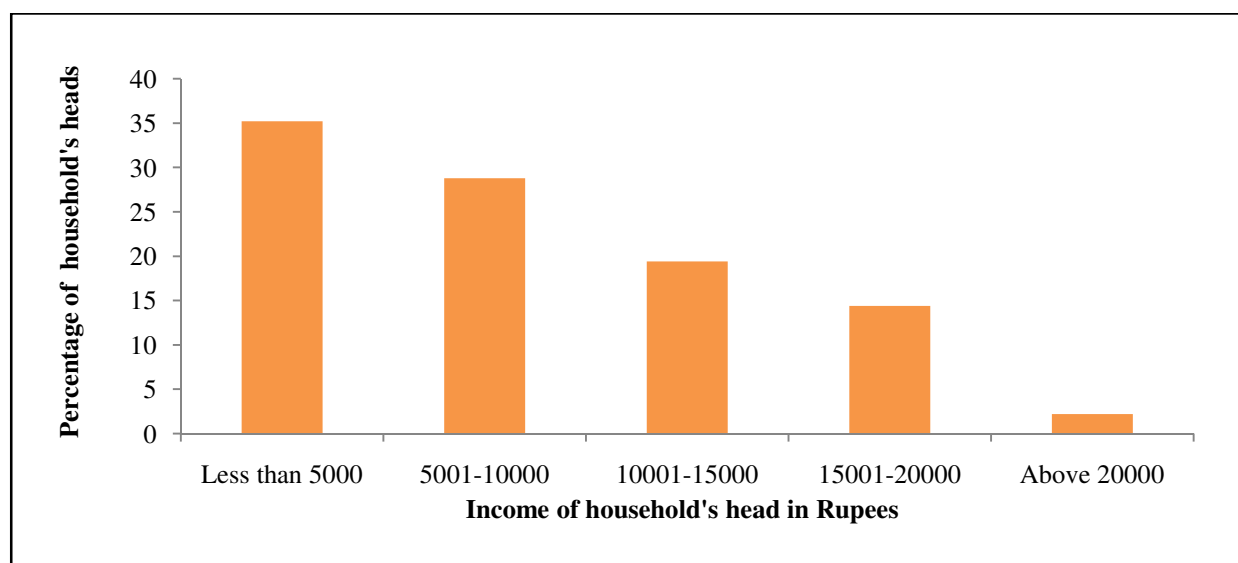*Table 2: Economic Status of sample households of Namasudra community, Bagdah block*

Figure 4: Monthly income household's head of Namasudra community, Bagdah block
Source: Primary survey, 2016

6.4. Educational Status

Education is one of the most important indicators for socio-economic development. Level of education is determined the level of occupational and level of income. Education is also accepted as the crucial inputs for nations building. So education is a pre-requisite for progress and development of human personality. The education status of Namasudra community is 80.37 percent males and 69.87 percent females are literate. Regarding educational level among the Namasudra people are concerned only 35.77 percent primary, 18.93 percent are madhyamik or matriculation, 14.68 percent are higher secondary (10+2), and only 5.93 percent are graduate and above. So we say that the participation at higher education (graduation and above) of Namasudra community is very poor.

Literacy Level	Male		Female		All	
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Illiterate	235	19.63	335	30.13	570	24.69
Literate	962	80.37	777	69.87	1739	75.31
0-6 years	224	15.76	202	15.37	426	15.58
Primary	443	37	383	34.44	826	35.77
Madhyamik/Matriculation	233	19.47	204	18.35	437	18.93
Higher Secondary (10+2)	197	16.46	142	12.77	339	14.68
Graduate and above	89	7.43	48	4.31	137	5.93
Total	1421	100	1314	100	2735	100

Table 3: Educational Level of the sample households of Namasudra community, Bagdah block
Note: While calculating educational level and literacy 0-6 age group of population is excluded
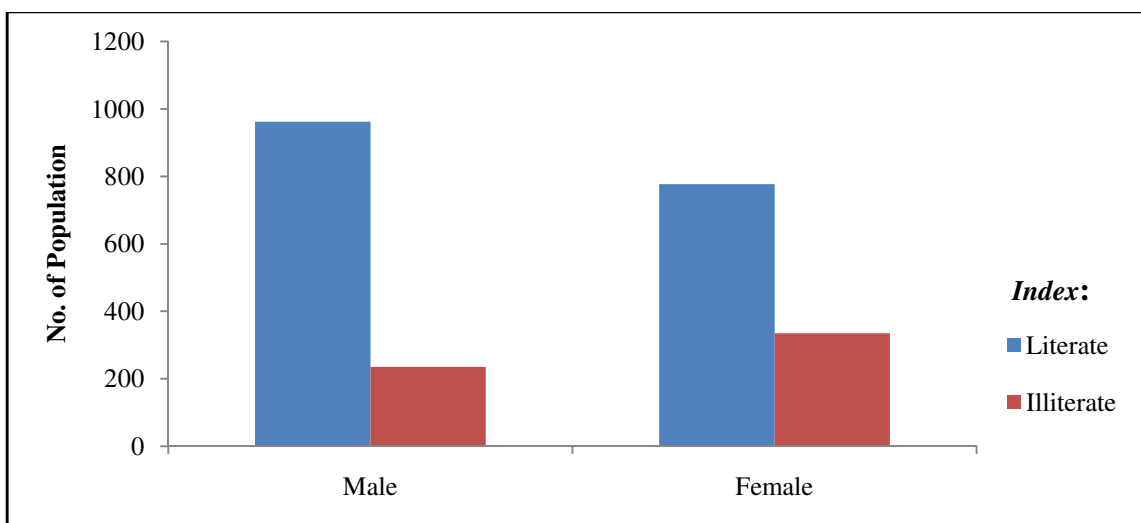*Source: Computed field data. 2016*

Figure 5: Educational Status of Namasudra community, Bagdah block
Source: Primary data, 2016

6.5. Health Status

To lead a productive and good life needs good health. Healthcare facilities are also one of the important factors which reflect the socio-economic status of population. According to primary survey, only 24.81 percent normal patient checked up their health to the registered doctor and remaining 76.19 percent patients depends on nonregistered doctor due to not availability registered doctor. On the other handlarge number people go to the registered doctors when their patient's condition is critical. According to primary survey more than 69.26 percent households depends on registered doctor at the time of patient critical condition and remaining 30.74 percent patients depends on nonregistered doctors. On the other side only one rural hospital and three primary hospitals are available in whole Bagdah block. It's clearly shows the poor health status of Namasudra community of Bagdah block.

S.L. No.	Name of Gram Panchayat	Normal condition Patients				Serious condition Patients			
		Registered Doctors		Non registered Doctors		Registered Doctors		Non registered Doctors	
		No. of household	Percentage (%)	No.of household	Percentage (%)	No. of household	Percentage(%)	No. of household	Percentage (%)
1	Asharu	13	23.21	43	76.79	39	69.64	17	30.36
2	Helencha	30	41.67	42	58.33	55	76.39	17	23.61
3	Malipota	9	21.43	33	78.57	30	71.43	12	28.57
4	Bagdah	21	40.38	31	59.62	42	80.77	10	19.23
5	Kaniara-I	24	35.29	44	64.71	49	72.06	19	27.94
6	Ranaghat	14	28	36	72	34	68	16	32
7	Bayra	13	25	39	75	34	65.38	18	34.62
8	Kaniara-II	11	18.33	49	81.67	38	63.33	22	30.67
9	Sindrani	16	33.33	32	60.67	33	68.75	15	31.25

Table 4: Gram Panchayat wise health status of Namasudra community of Bagdah block
Source: Primary data, 2016

7. Conclusion

The socio-economic condition of Namasudra community, Bagdah block, North 24 Parganas varies in different Gram Panchayat. According the data analysis we have clearly seen the intra Gram Panchayat variation in Bagdah block is highly control by some social economic factors. The detailed data analysis of Namasudra community of Bagdah block reveals that the Gram Panchayat level socio-economic condition will be explained by the socio-economic factors (i.e.- demographic condition, occupational structure, economical status etc.). The economic condition of this surveyed area is so pathetic because 35.83% people are workers and participation of female in job very poor (21%). In this area maximum working people (more than 64%) earned less than Rupees 10000 only. So we say that maximum people of this community, Bagdah block are living below poverty line. Education scenario is not perfect and positive in Namasudra community. Primary educated people are dominated here and female literacy rate is low (below 70%). The health status of Bagdah block is very poordue to lack of hospitals and registered doctors. There are only one rural hospital and three primary hospitals. In this paper we have clearly seen that the socio-economic condition of Namasudra community of Bagdah block is not satisfactory. Central and State Government have taken much interest in the scheduled caste (Namasudra) welfare programmes, projects and schemes. And some projects and schemes remain to be done. The progress achieved in this field far from satisfactory.

The welfare programme have not been effective due to administrative machinery, lack of sensitiveness, trained management, lack of large investment, procedural delays and lack of proper monitoring and evaluation.

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