

## DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT OF RAJBANSHI COMMUNITY IN NORTH BENGAL: A STUDY ON GOVERNMENT POLICIES

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### Abstract

*North Bengal has the largest concentration of Rajbanshi community. They belong to the Autochthonous race of northern Bengal. In social status, the Rajbanshis belong to the category of scheduled caste in West Bengal and are dominant community in North Bengal region. This paper has tried to highlight the different governmental policies that are framed and implemented for the empowerment of Rajbanshis communities in North Bengal regions.*

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**Key Words:** *Rajbanshi Community, Land Reform Policies, Rural Development Policies, Reservation, Empowerment.*

### INTRODUCTION

Rajbanshis is one of the dominant communities (Mukhopadhyay: 1990) of West Bengal, mostly living in the northern part of West Bengal. They are also to be found in some parts of present Assam, adjoining parts of Bihar, Nepal, Bhutan and the present parts of the ancient Rongpur of Bangladesh. The region is situated in the foothills of the magnificent eastern Himalayan range. The place's geographical coordinates are 26°22' North and 89°29' East. They are categorized as scheduled caste in West Bengal. They are the third largest Hindu caste of this province (Bandhyapadhyaya: 2013).

The Rajbanshis is one of the major Scheduled Caste populations in West Bengal. As per 1991 census, their population was 26, 88, 560 and constituted 18.26 percent of total Scheduled Caste population of North Bengal. Of the total Rajbanshis population of the state, more than 60 percent were the inhabitants of north Bengal. Even though the Rajbanshis is a dominant and important scheduled caste group of North Bengal however, the research studies on them are rather very scanty. Thus, the empirical knowledge on Rajbanshi society is very limited (Sanyal: 1965; Mukhapadhyaya: 1990).

This paper is an attempt to study the various policies dealing with the development of backward communities especially for the Rajbanshis people. The policies like land reforms, educational development, health service, development policies have been analyzed here in order to take a look of its implementation. This exercise may be helpful for understanding the dynamics of the development of Rajbanshis community by studying the developmental policies of the government.

### **Land Reforms Polices**

During the time of independence, the agrarian structure in West Bengal was an extremely complex one with the Zamindar's at the apex and peasantry at the bottom with many layers of intermediaries. The Zamindar who stood at the apex was often an absentee and "..... among the residents the Jotedars were at the top, held a large block of land with full occupancy rights, rarely undertook any manual labour and had their fields leased out or cultivated by agricultural workers. It was this class which also took to money lending and trading in agricultural commodities to a varying degree... for about one hundred years prior to the formal abolition of the Zamindari system in Bengal; this class was slowly displacing the Zamindars as the leading group in the countryside." In 1953, the revenue minister of West Bengal reported that the area under cultivation was approximately 11,700,000 acres. Of these intermediaries held about 400,000 acres, Raiyats 10,500,000 acres and under Raiyats 800,000 acres. At the bottom of the rung, there were a large number of share-croppers known as Bargadars. A substantial portion of the land held by Zamindars, Raiyats and that the area was cultivated by the Bargadars; the

1951 census estimated that the area cultivated by the Bargadars was 20.3 percent of the total cultivable land in West Bengal (Jana: 2007).

After independence, the state government and more particularly the Left Front Government, adopted an important land reforms policy in the state, which affected the rural poor in general and the communities that are now being mobilized by the parties in particular. Land reforms were hence adopted as a broad strategy for ameliorating the condition of the rural poor. Land reform measures that sought to bring about institutional changes in the countryside were passed in a different state (since agriculture was a state subject) in the 1950s, 1960s, and even in the 1970s. In the first five year plan (1950-55), all the states had passed land reforms measures concerning the abolition of intermediaries and feudal land tenure systems. From 1955 to 1971 (often termed the second phase of land reform measures), measures concerning the imposition of ceiling on agricultural landholdings were passed. In the initial stages, these reforms had twin objectives:

1. First, the abolition of intermediaries;
2. The imposition of ceiling on land holdings (Ghosh: 1978).

After the imposition of ceilings, it was felt that the land acquired by the state should be distributed among the landless.

## **Development of the North Bengal Region**

The Teesta Irrigation Project was conceived to harness the vast water resources flowing through this river in a good cause of the North Bengal in terms of irrigating the fertile lands of North Bengal regions. It is a multipurpose project involving irrigation as well as power generation and navigation. The project was initially planned to be completed in three independent phases. Development of irrigation, which is rightly considered to be more important than other purposes, was decided to be taken up in the first phase. Construction of the dam in the upper reach of Teesta would constitute the second phase and the navigation link between the Brahmaputra and Ganga is to be taken in the third phase. The first phase is concerned with the creation of irrigation potential to the extent of 9.22 lakh hectare in the

districts of North Bengal in three stages. The first stage is again divided into two sub-stages. The planning commission approved the first sub-stage of the first stage of the project for implementation by the irrigation and waterways department of Government of West Bengal. Recently the project has been declared as a national project by the government of India. The work of first sub-stage involves the construction of barrages on Teesta, Mahananda and Dauck rivers as well as five canals viz, Teesta Mahananda link canal, Mahananda main canal, Daucknagar main canal, Nagartangar main canal on the right of the Teesta barrage and Teesta-Jaldhaka main canal on the left side. Table -1 show districts wise targets at different stages of the project. The target for creating irrigation potential on completion of the first sub-stage is 3.42 lakh ha covering the six districts. In the subsequent second phase, it will be 2.04 lakh ha. The project proposes to cover 2.23 lakh ha and 1.53 lakh ha at the end of the stage 2 and 3 respectively. At the end of the project a total of 9.22 lakh ha has been expected to come under irrigation in the six districts of North Bengal. It has been seen that the Coochbehar will be the highest beneficiary district of north Bengal while Darjeeling, due to hilly, is the lowest in the rank. Another interesting point to note is that Darjeeling and Uttar Dinajpur will continue to get their full benefit by the end of the sub-stage I of the first stage while the districts like Dakshin Dinajpur and Malda have to wait till the completion of the third stage of the project. The table also reveals that the project failed to maintain, even in its proposal, its speed of work in all the stages.

**Table-1**  
**Districts Wise Targets Of Teesta Project**

District	Stage I		Stage II	Stage III	Total
	A	B			
Darjeeling	17	0	0	0	17
Jalpaiguri	62	0	81	0	143
Coochbehar	20	61	142	0	223
Uttar Dinajpur	194	0	0	0	194
Dakshin Dinajpur	10	121	0	65	196
Malda	39	22	0	88	149
Total	342	204	223	153	922

Districts Wise Irrigation Target under Teesta Project (in Thousand Hectares)

The basic statistics of all the six districts under the proposed project regarding their total geographical area, cultivable area and net cropping area have been shown in Table 2. It is seen that Jalpaiguri ranks first in terms of all the indicators while Dakshin Dinajpur ranks the last. Although Cooch Behar and Uttar Dinajpur possess nearly similar cultivable and net cropping areas but Cooch Behar has been proposed to receive more benefit (223 thousand hectares) than Uttar Dinajpur (194 thousand hectare).

**Table-2**  
**Land Utilizations of the Six Districts of North Bengal**

Sl. No.	Districts	Geographical Area (Sq.Km)	Cultivate Area (Ha)	Net Cropped Area (Ha)
1	Darjeeling	3149	167054	146454
2	Jalpaiguri	6227	376728	366920
3	Coochbehar	3387	281026	270034
4	Uttar Dinajpur	3140	282148	272505
5	DakshinDinajpur	2219	194024	191751
6	Malda	3733	284609	223112
	Total	21855	1585589	1470776

Districts Wise Irrigation Target under Teesta Project (in Thousand Hectares)

### Teesta Canal Project

The importance of the water sector is ever increasing to sustain agriculture growth in the state. The anticipated expenditure of the irrigation and waterways department for the year 2010-11 would be around 1139.57 Crore.

Under this sector, Teesta Barrage Project is the most important major irrigation project in the state providing irrigation water in the six districts of North Bengal. Teesta Barrage Project has recently been declared as a national project and is eligible for receiving 90 percent central assistance. The target for potential cannot be fully achieved mainly due to land constraints. Several corrective measures are being taken to complete the remaining works of 1<sup>st</sup> sub-stage by the year 2015. The revised budget for current financial year is 100.00 crore. Even though the project like Teesta barrage (which is still under construction and which led to the displacement of the original inhabitants) have left a large chunk of Rajbanshi community landless.

North Bengal consists of six districts and about 22 percent of the population in West Bengal lives in this area. The districts are mostly non-industrialized and agriculture is the most important occupation of most of the population. However, because of the lack of proper irrigation, the productivity of agriculture is lower than that of south Bengal. The irrigation water is not available in North Bengal because of non-completion of Teesta Multipurpose Project for about 35 years. Therefore, landless labourers are increasing at a very high rate specially the Rajbanshis in different parts of North Bengal. Most of the Rajbanshis were landless and become landless labourers.

### **Development of Education in North Bengal**

Educational advancement in the state acts as a prime mover for improvements in other indicators of social and human development. With a view to accelerate and sustain faster social and human development, the government of West Bengal has taken initiatives to strengthen and widen the education system. Universalization of elementary education is a flagship policy initiative of the state in this direction.

D.H.E Sunder in his report on people of western- Duars (Bengal Duars was often being called as Western-Duars in British days), in 1995 made an observation while writing on the Rajbanshi thus, 'the parent among Rajbanshi gives little attention to the education of their children. Many of them refused to allow children to attend school because education will make them ask for better clothes, also socks and shoes instead of attending to ploughing and agriculture.' (Sunder: 1895).

### **Health Infrastructure**

The state has a well structured three-tier public health infrastructure comprising primary health centers and sub-centers spread across rural and semi-urban areas, secondary health sector comprising state, district and sub-divisional hospitals and tertiary medical care providing multi-speciality hospitals and colleges located in urban areas. The investment in the health sector has

increased considerably over the years. Several reform measures and programmes have also been initiated in order to provide accessible, equitable, affordable health care in the state.

Over the last few years, north Bengal has shown remarkable progress in the field of health care facilities in the state which is reflected in the health outcomes. Some of the key indicators depicting recent progress made by the state are as follows:

Percentage of patients getting in patient service from government hospitals in north Bengal is high. The in-patient admission in the rural hospitals and block primary health centre's have increased respectively in 2009.

The permanent sterilization coverage has improved from 1.36 lakh in 2006-07 to 3.02 lakh in 2008-09. The state government has given thrust on male sterilization.

An overview of progress is discussed below. The total number of hospital (Government, Local Body and NGOs) has increased from 2291 in 2008-09 to 2311 in 2009-10 and consequently, there is 1 percent increase in the total number of in the state. At present the rural infrastructure consists of a network of 10356 sub-centers, 921 primary health centers 242 block primary centers and 101 rural hospitals. Poor upkeep, maintenance and high manpower shortage in rural areas are the main constraints in the service delivery system in the government sector. Due emphasis has been given on overall improvement of these primary health care services.

In the Darjeeling district, the department of health has a unique feature with two district health and the Family Welfare Samitis are under Siliguri Mahakuma Parisad and the other at Darjeeling Gorkhaland Territorial Areas. The 8 Block Primary Health Centers are located generally at the Block Head Quarter. BPHC viz., Bijanbari under GTA and Khoribari under SMP are being upgraded to the level of the rural Hospitals (RH) which are located at block headquarter. There are 2 sub-divisional level hospitals situated at Kalimpong and Kurseong under GTA, whereas the district level hospitals are located in each district Headquarter at Darjeeling and Siliguri under sub-division. The bed strength of the health institution under GTA reveals that there are 100 beds in PHCS, 165 in BPCS and 30 beds are available in the

RH altogether 295 hospital bed dominated among 26 health facilities located in the rural serving mainly the rural population of the hilly region of the district. In the Jalpaiguri district health and the familywelfare are under the Jalpaiguri Mahkuma Parisad at Jalpaiguri. Despite the several health centers and facilities, the Rajbanshis have not benefited these facilities because of lack of proper information.

**TABLE 5**

**Health Infrastructure in North Bengal**

Year	Hospital		Health centre		Sub Centre	Total Health Unit	
	No.	No. of Beds	No.	No. of beds		No.	No. of beds
<b>2006</b>							
<b>DARJEELING</b>	131	3717	32	411	230	393	4128
<b>JALPAIGURI</b>	64	2262	52	543	537	653	2805
<b>COOCH BEHAR</b>	26	1516	42	366	406	474	1882
<b>UTTAR DINAJPUR</b>	17	707	28	275	344	389	982
<b>DAKSHIN DINAJPUR</b>	12	886	26	244	247	285	1130
<b>MALDA</b>	28	1057	51	667	511	590	1724
<b>2007</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>No. of beds</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>No. of beds</b>		<b>No.</b>	<b>No. of beds</b>
<b>DARJEELING</b>	131	3909	33	451	231	394	4360
<b>JALPAIGURI</b>	64	2343	53	637	537	654	2980
<b>COOCH BEHAR</b>	28	1487	42	434	406	476	1921
<b>UTTAR DINAJPUR</b>	18	729	29	320	344	391	1049
<b>DAKSHIN DINAJPUR</b>	13	889	26	288	247	286	1177
<b>MALDA</b>	26	1120	51	769	511	588	1889

Source: Ministry of Human Resource Development, New Delhi, Part-II, Sec-II, Government of India

### Rural Development

In the North Bengal region, various plans are being implemented and these may be broadly grouped under the following heads, namely (i) schemes for generation of wage employment (MGNREGS), (ii) dwelling house for the poor (IAY), (iii) social sector development



(sanitation programme and rural water) for the poor, (iv) social security measures (old age pension scheme, family benefit scheme, provide fund for agricultural labourers, relief for destitute people etc.). There are some other programmes aimed at quicker development of some backward regions. These programmes supplement the efforts undertaken under all the above-mentioned schemes. They are (i) Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF), (ii) special programmes for villages identified as backward, (iii) fund provided by Uttaranchal Unnayan Parishad for the development of north Bengal districts

### **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)**

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) provides statutory guarantee under the provision of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) for 100 days of employment in every year to the adult members of any rural household willing to do unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage. For this purpose hundreds and thousands of public works schemes like the construction of roads, excavation of canals, improvement of land, digging of ponds, social forestry is being designed and executed in thousands of villages. The landless agriculture labourers are being given job cards that entitle them to get a job or financial compensation if the job cannot be given. The scheme was launched nationally in 200 districts of the country with effect from 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2006. From 1.4.2008 the scheme is operational in all the districts of north Bengal of the state. With the guarantee of demand-driven fund allocation, this scheme opens up tremendous possibilities of creating a livelihood resources base of the rural poor.

Operational guidelines for implementation of the programme have the following important features:

1. Every willing household is to be registered on the basis of application in the prescribed format. The application should be submitted to the concerned gram panchayat.
2. Every registered household will be given a job card by the gram panchayat.

3. The job card holders are to be provided with work within 15 days of demand, failing which they will be entitled to unemployed allowance subject to certain conditions prescribed under the programme. Job cardholders are provided wages for unskilled labourers.

By the end of the financial year 2009 -10, 103.52 lakh job cards were issued. Among them, 34.85 lakh households demanded employment during the year and 34.76 lakh households were provided wage employment. Up to November, 2010, 106.22 lakh job cards were issued and provided among them 39.96 lakh households demanded employment. As shown in Table 2 the number of persons, days of work provided per household (by those households who demanded work) was 45 days of an average in 2009-10 as compared to 26 days in a previous year. The districts which provided more than 50 days of employment per household during the year were; Jalpaiguri, Dakshin Dinajpur and Jalpaiguri district provided the highest number of 64 days of employment on an average. The performance of Darjeeling was very poor, where on an average only less than 30 days of employment were provided to each household.

**Table 6**

**(Registration, demand for employment and average number of person-days generated on the basis of employment provided per household under MGNEGA)**

Name of the District	Number of household who demanded employment (in lakh)		Number of household who demanded employment (in lakh)		Number of household provided employment (in lakh)		Number of person-days generated per household	
	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010
JALPAIGURI	5.90	6.13	2.22	2.50	2.22	2.50	25	64
DARJEELING (SILIGURI MP)	0.72	0.77	0.29	0.24	0.29	0.24	20	19
COOCH BEHAR	5.19	5.76	2.29	2.05	2.29	2.04	15	32
UTTAR DINAJPUR	4.36	4.36	0.57	0.75	0.57	0.75	24	36
DAKSHIN DINAJPUR	2.47	2.74	0.70	0.56	0.70	0.56	25	53
MALDA	5.38	5.65	0.98	1.39	0.96	1.39	17	40

Source: Department of Panchayat and Rural Development, Government of India.

Rural Housing-Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY). In the Ninth Plan, the Special Action Plan for Social Infrastructure has identified 'Housing' as one of the priority areas. It aims at providing "Housing for all" and facilitates the construction of twenty lakh additional dwelling units, of which thirteen lakh dwelling units are to be constructed in rural areas. The composite housing strategy for the Ninth Plan may be a multipronged strategy which has been operationalized w.e.f. 1999-2000. The salient features of the strategy under the Action Plan are given below.

The Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) will continue to be a major scheme for construction of houses to be given to the poor, free of cost. However, an additional component has been added, namely, conversion of unserviceable *Kutcha* houses to semi *Pucca* houses. From 1999-2000, the criteria for allocation of funds to States/UTs under IAY has been changed to 50 per cent poverty ratio and 50 per cent housing shortage in the State. Similarly, the criteria for allocation of funds to a district in a State have been changed to the SC/ST population and housing shortage, with equal weightage to each of them. A Credit-cum-Subsidy Scheme for rural housing has been launched from 1.4.1999 which will target a rural family having annual income up to Rs.32, 000. The subsidy portion will be restricted to Rs.10, 000/- and loan amount to Rs.40, 000/-. The loan portion will be disbursed by the commercial banks, housing finance institutions etc.

Equity support by the Ministry of Rural Development (MORD) to Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) has been increased to improve the outreach of housing finance in rural areas. Additionally, an Innovative Scheme for Rural Housing and Habitat Development and Rural Building Centers (RBCs) has been introduced to encourage innovative, cost-effective and environmentally friendly solutions in building/housing sectors in rural areas. A National Mission for Rural Housing and Habitat has been founded to deal with the critical problem with "housing gap" and induction of science and technology inputs into the housing/construction sector in rural areas. Samagra Awaas Yojana, a comprehensive housing scheme, was launched in 1999- 2000 on a pilot project basis in one block in each of 25 districts of 24 States and in one Union Territory with a view to ensuring the integrated provision of

shelter, sanitation and drinking water. The underlying philosophy is to supply for convergence of the prevailing rural housing, sanitation and water system schemes with special emphasis on technology transfer, human resource development and habitat improvement with people's participation. The existing schemes of housing, drinking water and sanitation will follow the normal funding pattern. However, a Special Central Assistance of Rs 25.00 lakh would be provided for every block for undertaking overall habitat development and IEC works with 10 per cent contribution coming from the people. In 1999-2000 (up to February, 2000), Rs.1438.39 Crore has been spent and 7.98 lakh dwelling units have been built under the IAY. In the Annual Plan 2000-01, the Central outlay of Rs.1710.00 Crore has been provided for Rural Housing.

### **Five Year Plans and the Socio Economic Condition of the Scheduled Castes**

Based on article 38 and article 39 (a), (b) and (c) of the Constitution, the Government of India has set up the planning commission to look after the task of achieving all round development with emphasis on social justice. Broad aim of planning commission in the country is to bring rapid economic development accompanied by continuous progress towards equality and social justice. In order to achieve the above goal the Planning Commission through this five year Plan made separate financial allocation and formulated socio-economic programmes to improve the condition of scheduled castes in the country.

1. In the first two five year plans, welfare programmes were drawn up and implemented for improving the educational and economic status of Scheduled Castes. It was however, noticed that the strategy for the development of this disadvantaged group would have to be based on comprehensive economic and human resource development efforts so that this section of the society could acquire the ability to utilize the fruits of general economic development. During the fifth plan, same objectives and strategies were adopted and attempts were continuously made to accelerate the pace of development of scheduled castes.

2. Following the same strategy special component plan (SCP) was adopted in the sixth five year plan. These efforts resulted in earmarked allocation for the SCP. Accordingly, programmes for the development of scheduled castes were undertaken by the central and states governments. Emphasis was laid upon the family and individual beneficiaries oriented programmes within the general frameworks of schemes.
3. During the seventh plan period, SCP for scheduled castes was implemented. Substantial's increase in the flow of the funds for scheduled castes was made resulting in expansion of infrastructural facilities and enlargement of coverage. For the speedy economic development of scheduled castes, scheduled caste finance and Development Corporation was assigned primarily to act as the catalytic agent in formulation of schemes for employment generation and financial pilot projects. Besides, special consideration was made for scheduled castes families in the implementation of an integrated rural development programme.
4. During the eighth plan, the emphasis was laid upon narrowing down the gap in the level of development of the scheduled castes and other sections of the society so that by the turn of the century these disadvantaged groups might be brought at par with the rest of the society in all spheres of national development. Priority was given to the elimination of exploitation of scheduled castes and removal of all oppression. The issue relating to untouchability, denial of civil rights, injurious money lending, land alienation, nonpayment of minimum wages and restriction on right to collect minor forest produce was also accorded top priority in order to bridge the gap in the development of scheduled castes, of north Bengal.

### **Special Policies for the Scheduled Castes**

While the Scheduled Castes lag behind the general population on most of the social and economic development indicators and in several areas the developmental needs are common, there are some important aspects in the problems of Scheduled Castes. For instance, the Scheduled Castes suffer not only from economic backwardness but also from social disabilities. The problem of the Scheduled Castes arises from geographical isolation

characterized by the low level of techno-economic development and wide variation in the levels of living between different areas and different castes groups but all the same, assiduously retaining their distinct socio-cultural identity in a large measure. The programmes for these groups during the Plans will, therefore, need to be attuned to meet the specific needs of these communities.

### **Educational Development of the Scheduled Castes**

For the educational development of the Scheduled Castes steps had been taken to ensure that at both pre-matric and post-matric stages, the problems such as high dropout rate, stagnation, non-enrolment of girl students and uneven growth amongst specified communities are effectively tackled. While the general sector would take care of the institutional arrangements for locating the necessary infrastructure, the programmes under the Backward Classes Sector would continue to pay special attention in supplementing these through incentives and support services.

At the pre-matric stage, programmes covering scholarships, boarding grants, hostel facilities, free supply of books, stationery and uniform and mid-day meals were to be expanded. An appropriate package of services will be worked out to promote literacy and raise the level of education of communities where the current level is very low. Special attention will be paid to the retention of the girl child in school.

The post-matric scholarship scheme for Scheduled Castes is in operation since 1944-45 has helped students from these communities to pursue higher education. Although the rates of scholarship under the scheme have been increased from time to time, no structural changes aimed at increasing employment opportunities have been made. The attempt during the Eighth Plan would be to rationalize the scheme to: (i) provide guidance with reference to employment opportunities and offering appropriate incentives for courses which have a larger market demand; (ii) improve the performance, if necessary by prescribing minimum standards; and

(iii) identify causes for inter-caste/ tribe variation in availing benefits under the scheme and chalk out appropriate remedial action.

### **Economic Development of the Scheduled Castes**

The economic development of Scheduled Caste families has been given high priority. The Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Development Corporations will strengthen their activities to enable proper identification of beneficiaries; selection of projects in non-traditional as well as traditional areas and matching them with the capabilities of the beneficiaries; provide financial assistance in the form of margin money or direct loan on concessional rate of interest in order to lessen the burden of repayment liability; facilitate the flow of credit through financial institutions for these projects; ensure tie-up with poverty alleviation programmes like IRDP; provide infrastructure support wherever necessary, to enable the group of beneficiaries to take up their own ventures in a common workplace; organize training in different skills to the target group; arrange for inputs such as a supply of raw-material, marketing of finished goods, etc.; and monitor the implementation of the projects.

A time-bound programme, is to be completed within the period of the Eighth Plan, was launched to achieve complete elimination of scavenging. The objective will be achieved by (i) making provisions of flush latrines mandatory in every house in urban areas and (ii) providing alternative work opportunities to those presently engaged in scavenging. For this purpose, necessary training facilities are provided and rehabilitation is undertaken. The National Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation would take up projects for the benefit of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In addition, the Federation would organize training courses to provide skills.

### **Suggestions**

- I. Educational facilities are to be improved in the Rajbanshi Community to eradicate illiteracy. In this context, government schools to be strengthened as Rajbanshi children mostly depend on them. The school dropouts be discouraged through incentives and by creating interest in education.
- II. The governmental agencies should take care of the development of Rajbanshi community in the socio-economic spheres.
- III. Government hospitals are to be provided with infrastructure facilities and doctor to protect the community health from the private practitioners and local curators.
- IV. Agriculture is to be given anew thrust in this area as more than 70 percent depend on them. At the same time non-agricultural wage employment through government programmers like NREGA should be increased which would improve the economic condition of the Rajbanshi community thereby, get a livelihood.
- V. Housing programmers and household facilities to be extended to cover more Rajbanshi household for a comfortable living.
- VI. Institutional credit is to be liberalized as most of the community belong to landless, marginal and small farmer categories. They need to be protected from the clutches and higher rates of interest of the money lenders.
- VII. Therefore, government policies, programs and schemes should take the involvement of Rajbanshi community to developed their socio-cultural, economic, health, conditions in present day scenario by following transparency, participation and accountability criteria and to promote both the welfare and development of the Rajbanshi community people.

## **Conclusion**

In the present study, the adoption of development measures for Rajbanshis (a dominant variety of scheduled castes in West Bengal) has been viewed under the preview of public policy in the planned process of social change and development. In order to sustain growth with equality and justice as well as maintenance of social order in the society, public policy has been framed in accordance with the need and basic requirement of the people and the area under study, the primary objective of the welfare measures is to achieve a state of the physical, psychological,



social and economic well-being of the people. In both public policy and the welfare measures emphasis is being given to protect the right of the community and the study through certain distribution justice. The principle of such justice is based on the reservation, maintenance of happiness and want satisfaction through resource allocation to the individual and community. In order to achieve equal social worth (Marshall: 1950) it is necessary that citizen may be granted certain social rights as well as the traditional civil and political rights. Indeed to ensure welfare measures in the society is a manifestation of social justice. The phenomenon of social justice demands a historic reality in the distribution of benefits among the member of the society. It deals with the regulation of wages, protection of personal rights through a legal system of allocation of housing, medical education facilities and such other basic amenities of life. These welfare benefits and measures are a part of the natural extension of traditional liberal voters (Rawls:1971) and being provided not mere to aid people but to enlist their health and co-operation in social welfare programme in term of recognition of the wit and dignity of the individual through the media of social policy.

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