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Chandrasekhar Hajra
Department of Economics;
Nistarini College, Purulia

Changes in work opportunities and empowerment of the people of Purulia during Last Two Census decades

Chandrasekhar Hajra

Abstract

One of the objectives of development planning was to increase work opportunities and empower people to reap the fruits of economic development. Various steps have been taken by different governments through various incentives & policy interventions to fulfill this objective. To study how far this has been achieved at Purulia, we have used four parameters – literacy rate, gender gap in literacy rate, level of urbanization & population density. Development programmes implemented at Purulia have yielded mixed results. In case of spread of education in general and female education in particular results are encouraging but empowerments are not transferred into employability. Vulnerability of workers are increasing as casual works are replacing permanent works.

Keywords: Economic Development, literacy rate, gender gap, urbanization, population density, permanent workers.

Jel Classification: O1; O2; J7; I3

1. Introduction

1.1. Brief profile of Purulia

Purulia, the westernmost district of West Bengal was born on 1st November, 1956, after partitioning of the Manbhum District under the States Re-originated Act and the Bihar and West Bengal (Transfer of Territories) Act, 1956. The district comprises three subdivisions: Purulia Sadar East, Purulia Sadar West and Raghunathpur. Purulia Sadar East consists of Purulia municipality and seven community development blocks: Manbazar-I, Manbazar-II, Bundwan, Purulia-I, Purulia-II, Hura and Pancha. Purulia Sadar West consists of Jhalda municipality and seven community development blocks: Jhalda-I, Jhalda-II, Jaipur, Arsha, Bagmundi, Balarampur and Barabazar. Raghunathpur subdivision consists of Raghunathpur municipality and six community development blocks: Para, Raghunathpur-I, Raghunathpur-II, Neturia, Santuri and Kashipur. Purulia town is the district headquarters. There are 20 police stations, 20 development blocks, 3 municipalities, 170 gram panchayats, and 2459 inhabited villages in this district. The geographical area of the district is 6259 km². This district is bordered on the east by Bankura, Paschim Medinipur districts, on the north by Bardhaman district of West Bengal state and Dhanbad district of Jharkhand state, on the west by Bokaro and Ranchi districts of Jharkhand state and on the south by West Singhbhum and East Singhbhum districts of Jharkhand state. Purulia is one of the drought prone districts of West Bengal. It has a sub-tropical climate nature and is characterized by high evaporation and low precipitation. Temperature is very high in summer and low in winter which varies from 2.8 degrees in winter to 52 degrees in summer thus causes dryness in moisture. South west monsoon is the principal source of rainfall in the district. Average annual rainfall varies between 1100 and 1500 mm. The relative humidity is high in monsoon season, being 75% to 85%. But in hot summer it comes down to 25% to 35%.

1.2. Objective of Study and Data Sources

Life is not easy at Purulia even today. Agriculture is not developed, water is scarce, old industries are dying, new industrial ventures are rare, tourism is not responding as expected, handicrafts are not getting enough market... list of problems is long. Nearly one fifth of total population of Purulia is tribal. One of the objectives of development planning was to increase work opportunities and empower people to reap the fruits of economic development. Various steps have been taken by different governments through various incentives & policy

Correspondence
Chandrasekhar Hajra
Department of Economics;
Nistarini College, Purulia

interventions to fulfill this objective. In this attempt I have tried to study how far we have been successful in this regard. Using census data we have unfolded some important insights about the life, its challenges and the direction of its changes for people in general and women in particular of this district. In this study I have basically used published census data of 1991, 2001 & 2011 along with some district level data collected from NRDMS cell of the Office of DM Purulia.

1.3. Demographic Profile of Purulia

In 2011, Purulia had population of 2,930,115 roughly equal to the nation of Jamaica out of which male and female were

1,496,996 and 1,433,119 respectively (Table 1). With respect to number of population rank of Purulia district is 129th out of a total of 640 districts in India. Out of total population the district has 567767 number of (19.38 per cent) Scheduled Caste and 540652 number (18.45 per cent) of Scheduled Tribe population. The district has experienced an increase of 15.52 per cent of population compared to population as per 2001. Density of population at Purulia district for 2011 was 468 people per sq. km. With regards to Sex Ratio in Purulia, there are 957 females per 1000 male. The average national sex ratio in India was 940 in 2011.

Table 1: Demographic Indicators of Purulia District from 1991 to 2011

Category	1991 Census	%	2001 Census	%	2011 Census	%
Total Population	2014571		2536516		2,930,115	
Male Population	1032172	51.37	1298078	51.18	1,496,996	51.09
Female Pop.	982399	48.63	1238438	48.82	1,433,119	48.91
Total Literates	658624	40.32	1182284	55.57	1624905	64.48
Male Literates	503090	59.98	803494	73.72	1002058	77.86
Female Literates	155534	19.57	378790	36.50	622847	50.52
Rural Population	2014571	90.56	2281090	89.93	2,556,801	87.26
Urban Population	210006	9.44	255426	10.07	373,314	12.74
Scheduled Caste	430513	19.35	463956	18.29	567767	19.38
Scheduled Tribe	427765	19.23	463452	18.27	540652	18.45
Sex Ratio	947		954		957	
Popln. Density (per sq. km.)	355		405		468	
Decadal Growth Rate	20		14.02		15.52	
	(1981-91)		(1991-2001)		(2001-2011)	

Sources: Register General of Census Operations, Govt. of India 1991, 2001, 2011

Average literacy rate of Purulia in 2011 were 64.48 compared to 55.57 of 2001. Male and female literacy were 77.86 and 50.52 respectively. For 2001 census, same figures stood at 73.72 and 36.50 for Purulia District. Total literate in Purulia District were 1,624,905 of which male and female were 1,002,058 and 622,847 respectively. Out of the total population 12.74 percent lives in urban regions of district & 87.26 % population of Purulia districts lives in rural areas or villages. In total 373,314 people lives in urban areas and 2556,801 people lives in rural areas in 2011.

Now we shall discuss how things are changing in Purulia District. To study we shall use four parameters – literacy rate, gender gap in literacy rate, level of urbanization & population density. It is well known that education is one of the prerequisite of empowerment, so we have studied literacy rate of the people of this district to access how people are getting empowered and what is the distribution of this empowerment among male and female population. It is believed that for a developed society, people should be educated and the gap between male and female education should be minimum. We have measured empowerment by literacy rate. The gender gap in literacy rate is the difference in the literacy rate between male and female population at different census years. Level of urbanization is measured by the percentage of people living in urban areas. Population density is number of people living per square kilometer of Purulia.

Overall literacy rate has been increased from 40.32 per cent in 1991 to 64.48 % in 2011. So in 20 years literacy rate has increased by more than fifty percent. People has become more empowered through education in these last twenty years. Looking at the distribution of the literacy rate we find women literacy has been increased substantially from 19.57 per cent in 1991 to 50.52 in the year 2011. The gender gap

has been narrowed down from 40.41 in the year 1991 to 37.22 in 2001 and further to 27.34 to 2011. Increase in female literacy rate has remain more pronounced than the increase in male literacy rate in the entire period.

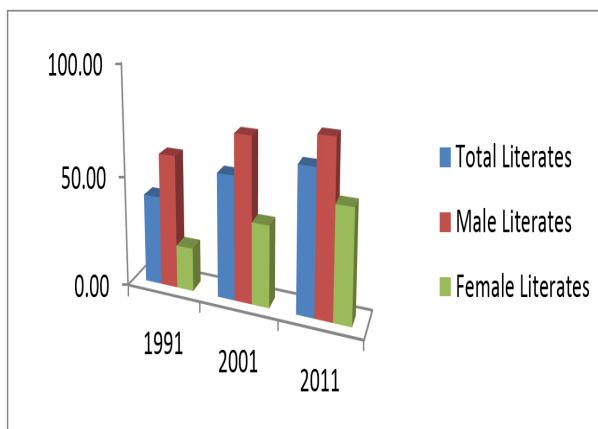


Fig 1: Literacy profile of Purulia (in percentages) 1991-2011

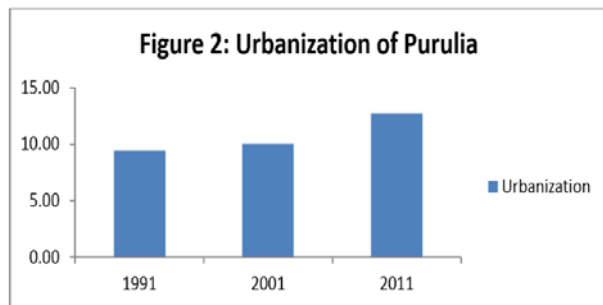
Overall literacy rate has increased form 40.32 in 1991 to 55.57 in 2001 a 38 per cent increase and further to 64.48 in 2011 a further 16 percent increase. This is satisfactory but it becomes more satisfactory if we look at the increase in male and female literacy rates over the years. It is given in the Table 2 below. During 1991 -2001 female literacy has achieved a growth by 86.49 per cent while male literacy by 23 percent and during 2001 -2011 the district has achieved 38.4 percent growth in female literacy while male literacy by 5.62 per cent.

Table 2: Growth of literacy rates at Purulia from 1991 to 2011

Category	Difference (2001-1991)	Growth	Difference (2011-2001)	Growth
Total Literacy	15.24	37.80	8.92	16.04
Male Literacy	13.74	22.90	4.14	5.62
Female Literacy	16.93	86.49	14.02	38.40

Source: Authors own calculation.

With development level of urbanization increases and Purulia has become more urbanized as well. In 1991, 210006 (9.44 %) people of Purulia lived in urban areas while in 2001 the figure has increased to 255426 (10.07 %) people and further in 2011 it has become 373314 (12.74 %). The pace of urbanization has been accelerated also.



Population density is an important indicator of studying opportunities of life at a place. Population density has increased in Purulia from 355 per square kilometer in 1991 to 405 per square kilometer in 2001 and further 468 per

square kilometer in 2011. We can put some light to the question that whether Purulia is becoming more attractive place of living or opportunities of life are shrinking in the area with rise in population? Is it the pull factor of the land that is gradually increasing or people are pushed to live a life out of no choice?

1.4. Changing Employment Opportunities of Purulia

Now look at the working population of this place at 2011 and its trend from last two census decades. Table 3 presents data on work opportunities of the district in 2011 and its changes over last two census decades. Less than fifty percent of the people of Purulia are worker and out of the working population 64.12 per cent are male and only 35.88 per cent are female. In 1991, 55.30 per cent people were workers, it has declined to 52.99 per cent in 2001 and finally came down to 49.59 per cent in 2011. We can safely say that work opportunities are not increasing in the district.

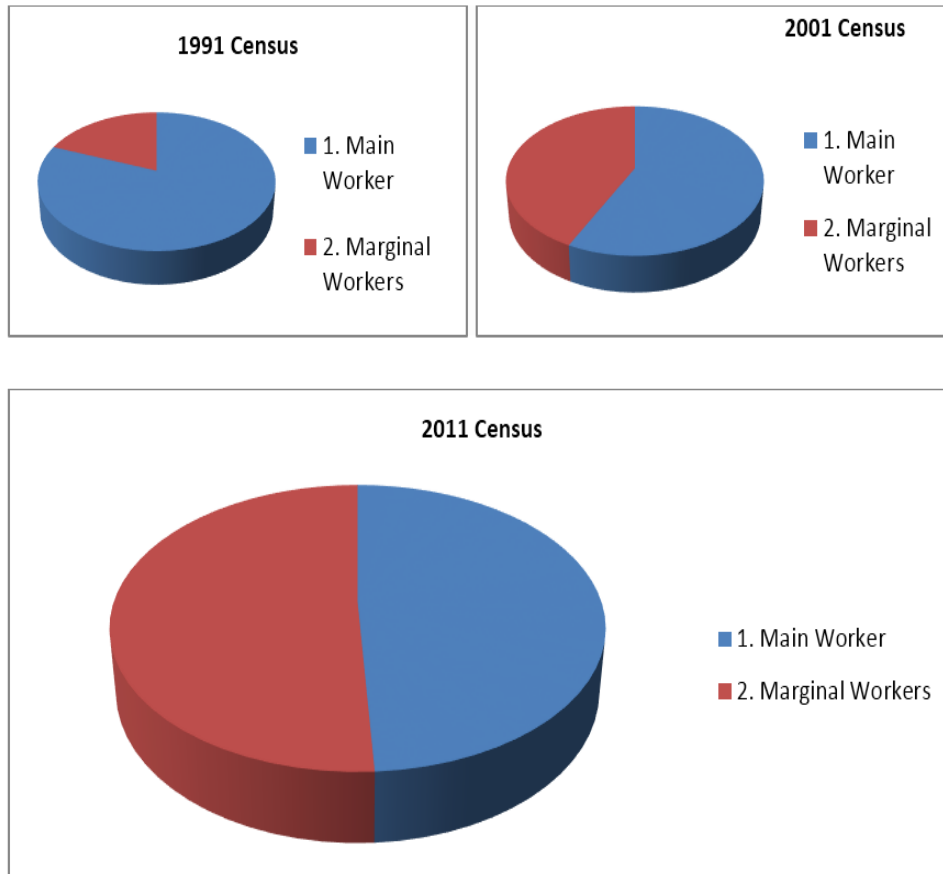
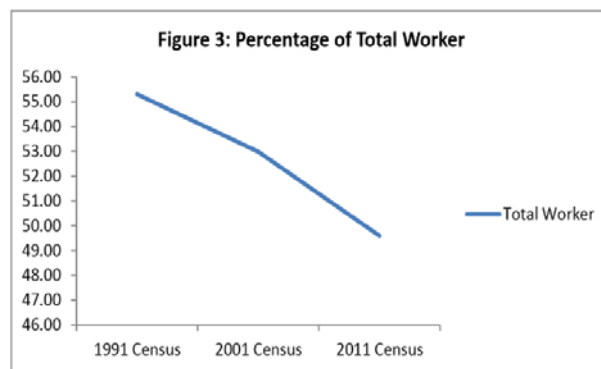


Fig 4: Distribution of Main & Marginal Workers 1991-2011

Table 3: Working Population and its distribution at Purulia from 1991 to 2011

Category	1991 Census	%	2001 Census	%	2011 Census	%
Total Population	2014571		2536516		2930115	
Male	1032172		1298078		1496996	
Female	982399		1238438		1433119	
Total Worker	903314	55.30	1127488	52.99	1249642	49.59
Male	535519	59.28	679022	60.22	801254	64.12
Female	367795	40.72	448466	39.78	448388	35.88
1. Main Worker	731829	81.02	645507	57.25	613398	49.09
Male	514959	70.37	497262	77.03	493232	80.41
Female	216870	29.63	148244	22.97	120166	19.59
A. Cultivators	386949	52.87	243043	37.65	166814	27.20
Male	277759	71.78	187855	77.29	145180	87.03
Female	109190	28.22	55158	22.69	21634	12.97
B. Agri. Labours	197830	27.03	121357	18.80	128475	20.94
Male	112171	56.70	76728	63.23	88883	48.71
Female	85659	43.30	44629	36.77	39592	51.29
2. Marginal Workers	171485	18.98	481982	42.75	636244	50.91
Male	20560	11.99	181760	37.71	308022	48.41
Female	150925	88.01	300222	62.29	328222	51.59
3. Non Workers	1111257	55.16	1409028	55.55	1680473	57.35
Male	496653	44.69	619056	43.93	695742	41.40
Female	614604	55.31	789972	56.07	984731	58.60

Sources: Register General of Census Operations, Govt. of India 1991, 2001, 2011

Two more important things are notable here one, from 1991 to 2011 percentage of male workers is increasing from 59.28 per cent in 1991 to 60.22 in 2001 and finally to 64.12 in 2011 and two, percentage of female worker is decreasing during the same period from 40.72 in 1991 to 39.78 in 2001 and finally to 35.88 in 2011. So it is seen from the census data that percentage of working population of Purulia is declining over the census decades and at the same time the working population is becoming male centric. Total workers are subdivided further into two broad subgroups namely Main Workers and Marginal workers. From the Table 3 it is clear that percentage of main workers are declining and that of marginal workers are increasing over the years. Percentage of Male Main Workers are increasing from 70.37 per cent in 1991 to 77.03 per cent in 2001 and finally to 80.41 per cent in 2011 but percentage of female Main Workers are decreasing consistently from 29.63 per cent in 1991 to 22.97 per cent in 2001 and finally to 19.59 per cent in 2011. It implies that female main workforce participation rate is declining over time at Purulia. But percentage of marginal workers are increasing in general but more prominently for female workers. In 1991, 19 per cent of total workers were marginal workers amounting 171485 people. It increased to 481982 people (42.75 %) in 2001 and further to 636244 people (50.91 %) in 2011. So we find a declining trend of Main workers over the census decades and increasing trend of Marginal workers during the same census decades. In case of main workers percentage of male main workers are increasing and that of female main workers are declining sharply and in case of marginal workers also the same trend follows. So in Purulia nature of work opportunities are changing also and they are becoming more and more of temporary/ casual type than the regular ones. It increases the vulnerability of the workers and instability in life of the people in general and marginal workers in particular. Cultivation and agricultural labour are two main components of main workers as together they explain nearly 75 percent of the main work force in 1991 but in successive decades importance of cultivation has consistently declined as in 1991 52.87 per cent of main workers were cultivators but in

2011 only 27.20 per cent of main workers are cultivators. In 1991, 27 percent of main workers were agricultural labourers amounting 197830 people but in 2001 it declined to 18.80 per cent amounting 121357 people a fall in absolute as well as in percentage figures. In 2011 20.94 per cent of main workers are working as agricultural labourers amounting 128475 people. From the data it is also clear that male main workers are taking care of cultivation whereas females are working as agricultural labourers.

2. Conclusions

Even after seventy years of independence issues of regional development are not properly addressed as it is depicted by the census data. Development programmes implemented at Purulia have yielded mixed results. In case of spread of education in general and female education in particular results are encouraging but empowerments are not transferred into employability. Vulnerability of workers are increasing as casual works are replacing permanent works. Globalization has some inevitable ill effects which are felt at Purulia clearly in last two decades. Women workers are the most sufferers. Only spread of education will not help us much unless we think early and in right direction to combat the situation. Increasing frustrations will likely to cause further problems for all of us.

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