

Rural Employment Change in a Village in West Bengal, India : A Study of Radhaballavpur Village, Medinipur District between 1967 – 1992

Hidenori OKAHASHI*

インド西ベンガル州 1 農村における就業構造の変化
—1967-1992年におけるミドナプール県ラダバラブプール村の事例—

岡 橋 秀 典*

CONTENTS

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| I. Introduction | IV. Employment structure in 1992 |
| II. Location and general characteristics | V. Conclusion |
| III. Employment structure in 1967 | |

I. Introduction

1. Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to examine the present employment structure and its changes over 25 years (1967-1992) in the village of Radhaballavpur in West Bengal, India. The data was largely obtained from the field surveys conducted by the geographical research team at Hiroshima University in 1967 and 1992.

A large number of studies have been conducted concerning rural problems in India. They have attributed India's poverty to the rapid increase of population, the extremely small size of farm holdings and the existence of profuse unemployment and lack of full-time occupation. What seems to be lacking, however, is the consideration of the role of non-agricultural employment which composes an important element in the economic

* Faculty of Letters, Hiroshima University ; 広島大学文学部

life of rural inhabitants. Nowadays, rural problem in the developing countries cannot be revealed without examining the condition of the labor market.

With regard to this respect, two important features of West Bengal which have been exposed since the last survey in 1967, need to be considered. Firstly, there is the declining trend of West Bengal economy. West Bengal was the leading industrial state in the country just after independence. In the year 1950-1951, the industrial production of West Bengal accounted for 25% of the country's total industry. But, it came down to 23% in 1960-61, 11% in 1976-77. Since 1960's, the state has experienced serious decrease in industrial development. The main causes of the declining trend include; the partition of Bengal, discrimination by the central government, the "Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act", harmful trade unionism and the passive role of the state government(Basu,1989).

The other feature of the state is the rule of the Left Front government which was formed by CPI(M) and its allies between 1967-1969 and from 1977 to the present. Government achievement such as the land reform programme, the expansion of irrigation facilities and the establishment of *Panchayat Raj* has influenced on rural areas including our sample village. As a result, these improvements have helped to narrow the gap between the urban and rural areas(Banerjee, 1989).

2. Method

Field research was conducted in September and October, 1992. The main emphasis of the research work was placed on the intensive resurvey on two villages, Radhaballavpur and Tentleberia, which were under observation in 1967. A census survey was taken through interviews with informants, employing a questionnaire covering most domains of family life. The data obtained was entered onto a personal computer and combined carefully with the survey data of the 1967 research. By examining the procedure of creating the original database, it was possible to analyse the employment structure on the basis of individual data and to chart the changes between 1967 and 1992.

The outline of this paper is as follows: chapter II describes the location and the general characteristics of the sample village; chapter III examines the employment structure in 1967. Chapter IV attempts to analyze the recent employment structure

and explain the causes of employment changes over these 25 years; and finally, chapter V makes concluding remarks.

II. Location and general characteristics

Radhaballavpur village is located on the low and flat alluvial plain less than 3m above the mean sea level which extends over the western edge of the Gangatic delta. The landscape of this region is quite typical as far as its physical aspects. Settlements covered by dense trees, which are scattered over the large area of paddy fields, look just like islands in the sea. Those settlements comprise a large population which forms the high population density (1210 per km² in Tamulok Police Station).

Tamulok Police Station(P.S.) is characterized by a high density of markets and a high frequency of market days. This is attributable not only to the high population density, but also to the high degree of commercialization in the rural economy(Ishihara, 1989). For example, there is a large number of cottage industries represented by handloom-ing(Miyamachi, 1989) and the increasing production of cash crops such as betel leaf.

Calcutta, the former capital of India and the present capital of the state of West Bengal is approximately 80 km away from this village. Calcutta's metropolitan area possessed an approximate population of 11 million in 1991 and is one of India's most important industrial centers. The sample village is 2-3 hours from Calcutta by train and bus. Village life has been strongly affected by Calcutta, especially regarding employment although commuting daily is still not easy. Accordingly, a large number of villagers have migrated to Calcutta seeking job.

Radhaballavpur is also influenced by the town of Tamulok, a political and commercial center of Tamulok P.S.(Fig. 1) The village is so adjacent to Tamulok town and thus it is very easy to get there by foot and by bicycle. Daily life in the village is closely connected to the town as far as employment, shopping, education and etc. In addition, we cannot overlook the importance of Haldia and Mecheda in expanding the local labor market.

Haldia was developed as a auxiliary to Calcutta port and opened at the end of 1970s. Now the Haldia Petro-Chemical Complex, the biggest joint sector project in the state is in operation. In Mecheda, the Kolaghat Thermal Power Plant has been constructed by the State Electricity Board. In 1986, the plant had two units and the

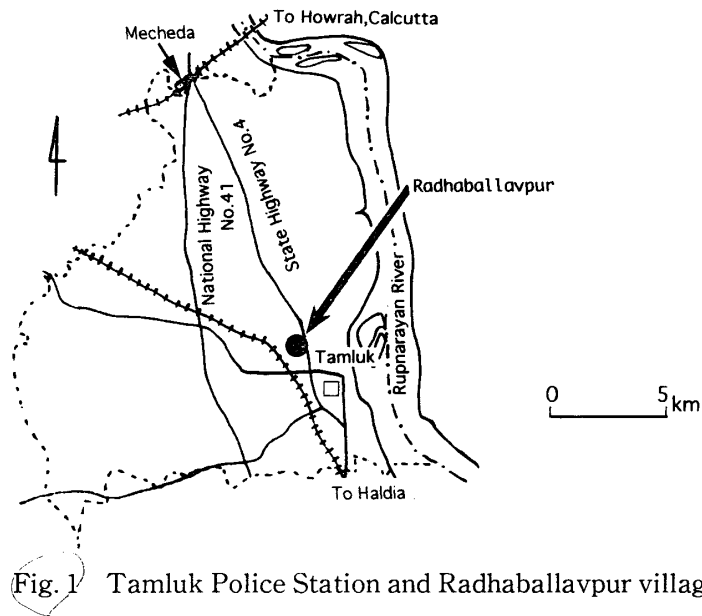


Fig. 1 Tamluk Police Station and Radhaballavpur village

Table 1 Population change in Radhaballavpur

Year	Population	Annual increase rate	Source
1967	963		(Yonekura, 1973)
1971	1032	1.79% (1967-71)	(Census of India)
1981	1180	1.43% (1971-81)	(Census of India)
1992	1247	0.52% (1981-92)	(Our Survey in 1992)

total installed power was 420 MW. Thus, in the surrounding areas of the village, big projects have been realized in the last two decades in spite of general trend of decline in the state economy. The local labor market in this area has experienced gradual expansion.

The village population rose from 963 inhabitants in 1967 to 1247 inhabitants in 1992. The total difference between 1967 and 1992 was 284, an increase of 29.5%, or 1.18% per year. As Table 1 demonstrates, however, the rate of increase retards radically, especially over these ten years. Census figures from 1971 to 1981 show an increase of 1.79% per year, while the annual rate of increase from 1981 to 1992 is only 0.52%. The recent increase is very low compared with that of the Medinipur district (2.4% in 1981-1991) and the West Bengal (2.5% in the same period) in Fig. 2. The gender ratio is very low; in 1992 there were only 924 females to every 1,000 males. However such a low ratio is common in West Bengal and India.

A high level of education is one of the important features of this village. Our survey in 1967 already revealed the high literacy rate, 86% for males, 57% for females. Our survey in 1992 also confirmed the extremely higher level of literacy from 95% for males and 85% for females, which should be compared to the average literacy rate of the West Bengali state(67% for males, 47% for females) in the 1991 census(Table 2).

In 1992, the number of households in the village was 202(Table 3). The difference between 1967 and 1992 was 35, although the past 11 years have not contributed to the

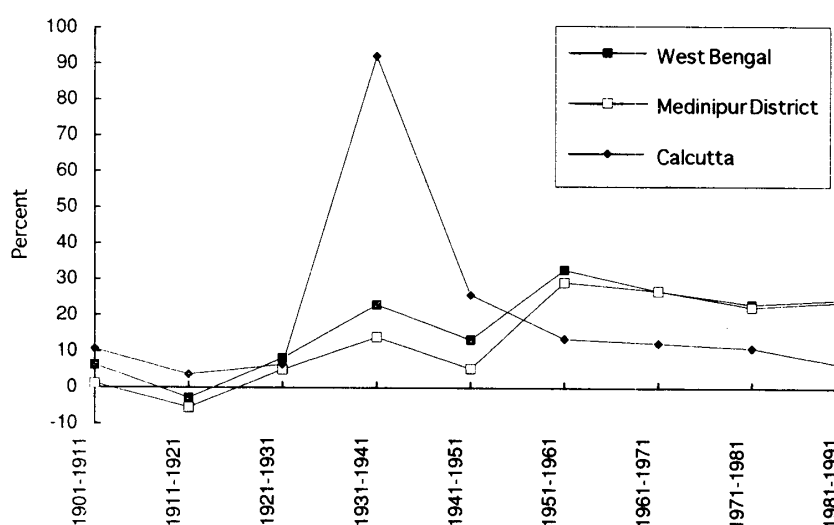


Fig. 2: Trends in population growth rate (percentage decadal variation)

Source: *Census of India*

Table 2 Literacy rates for 1961–1991 in West Bengal

Year	Persons	Males	Females
1961	29.28	40.08	19.98
1971	33.20	42.81	22.42
1981	48.64 (40.94)	59.93 (50.67)	36.07 (30.25)
1991	57.72	67.24	47.15

Note: 1. Literacy rates for 1961 and 1971 relate to population aged 5 and above. The rates for the year 1981 and 1991 relate to population 7 years and above. The literacy rates for population aged 5 and above in 1981 have been shown in bracket.

Note: 2. In 1991 Census all children below age 7 years have been treated as illiterates. In 1961, 1971 and 1981 censuses, all children below 5 years were treated as illiterates. The population of age group 7 and above in 1991 is not based on actual census count, but is based on estimated population and is, therefore, provisional. The final population aged 7 years and above will be available when the Primary Census Abstract is finalised at a later stage.

Source: *Demographic Diversity of India*

Table 3 Household number by *jati*

<i>Jati</i>	1967	1992
<i>Brahman</i>	4 (2.40 %)	4 (1.98 %)
<i>Dom</i>	1 (0.60 %)	3 (1.49 %)
<i>Kayastha</i>	56 (33.50 %)	51 (25.25 %)
<i>Mahishaw</i>	106 (63.50 %)	144 (71.29 %)
Total	167 (100.00 %)	202 (100.00 %)

Source: Field survey in 1967 and 1992

increase (an increase of 9 household from 1981 to 1992). The largest *jati* is the *Mahishaw* which is also the most dominant in this region and represents 70% of the total number of households and 73% of the total population. They have been mainly engaged in agriculture. The *Kayastha*, the second largest *jati* in this village accounts for 25% of the total number of households. This sub-caste which is found throughout Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal and has traditionally specialized in clerk work. Households belonging to other *jatis* are very few, 4 *Brahman* households and 3 *Dom* (Scheduled Caste) households. According to the report of 1967 survey, the social and economic dominance of the *Kayastha* was confirmed in landholdings and income which depends on remittance from emigrant workers (Yonekura, 1973). The important point to note is that the number of household in the *Mahishaw* showed a marked increase by 140% in this 25 years, while the *Kayastha* lost their number slightly in the same period. That seems to go to the very heart of the employment problem in this village.

The landholding size in this village is too small. Farming households possessing less than 2 *bigha* (approximately 1.04 acre) comprised approximately about 90% of the total, including approximately 40% of landless households. The distinguished landowner does not exist. Commercial agriculture has not progressed except for betel leaf growing which provides the main ingredient for Indians' favourite food, *pan*.

III. Employment structure in 1967

According to the survey in 1967, 241 persons (213 male and 28 female) in this village were recorded as employed¹⁾. Their main occupations are shown in Table 4 (male

workers) and Table 5(female workers). Approximately 50% of both male and female workers were engaged in self-employed agriculture and the rest 50% worked in the non-agricultural sector. It is surprising to note that a large number of non-agricultural workers existed in this village 25 years ago.

Table 4 shows the employment of males by main occupation. Their main occupations outside agriculture ranged from a number of categories, among them civil servant(officer and worker) occupying the leading position with 14.1%, and handloom weaver with 8.9%. In the employment of females(Table 5), such variety was not found and their occupations were limited to a few sectors like teaching, civil service(officer) and shopkeeper / boy / servant.

Attention must also be given to the marked difference in the employment structure between the two major *jati*, the *Kayastha* and *Mahishaw*. That is better represented by male employment than female one. There were very few *Kayastha* engaged in agriculture as a main occupation. The majority of this caste was employed doing clerk work for the government sector(21.2%) and businesses(23.1%). On the other hand, the overwhelming majority of the *Mahishaw*(61.5%) worked in agriculture,

Table 4 Main occupation by *jati* ; male in 1967

	<i>Kayastha</i>	(%)	<i>Mahishaw</i>	(%)	Other <i>jaties</i>	Total	(%)
Agriculture	3	5.8	96	61.5	2	101	47.4
Hand looming	2	3.8	17	10.9	0	19	8.9
Seller	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0
Craftsman, Small manufacturing	0	0.0	3	1.9	0	3	1.4
Labor (Agricultural or General)	0	0.0	5	3.2	0	5	2.3
Shopkeeper, Boy, Servant	1	1.9	1	0.6	0	2	0.9
Transportation (driver, rikishaw puller, others)	3	5.8	3	1.9	1	7	3.3
Manufacturing worker	6	11.5	2	1.3	0	8	3.8
Technical worker	1	1.9	1	0.6	0	2	0.9
Officer (company)	2	3.8	1	0.6	0	3	1.4
Civil servant (worker, policeman and others)	4	7.7	9	5.8	0	13	6.1
Civil servant(officer)	11	21.2	5	3.2	1	17	8.0
Teacher	5	9.6	4	2.6	0	9	4.2
Professional business	4	7.7	1	0.6	1	6	2.8
Factory owner, Shopowner, Trade business	8	15.4	6	3.8	0	14	6.6
Private tuitions	1	1.9	0	0.0	0	1	0.5
Others	1	1.9	2	1.3	0	3	1.4
total	52	100.0	156	100.0	5	213	100.0

Source: Field survey in 1967

Table 5 Main occupation by *jati* ; female in 1967

	<i>Kayastha</i>	<i>Mahishaw</i>	Other <i>jaties</i>	Total	(%)
Agriculture	0	16	0	16	57.1
Hand looming	0	0	0	0	0.0
Seller	0	0	0	0	0.0
Craftsman, Small manufacturing	0	0	0	0	0.0
Labor (Agricultural or General)	0	0	0	0	0.0
Shopkeeper, Boy, Servant	0	3	0	3	10.7
Transportation (driver, rikishaw puller, others)	0	0	0	0	0.0
Manufacturing worker	0	0	0	0	0.0
Technical worker	0	0	0	0	0.0
Officer (company)	1	0	0	1	3.6
Civil servant (worker, policeman and others)	0	0	0	0	0.0
Civil servant (officer)	2	0	0	2	7.1
Teacher	2	1	0	3	10.7
Professional business	0	0	1	1	3.6
Factory owner, Shopowner, Trade business	0	0	0	0	0.0
Private tuitions	0	0	0	0	0.0
Others	0	2	0	2	7.1
total	5	22	1	28	100.0

Source: Field survey in 1967

including some tenant farmers. Another occupation of the *Mahishaw* specialized in was textile manufacturing by handlooms which commonly played an important role in the farming household economy of Tamruk P.S.. According to the last report, 35 households were engaged in the weaving and 43 handlooms were in operation (Yonekura, 1973). Handloom on a self-employed basis had a definite place in the *Mahishaw* income.

As a result of such a difference between two *jati*, economic inequality was considerably noticeable in 1967. *Kayasthas* were able to enjoy a high standard of living by relying on the remittance from migrant workers engaged in better jobs.

The high dependency on non-agricultural employment in the sample village in 1967 can be explained, not only by the proximity of the labor market of Calcutta, but also by the inherited nature of the *Kayastha* as a clerk caste who dislike working on the land.

IV. Employment structure in 1992

In the 25 years following 1967, the importance of non-agricultural employment was enforced in Radhaballavpur.

Table 6 shows the employment structure by males. The percentage of agriculture-related workers dropped drastically to half of 1967 figure, accounting for only approximately 25%. The non-agricultural sector amounted to three-quarters of the total. Civil service and handloom which held an occupational majority in 1967 basically remained the same as their 1967 levels, though civil service was reduced by 3%. What is evident is a remarkable increase in manual labor, such as agricultural or general labor, craftsmen and vendors. The manual labor rate rose from 3.7% to 20%. Another interesting point is the slight increase in the rate of officers in a company and private tuitions which account for 5.3% and 2.6%, respectively.

Female employment shows more occupational diversification compared to the 1967 figures (Table 7). Handloom which shifted from a subsidiary occupation to a main occupation is the largest growing sector in these 25 years. Nonetheless, the total amount of the female working population remained very small. It is a little difficult to define the females' occupations, because most of them have housework as a main occupation in spite of supplementary work they do in their spare time.

The difference between the *Kayastha* and the *Mahishaw* with regard to the employ-

Table 6 Main occupation by *jati* ; male in 1992

	<i>Kayastha</i>	(%)	<i>Mahishaw</i>	(%)	Other <i>jaties</i>	Total	(%)
Agriculture	2	2.3	82	33.5	0	84	24.7
Hand loom	1	1.1	32	13.1	0	33	9.7
Seller	7	8.0	5	2.0	0	12	3.5
Craftsman, Small manufacturing	1	1.1	19	7.8	2	22	6.5
Labor (Agricultural or General)	2	2.3	32	13.1	0	34	10.0
Shopkeeper, Boy, Servant	1	1.1	7	2.9	0	8	2.4
Transportation (driver, rikishaw puller, others)	4	4.5	11	4.5	0	15	4.4
Manufacturing worker	5	5.7	14	5.7	0	19	5.6
Technical worker	2	2.3	5	2.0	0	7	2.1
Officer(company)	14	15.1	4	1.6	0	18	5.3
Civil servant (worker, policeman and others)	7	8.0	8	3.2	0	15	4.4
Civil servant(officer)	18	20.5	11	4.5	1	30	8.8
Teacher	3	3.4	5	2.0	0	8	2.4
Professional business	5	5.7	0	0.0	3	8	2.4
Factory owner, Shopowner, Trade business	10	11.4	6	2.5	0	16	4.7
Private tuitions	6	6.8	3	1.2	0	9	2.6
Others	0	0.0	1	0.4	1	2	0.6
Total	88	100.0	245	100.0	7	340	100.0

Source: Field survey in Sept. 1992

Table 7 Main occupation by *jati* ; female in 1992

	<i>Kayastha</i>	<i>Mahishaw</i>	Other <i>jaties</i>	Total	(%)
Agriculture	2	15	0	17	37.8
Hand looming	0	7	0	7	15.6
Seller	0	0	0	0	0.0
Craftsman, Small manufacturing	0	1	0	1	2.2
Labor (Agricultural or General)	0	2	0	2	4.4
Shopkeeper, Boy, Servant	1	5	0	6	13.3
Transportation (driver, rikishaw puller, others)	0	0	0	0	0.0
Manufacturing worker	0	1	0	1	2.2
Technical worker	1	0	0	1	2.2
Officer (company)	1	0	0	1	2.2
Civil servant (worker, policeman and others)	0	0	1	1	2.2
Civil servant (officer)	1	1	1	3	6.7
Teacher	2	0	0	2	4.4
Professional business	0	0	0	0	0.0
Factory owner, Shopowner, Trade business	0	1	0	1	2.2
Private tuitions	0	2	0	2	4.4
Others	0	0	0	0	0.0
Total	8	35	2	45	100.0

Source: Field survey in Sept. 1992

ment structure continues to exist up to today, though it is not as clear as in 1967. According to Table 6 which shows male figures, the *Kayastha* have very few people engaged in agriculture and handloomng. As before, civil service and business which are their given occupations maintain a central position. The portion of their total amounted to approximately 50%. However, it should be mentioned that a new feature is also appearing in the employment structure, that is, the increase of officers in a company, vendors and private tuitions in both the occupancy rate and the total number. This means that the difficulty of getting a job in the government sector forces the *Kayastha* to seek jobs in private companies and sometimes to wait for a good jobs as vendors and private teachers. On the other hand, the *Mahishaw* have shown a decrease in the working population in the agricultural sector, even though the largest number of them is still working in agriculture. The manual labor sector has seen recent growth like, for example, agricultural or general labors, craftsmen/small manufacturers, transportation-related jobs and factory workers. *Mahishaw* employment is presently characterized by an intrinsic relationship to the manual labor market which has expanded in this region, though the increase of civil servant (officer) with the rise in the

educational level should not be neglected.

Table 8 shows the connection between main occupations and secondary occupations for every employed *Mahishaw* male. Multi-jobholders are quite common, accounting for 38% of the total. The most conspicuous among them is the combination with agriculture as a subsidiary occupation (59.1%). This is related to the fact that their *jati* is specialized in agriculture. In addition, it should be noted that handloom- ing plays an important role in increasing multi job holding. However, the *Kayastha* have very few people employed who also have a secondary occupation (only 3%). This is largely due to the absence of a combination with farming.

These characteristics in the employment structure are reflected by the working location shown in Fig. 3. Fundamentally, there is a clear tendency for a decrease in the number of workers with the increase of distance from the village. The largest number of workers are employed in Radhaballavpur, amounting to 200 persons, more than 50% of the total. These workers are mostly self-employed in agriculture and handloom- ing. Accordingly, the *Mahishaw* constituted 90%. Rather important job location place

Table 8 Main and subsidiary occupation in *Mahishaw* 1992

Main occupation	Subsidiary occupation							Total
	No sub- occupation	Agriculture	Hand loom- ing	Craftsman,...	Labor	Shopkeeper,...	Factory owner,...	
Agriculture	50		21	4	5	1	1	82
Hand loom- ing	17	14					1	32
Seller	2	3						5
Craftsman, Small manufacturing	11	8						19
Labor (Agricultural or General)	22	7	2			1		32
Shopkeeper, Boy, Servant	5	1		1				7
Transportation (driver, rikishaw puller, others)	9	2						11
Manufacturing worker	11	2			1			14
Technical worker	3	2						5
Officer (company)	1	3						4
Civil servant (worker, policeman and others)	4	4						8
Civil servant (officer)	5	6						11
Teacher	2	3						5
Factory owner, Shopowner, Trade business	6	0						6
Private tuitions	3	0						3
Others	1	0						1
Total	152	55	23	5	6	2	2	245

Source: Field survey in Sept. 1992

ANREG 4, 1995

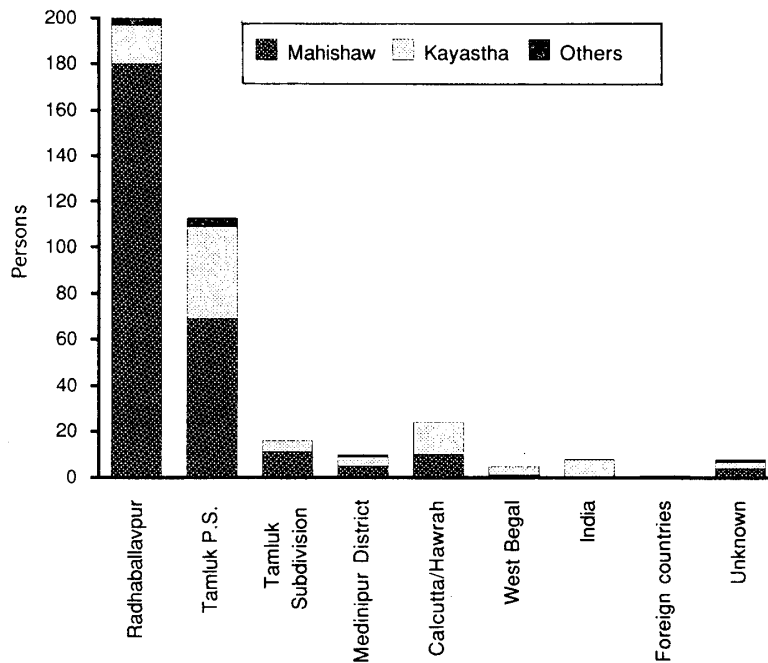


Fig. 3 Working place by *jati* : in 1992 : Main occupation

Source: Field survey in Sept. 1992.

not only for the *Mahisaw* but also for the *Kayastha*, is Tamluk P.S. which also includes the town of Tamluk. The local labor market in Tamluk P.S. supplies government employee and manual labor for the town of Tamluk and construction workers in Mecheda where the Kholaghat Thermal Power Plant Project is under construction. In Tamluk subdivision, Haldia, a large industrial area has developed around the port and contributes to provide the job of employee in the government and private companies.

Working in Calcutta and Hawrah is characterized by the prominence of white collar jobs. Of the total 24 persons, office work (civil servant, officer in a company and technical worker) accounts for more than 60%, in contrast to a very small number of unskilled manual laborers. On the basis of *jati*, it should be noted that the *Kayastha* community amounts to approximately 60% of the total. One of the key issues involved in having a job in Calcutta is transportation, because the distance between the village and Calcutta is a little far for a daily commuting. Recently, the situation was gradually improved and it has become possible to commute daily, partly due to the new construction of a traffic infrastructure like the opening of Panskura-Haldia Railway Line and an extension of National Highway No.41 to Haldia. Nonetheless, workers are still forced to accept a long time and hard journey. Thus, a variety of commuting

options are listed in Table 9. Daily commuters number is no more than 30%, while the frequency of returning home varies from 3 times per week to once per month.

There is one more key issue which is very difficult for the villagers, that is, the labor market problem of Calcutta which has not grown favorably and has provided only restricted employment opportunities because of the stagnation of the state economy. In addition to this, the state government has adopted the discriminative employment policies which treat lower castes well. The *Kayastha*, therefore, must branch out regionally for employment opportunities and also shift jobs into the private sector. Fig. 2 and Table 6 present clear evidences of this situation.

The expansion of the local labor market which is mainly composed of manual labor has rendered the diversification of the non-agricultural *Mahishaw*. On the contrary, the *Kayasthas* who possessed an extremely high educational level could not benefit share from the increase in the demand in the manual labor market. Therefore the lack of appropriate opportunities forced the *Kayasthas* to migrate looking for jobs in remoter places. It is estimated that this tendency has led to a slight decrease in the population and number of household for the *Kayastha* community, while the *Mahishaw* have expanded their numbers greatly.

All the factors mentioned above lead to an important deduction; the reduction of the difference in economic levels between the *Kayastha* and *Mahishaw*, although the former constitutes to maintain a higher position over the latter in general.

Finally, the increase of unemployment and lack of full-time occupations for the younger generation educated above the college level should not be overlooked. Table 10 serves to document this problem. Lack of occupations (9 males;12 females) and

Table 9 Commuting of the villagers employed in Calcutta and Hawrah, 1992

Living place	Frequency of coming home					Total
	1 time in a month	2 times in a month	1 time in a week	3 times in a week	Daily	
Calcutta	1	0	1	0	0	2
Radhaballavpur	3	2	4	1	5	15
Total	4	2	5	1	5	17
Total in percentage	23.5	11.8	29.4	5.9	29.4	100

Note: Out of 24 employed persons in total, the data was obtained for 17 persons.

Source: Field survey in Sept. 1992

Table 10 Employment situation in well-educated male, 1992

Age Class	Civil servant (Officer)	No occupation	Private tuitions	Teacher	Technical worker	Civil servant (others)	Craftsman, ...	Factory owner, ...	Manufacturing worker	Officer (company)	Professional business	Seller	Shop-keeper, ...	Total
20-29	2	3	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	11
30-39	2	4	2	1	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	16
40-49	7	0	0	2	1	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	15
50-59	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	7
60-69	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
70-79	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
80-	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	17	12	6	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	55

Note: Well-educated menas educational career above C2 level

Source: Field survey in Sept. 1992

private tuition (5 males;2 females) is quite common in well-educated persons at the ages between 20 and 30 years, while a stable employment condition is found in the generation of people more than 40's. Such an employment problem can grow in this village if the state economy is not improved.

V. Conclusion

Radhaballavpur, the village examined in this paper offers a good example of an Indian village which has attained a high literacy rate and high educational career.

In the 25 years following 1967, the importance of non-agricultural employment has been reinforced in this village. Such a change is related to the expansion of the local labor market. The *Mahishaw*, the largest *jati*, has been affected by the expansion of the manual labor market in this region and has drastically decreased their employment in agriculture. On the other hand, the *Kayastha*, the second largest *jati* with an extremely high educational level in general, has been confronted with the difficulty of finding jobs in the government sector. This has forced them to broaden their working area geographically and shift to jobs in the private sector in addition to confronting unemployment. Moreover, the state government policy which improved treatment of low castes has also reinforced this trend.

As a result, it appears that the difference in economic level between the *Kayastha* and the *Mahishaw* has been reduced over these 25 years, although the difference in the employment structure and the superior position of the *Kayastha* persists.

All these factors have led to a slight decrease in the *Kayastha* population and the number of their household in contrast to the *Mahishaw* which have experienced a steady expansion in their numbers.

The increase of unemployment and the lack of full-time jobs for younger, well-educated people is evolving into a serious problem. Their future employment situation depends on the condition of Calcutta's labor market which has not shown favorable growth recently.

Finally, it is important to indicate the impact of developing trend in agriculture facilitated by the recent introduction of irrigation and the declining trend in handloom. These factors will definitely affect the village's future economic situation, especially for *Mahishaw* farmers, although it was not possible to examine this point in this paper.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to express his gratitude to Prof. B. Banerjee and Prof. H. Betal (Calcutta Univ.) for their coordination and assistance for our survey.

Notes

1). The households which were not trackable in the 1992 survey are omitted from this consideration.

References

- Banerjee, B.(1989): The Main Study Area-Tamluk Police Station, Midnapore District, West Bengal.
Ishihara, H. eds. (1989): *Markets and Marketing in West Bengal and Nepal (Market and Traders in South Asia No.3)*, Department of Geography Faculty of Letters Nagoya University, PP.1~12.
Basu, k.(1989): *West Bengal Economy-Past Present and Future*, Firma KIm, Calcutta, 316p.
Ishihara, H. eds. (1989): *Markets and Marketing in West Bengal and Nepal (Market and Traders in South Asia No.3)*, Department of Geography Faculty of Letters Nagoya University, Nagoya, 208p..
Miyamachi, Y. (1989): The Village Handloom Industry in Tamluk Sub-division West Bengal India. (in Japanese, with english abstract), *Annals of the Association of Economic Geographers*, 35-1, pp.1~22.
Yonekura, J(1973): *Recent Changes in Settlements in India*(in Japanese). Kokon shoin., Tokyo, 505p.