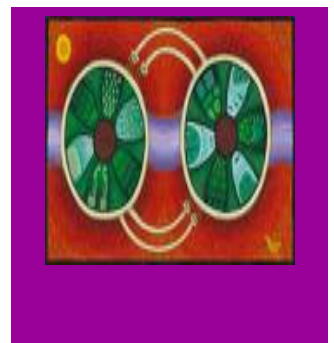
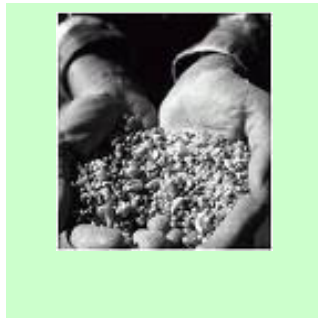


A MID - TERM STATUS REPORT
ON PROGRESS OF

**MILLENNIUM
DEVELOPMENT GOALS
OF WEST BENGAL**



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Executive Summary

The Millennium Development Goals(MDG) are the targets to be achieved within 2015 to reduce poverty and hunger, to attain quantified targets in the fields of health, education, gender, environment, public health and to increase awareness about HIV/AIDS. 07/07/07 is the half-way mark of MDG timeline and it is therefore the time to revisit the achievements attained so far. The aim of this report thus is to evaluate the progress regarding realisation of MDGs in West Bengal. The present report is part of a national initiative by Wada Na Todo Abhiyan to publish a national report to which the state reports will contribute.

A critical evaluation of different indicators of MDGS in West Bengal reveals a state of uneven development, which is a feature of underdevelopment, throughout the state. In West Bengal most of the districts in the North and Central Bengal show results far below the state averages in poverty, income, health, education and gender. A big point of concern is unavailability of MDG specific data for West Bengal due to which justice could not be done to all MDG indicators while doing the performance evaluation of the same in the state. The data provided by the state government to assess human development in most cases do not follow MDG indicators. MDG has eight Goals, eighteen targets and forty eight indicators. Goal 8 (Develop a Global Partnership for Development) has seven targets and sixteen indicators which has not been discussed in the present report. Some other indicators under different goals could not be assessed adequately due to lack of data.

The most important feature that has come out of the report (based on NSS 61st Round 2004-2005) is the prevalence of hunger in West Bengal. West Bengal has 10.6 percent households (the highest among Indian states) not having enough food everyday for some months of the year followed by Orissa(4.6%). West Bengal(1.3%) also holds the third place after Assam(3.6%) and Orissa in respect to percentage of rural households not getting enough food everyday in all months of the year. In the rural areas, as an economic class the agricultural labourers are the worst sufferers from the viewpoint of seasonal inadequacy of food. Among the social groups in rural areas, the worst hit are the ST households (3.7%) followed by the SC households (3.3%).

Apart from regional imbalanced growth, disparity among the economic classes has been aggravated and this has been the feature of the districts where the numbers of BPL families, SC, ST and minority population are higher. This is also associated with lower health, education and income indices of the said districts.

The state government has made some significant progress in gender development in the state and also initiated gender budgeting to spot the areas where further development is required most. In case of some gender related indicators the state figures are higher than national figures registering better progress. However, the report has revealed that much need to be done to improve gender balance in the state in near future

In respect to education the state has achieved some progress but its performance lags far behind other best performing states. In Education Development Index the state rank is below thirty among all the states.

The achievement of Millennium Development Goals is also a simultaneous process of progressive realization of human rights. From a cursory look at the performance of the

government it becomes apparent that the state government has not been able to perform well to ensure the right to health, right to education, right to livelihood and life with dignity of the people in the state.

In recent drive for industrialization, the state government has also violated certain fundamental constitutional rights of the citizens and provisions of the Directive Principles of the State Policy. The state government has breached its obligations under Right to food as enshrined in International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well. The report recognises the fact that the state government has failed to ensure inclusive democracy at grassroots and often bypass Panchayet structure in order to impose decisions from above. This is a violation of the 73rd Amendment of the Indian Constitution.

The report has further emphasised on the role of the state as a duty bearer and on the accountability of the state to its people. The status report recommends that state policies should emphasise on implementation of genuine agrarian reform in the state as this is the only way to ensure all round development of all stakeholders. The policies related to facilitation of MDGs should be consulted at grassroots and decision making process should be inclusive to ensure peoples aspiration and priorities are reflected in policies and programme rather than neo-liberal agendas of a few powerful global actors.

As progressive realisation is the key in realizing MDG Goals, the state government should strive hard to set specific targets with intent to realize Millennium Development Goals within the target period of 2015.

Chapter I

Introduction to MDGs

Background

To address the issues of abject poverty and hunger and to realize the human life with dignity and ensuring human rights to all sections of the people, political commitments were made by world leaders from the forum of United Nations in the form of Millennium Declarations in September 2000. The Declaration firmly pledged to free their fellow human beings from the “*Abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty*” and to ensure right to development for all. To realize these promises all the nations party to MDG agreed to fight together against poverty, hunger, gender inequality, environmental degradation and HIV/AIDS, while improving access to education, health care and clean water, all by 2015. These wide ranging commitments are encompassed in the eight goals popularly known as Millennium Development Goals.

The goals are quantified with a time frame and with particular focus on key aspects of development. At the same time the goals are aiming at establishing a partnership between the developed and developing countries for comprehensive and sustainable global development. These goals however, are not ends in themselves but benchmarks for progress towards eradicating human poverty and inequality.

“The Millennium Goals provide benchmarks for measuring the progressive realization of human rights. The Goals provide specificity to the concept of progressive realization.”

The MDG acknowledge the fact that the realization of human rights and/or MDG targets would largely depend on political will of the respective nation states. “*Therefore realization of MDGs will largely depend on the initiation of a political process based on political commitments made at the highest level through which legal rights can be claimed And at the same time the success would also depend on the participation of commons in this ‘political process’*”

There have been international efforts to mobilize resources for realization of MDGS for and within developing countries which can be used to implement the goals and to ensure progressive realization of human rights.”

Recognising the inherent structural inequality as a root cause for poverty and hunger MDG mentions:

“The human rights approach requires a thorough analysis of the reasons why rights are not realized. As such MDG focused development programmes must be based on an analysis of not only the immediate causes of poverty, but also the underlying and structural causes and of the non-realisation of rights.”

The fundamental rights as enshrined in the Indian Constitution and the Directive Principles of State Policy clearly emphasizes on the basic rights of the citizens and the principles of equity and socialism. But the realization of those rights and principles are of core importance. The existing legal system in the country has responded sometimes positively in favour of the common citizens but at times it was sluggish to deliver justice The Indian government has ratified all the major International Human Rights Covenants, the Millennium Development Goals, the Voluntary Guidelines for Progressive Realisation of Right to Food and upheld the resolutions of the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development. But the

translation of those rights, goals, guidelines and resolutions into reality needs political will on the part of the government.

Objectives of the MDG Status Report in West Bengal

The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – which range from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, all by the target date of 2015 – form a blueprint agreed to by all the world's countries and the world's leading development institutions. They have galvanized unprecedented efforts to meet the needs of the world's poorest. India is one of the countries that fall under the broad purview of MDGs. In this context the aim of this report is to judge the performance of an Indian state i.e. West Bengal with respect to the 8 goals and 48 indicators of MDGs.

This report aims to assess the progress in realization of MDGs in the state and the assessment has been largely based on the experiences of civil society and grassroots organizations coupled with information available from the state and national statistics. The report also takes into account the fact that some of the above mentioned problems in West Bengal are intimately related to the neo-liberal macroeconomic policies of successive Central governments since 1991, and to the fact that the State government having to function within a centralised quasi-federal Union. But the fact remains that all Indian states face more or less the same condition but have achieved different degree of success regarding progressive realization of MDGs. Therefore the focuses of the report will be on evaluating the recent trends with respect to realization of MDG in West Bengal, assessing the crosscutting issues e.g. gender, human rights, marginalized groups and disparity and putting forward some recommendations to catch up with the progressive realization of MDGS and human rights in the state. The resultant outcome of this assessment will help different organizations/institutions and individuals to develop the future strategies for strengthening the process of progressive realization of MDGs in west Bengal in the years to come.

The Methodology

As mentioned earlier the report is based on experiences of CSOs and secondary information available from various sources including that of state authorities. In course of this research the serious concern was lack of adequate secondary data on progress of MDG at state level. Due to this limitation, the state picture regarding some indicators cannot be portrayed. Another problem regarding the preparation of the report was time constraint. Within a short time the report has been prepared and which might have caused some inadequacies.

The first chapter in this report has dealt with the background of adoption of MDGs which is followed by an analysis of socio-political and economic scenario of West Bengal in the national context in chapter 2. This will help developing a comprehensive understanding of the status of MDG realization in the state. The analysis of major MDG indicators have been done in the 3rd Chapter and mostly the data have been provided in a fact sheet manner to present the trend and actual status at present. Intermittent trends have not been focused in most of the cases. The fourth chapter has dealt with cross cutting issues while the concluding chapter has tried to summarise the findings, concerns and hopes related to realisation of MDG in West Bengal from a civil society perspective.

The data regarding world, developed and developing regions were taken from UNMDG Report 2006, Statistical Annex. The national and state level data were taken

from Economic Survey 2004-2005 and 2006-2007 and sources mentioned here above. The other major sources of information were Human Development Cell, Department of Planning & Development, Govt. of West Bengal, WBHDR 2004

Civil society organizations like IMSE, Forum of Voluntary Organisations West Bengal, FIAN West Bengal etc. shared their valuable experiences with us regarding realization of MDGs at grassroots. .

A limitation of the report is inadequate discussion on alternative development paradigm as perceived by the majority of civil society actors, while criticizing the existing development models and methods of documenting human development. It is being felt that experiences of CBOs and CSOs should have been better integrated in this report as cases.

The other limitation of the report is that due to limited time and due to lack of information, it has not been possible to present coherent tables for all MDG indicators. The emphasis has been given on trend analysis and performance monitoring based on experiences shared by different CSOs which have not always been corroborated with statistical information at state level. Finally due to the limited scope of the report no attempt has been made to make a comparative study on status of MDG realization in west Bengal with other Indian states, which could be don separately in another research.

Chapter II

Policy and Political context of the State

Socio-economic environment of West Bengal

The Human Development Index for West Bengal is 0.61 and Gender Development Index is 0.549. The figures more or less tally with the national level figures.

The West Bengal Human Development Report 2004(WBHDR 04) points out to many deficiencies in achieving the targeted level of human development. Drawing conclusions of the report in “*The Way Forward*”, WBHDR 04 states, that equal progress was not registered on all human development indicators and some very crucial human development indicators registered poor progress.

According to the report the main constraining factor was ‘The lack of adequate productive employment opportunities’ Moreover the report expressed concern over the gender discrimination in access to employment opportunities, education in the state. The progress on key indicators like literacy and education remained slow and the state failed to achieve universal primary education Inequalities based on gender, ethnicity, caste class and regional dimensions were alarming. The report further stated that nutrition and health outcome indicators indicated a greater degree of equity across income groups than other states but there were severe lacunae in public delivery systems for both preventive and curative health. At the same time WBHDR 2004 pointed out that *Environmental forces that affect human development* conditions are of growing concern. Regional imbalances within the state continued to be significant.”

After WBHDR 04, many new sets of data are available. Some of these are “61st Round of NSSO” conducted in 2004-2005, DISE 2005-2006 Flash Statistics, National Family Health Survey-3, Report of the Gender Budgeting Study for West Bengal 2006 and West Bengal Human Development Profiles 2007. Based on these data the present report aimed to analyse the socio-political and economic environment of the state to find out how far this environment is conducive for realization of MDG and other human rights.

Table 1 MDG Target and Achievements in India & West Bengal

Year	Indicators	MDG Target		MDG Achievement	
		India	West Bengal	India	West Bengal
1999-2000	Proportion of population below poverty line	18.75	0	26.1	27.02
1999-2000	Undernourished people as percentage of total population	31.1	0	53	0
1998-2005	Proportion of undernourished children	27.4	27.5	47	44
2000-2001	Literacy rate of 15-24 yrs old	100	0	73.3	0
2000-2001	Ratio of girls to boys in primary education	1	0	0.78	0
2000-2001	Ratio of girls to boys in secondary education	1	0	0.63	0
1998-2002	Under five mortality rate per 1000 live birth	41	0	98	68
2002-2003	Infant mortality rate per 1000 live births	27	0	60	46
1998-1999	Maternal mortality rate per 1000000 live births	109	0	407	266
2003-2005	Population % (rural) access to sustainable and improved source of water	80.5	0	90	90.3
2000-2001	Population % (urban) access to sustainable and improved source of water	94	0	82.22	0
2000-2001	Population % with access to sanitation urban	72	0	63	0
2004-2005	Population % with access to sanitation rural	72	0	32.36	0

0 refers to data not available

Source: India Country Report 2005

The above table gives an overview in assessing the national as well the state perspective of the situations prevailing. It is also evident that data regarding MDG indicators are not readily available in the state and hence it is difficult to assess and explain the situation properly.

For the past 30 years Left Front Government rules West Bengal. The land reforms and decentralisation initiatives (started during late 1970s) have made possible human development achievements by empowering the poor and the socially disadvantaged, promoting greater equity, contributing to communal harmony and increasing the productive capabilities of agriculture and rural small industry and services.

However, the fact remains that 27 % of population in West Bengal (total population is 80176197 as per Census, 2001) live below poverty line. National Sample Survey data shows that 15% of the state's population can avail only less than 70% of required daily calorie intake (2700 Cal per day) and 64% of them gets less than the required amount (NSS Report No.471). Around 78% children are recorded as anaemic (malnourished) in West Bengal as per West Bengal Human Development Report 2004 (WBHDR).

News of starvation deaths and hunger often appear in the state level dailies which embarrasses the state government and motivates human rights organizations and social activists to intervene in the situation from a rights perspective. The provisional results for 61st Round of NSSO (2004-2005) are really alarming for West Bengal (refer to Table 2 in Chapter 3). According to this, West Bengal has the second largest population of hungry people in India.

In line with changing focus in economic policies and priorities at national level, the state government of West Bengal, despite having a left identity, has welcomed neo-liberal industrial policies and has taken drastic measures to promote rapid industrialization process at the cost of inclusive and comprehensive development of people at different levels in general and well being of the poor in particular.

West Bengal is a state where around 63% rural population and approximately 45% of total population depend primarily on agriculture. The sector is contributing 32 %ⁱ to State GDP.

A critical review of the so called success of land reform in the state reveals that out of the 10 lakhⁱⁱ acresⁱⁱⁱ of land acquired for distribution, only 2.5 lakh acres of land has actually been distributed during the entire 25-year period and out of 30 lakh bargadars, only 15 lakh got registered in the early days of Operation Barga (Liberation 2002 June). Still 41% households in rural Bengal remain landless (WBHDR 2004). Around 13.23% Pattadars^{iv} have lost possession of lands and around 14.37% Bargadars^v have been evicted (WBHDR 2004). And above all the gender aspect is highly neglected in the whole land reform policy and its implementation process. Only lately the state government has initiated a joint Patta/land title system to include peasant women in the process. However, so far only 9.7% women have received joint land titles (WBHDR 2004). The WBHDR 2004 has further blamed the state for its failure to provide support services to poor peasants and suggested *“Declines in institutional credits and agricultural extension services have adversely affected small peasants in rural West Bengal”* (WBHDR 2004). This situation has been further complicated with the rocketing unemployment in the state with an estimated unemployment of 24.9 % in rural and 17.% in urban areas (WBHDR 2004). The fate of small & cottage industries and public sector enterprises are grim with closure of approximately 66,000 sick industries in last 25 years in the state and thousands of small and cottage industries are in verge of collapse (WBHDR 2004).

The significant lacunae remain in the human development scenario of West Bengal. Thus, while progress has been registered in both health and education in terms of some basic indicators such as infant mortality rates and literacy rates, its record is not very impressive in comparison with some other Indian states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Maharashtra. Health and educational indicators show sizeable differences across gender, caste and region in West Bengal. The ethnic minorities, Dalits and women are lagging behind in literacy, access to health facilities, access to productive resources and so on. The income disparity in West Bengal has strikingly increased over the past few years and the above mentioned disadvantaged groups have suffered most. Another important issue of concern is the rapid increase in the number of HIV Affected persons. The no. of new HIV infected persons in West Bengal was 304 in 1996. In 1997 it was 371 and in the year 2006 the number has increased to 3610. In the last few years the epidemic has spread to the general people and it is no longer restricted to the most risk populations.

In the above backdrop when it is expected that to meet MDG targets the state government should give maximum efforts to eradicate inequality and to promote social justice, the recent state policies in agriculture, industry, health and other related sectors however, manifest a reverse trend. The state initiative to convert large-scale agricultural land to SEZ, ignoring pleas of peasants and evicting rural agrarian communities from their livelihoods, sacrificing the rights of vulnerable communities for the sake of FDI, discouraging poor's participation in local decision making process and ignoring/bypassing local democratic set-up that is Panchayat while taking decisions regarding model of grassroots development etc. have resulted into increase

in poverty and disempowerment of poor. This is also reversal of the gains of land reform measures adopted by the state government.

The MDG which was adopted in 2000 has reached its half way but it seems that little has been achieved so far towards the progressive realization of these goals in West Bengal. The fact that the GDP has increased considerably, does not ensure the comprehensive development because GDP is just one of the indicators of human development. The recent top down approach of development in the state has only benefited a few people who live in the upper echelons of the society and a section of the middle class. Poor people have been negatively affected by the recent policy shifts in favour of powerful groups while the common people's voices remain unheard.

Surely a great deal needs to be done urgently in this regard, if West Bengal is to achieve levels of human development consistent with MDG targets. The need of the hour is to review and revisit the state policies, which are related to MDGs. This will help us to understand how far the state has progressed in the realisation of the MDGs and what needs to be done further.

The Millennium Development Goals are seldom used in the state development perspective; it is worthy to mention here that ultimately the state government has felt the need to stress on the MDGs. In the Preface of "Human Development Profiles 2007, West Bengal" the Chairman, TCCISS says,

"Under a Project Cooperation Agreement with United Nations Development Programme(UNDP), the Human Development Research and Coordination Centre (HDRCC), West Bengal, has been set up in the Development & Planning Department of the state government with the primary objective of promoting activities having specific focus on human development in the state. This initiative is part of a broader initiative in Strengthening State Plans for Human Development (SSPHD) with joint collaboration with the UNDP and Government of India. There is also specific focus on strengthening the state statistical system as part of the project as enumerated in the Project Cooperation Agreement." (United Nations Millennium Campaign 2006)

He goes on saying,

" Since its creation, the HDRCC has been striving hard to build in human development concerns in the context of the Global Millennium development Goals. The Center is also engaged in animated dialogue with the academia in identifying the human development priorities for the State. With that aim in view, the Center has commissioned a number of studies on different aspects of development in the State with a specific thrust on human development."

It is a positive sign that the state government is acknowledging the MDG targets at last and we hope that the problem of lack of information on MDG targets & achievements at state level would be addressed properly by the state authorities soon. It is also expected that while trying to adopt policies and programmes for furtherance of MDG goals in West Bengal, the development perceptions of grassroots actors in particular and the CS actors in general should be properly acknowledged and incorporated at all levels from Panchayet to the state planning process.

In the background of above socio-political scenario let us now critically evaluate the progress/achievements of MDG goals target-wise in West Bengal and let us attempt to find out main obstacles and way outs for full realization of MDGs in West Bengal.

Chapter III

Assessment of MDGs in West Bengal Progress & Challenges

Goal 1. Eradicate extreme poverty & hunger

Target 1. Halve between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day.

Indicator 1. Proportion of population below 1\$ per day to be halved.

Table 2.

Year 2000	Population below \$1 per day	Population below \$2 per day
India	34.7	79.9
West Bengal	27.02	NA

Source: United Nations Statistics 2006

In 1999-2000 around 35% people in India used to earn less than 1 US\$ a day and official estimate of below poverty level population was 26.1% with an absolute number 260.3 million people. The recent estimates for the year 2006 showed a slight decrease in the absolute number of people below poverty line in India i.e 220 million. This shows the failure of reaching MDG target of halving the population below \$1 a day in the country. Despite this failure at national level a significant progress has been achieved in reduction of extreme poverty as percentage of population below \$1 per day reduced from 42.3% in 1993 to 34.7% in 2000.

Presently in West Bengal, more than 20 million people live below poverty level. The figure of 27.02% for West Bengal (2000) is the latest official estimate published by Government of West Bengal in Human Development Profiles 2007. West Bengal has thus failed to achieve much progress in eradicating hunger and poverty in the state as per MDG target.

Indicator 2. Poverty gap ratio to be halved.

(Note: we have not computed the poverty gap ratio and have mentioned the incidence of poverty estimates).

The tenth plan (2002 -2007) set a target at the reduction of an extreme poverty ratio by 5% points to 19.3% by 2007 and by 15 % points by 2012 in India. The target of rural and urban poverty in 2007 is 21.1% and 15.1% respectively.

The poverty ratio at national level for the year 2004 – 2005 as per NSS 61st provisional data was 27.8% for uniform recall period.

Unfortunately no information was available on West Bengal to find out the status related to poverty gap ratio in the state. Thus no comment could be made on this indicator. .

Indicator 3. Share of poorest quintile in National Consumption to be halved.

As per UN statistics and Social Watch report 2006, share of poorest quantity in National Consumption is 8.9 for 1999 – 2000.

No State level data is available in such a format. The nearly comparable data is available from NSS 61st round (2004-2005) which portrays the hunger perception both at the National and State level in urban, rural desegregations. The findings are alarming for West Bengal, Assam, Bihar, and Orissa.

Table 3

Households (in 1000) whose members did not have enough food everyday during the following months. **July 2004 – June 2005 India**

State/UT	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Estimated households
Rural													
Assam	37	37	37	37	37	44	49	51	46	41	38	36	44418
Bihar	9	10	8	8	8	12	23	26	18	12	9	9	126734
Orissa	13	13	13	17	23	24	37	37	32	28	19	13	67821
West Bengal	15	21	25	33	40	39	47	58	60	40	22	15	126886
Urban													
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Estimated
Assam	21	21	21	21	21	22	23	23	22	21	21	21	6061
Bihar	11	11	11	11	11	12	18	18	15	11	11	11	13775
Orissa	2	2	2	3	3	3	4	3	3	2	2	2	11486
Westbengal	7	6	6	6	6	8	11	10	7	6	6	7	48319

Source: NSS 61 st round (2004-2005)

Target 2. Halve between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

Indicator 4. Prevalence of underweight children under 5 years of age.

2005 – 2006 National Family Health Survey (NFHS) conducted by Ministry of Health & Family welfare, Govt. of India, reveals the percentage of children under age 3 who are underweight is 46% on National level. This is 1 percentage point decrease then NFHS -2 conducted in 1998-99 and 6 percentage points decrease if compared to NFHS – 1 conducted in 1992-93.

The West Bengal Fact Sheet for 2005-2006 NFHS -3 data reveals the percentage of underweight children under age 3 as 44% which is 5 % points and 11 % points lower than NFHS-2 and NFHS-1 figures consecutively, which is better than the national performance but clearly short of the MDG targets.

Indicator 5. Proportion of population below minimum level of Dietary energy consumption.

The UN MDG Report 2006 gives a reduction of 3 percentage points from 20 in 1990-96 to 17 in 2001-2003 for the developing world. However, not the percentage points but actual number of people undernourished is of concern in India.

The percentage of undernourished people declined from 21% in 1996 to 20% in 2002 in India. But the number of undernourished people has risen from 201.8 million to 212 million for the same period as per UN statistics. National Sample Survey data shows that 15% of the state's population can avail only less than 70% of required daily calorie intake (2700 Cal per day) and 64% of them gets less than the required amount (NSS Report No.471). Around 78% children are recorded as anaemic (malnourished) in West Bengal as per West Bengal Human Development Report 2004 (WBHDR).

Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education

Target 3: Ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

Indicator 6: Net Enrollment ratio in Primary Education

The UN MDG Report 2006 clearly points out that the world trend of Net Enrolment Ratio in primary education is progressing to a positive direction.

The UN Statistics also refers that India is also pushing ahead in a positive direction in Net Enrolment Ratio in Primary Education. However, we are experiencing a reverse trend in West Bengal at the same time. Table 3 is self-evident

Table4.

Net Enrolment Ratio and Enrolment in Primary Education (I – V)

	Net Enrolment Ratio in PE 4					Enrolment in PE5		
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
World	82.5				87.0			
Developing World	81.8				85.8			
India	81.5	81.4	81.2	85.8	89.7	110394128	118296540	124615546
West Bengal						9575246	9394836	9005975

DISE 2005-2006 Flash Statistics

Indicator 7: Proportion of Pupils starting Grade 1 who reach Grade 5

UN MDG Report 2006 does not use indicator 7. Rather, they use “Percentage of Students enrolled in the direct Grade of Primary School”. The world average for the above is 87.8% in 1999 with a decline to 86.1% in 2004. But, for developing Regions these is a rise of 4 percentage points from 80.4 to 84.4 in 1999 and 2004.

In the National level DISE 2005-2006 Flash Statistics provided these trends:

1. Apparent survival rate: Grade V
2. Transition rate from primary to upper primary level
3. Retention rate at primary level

Table 7 gives India's global position on adult and youth literacy rates.

Table 7 India's global position on adult and youth literacy rates 2001

Country	Adult literacy rate (in %, 16 yrs & above)		Youth literacy rate (in %, 15 to 24 yrs)	
	1990	2002	1990	2002
China	78.3	90.9	95.3	98.9
India	49.3	61.3	64.3	73.3
Nepal	30.4	44.0	46.6	62.7
Pakistan	35.5	41.5	47.4	53.9
Srilanka	88.7	92.1	95.1	97.0
Bangladesh	34.2	41.1	42.0	49.7

Source: UNDP, Human Development Reports

The Table clearly denotes progress in literacy rates in India in respect to China and even Sri Lanka. The objective of the National Literacy Mission is to impart functional literacy to non-literates in the 15-35 age groups. The goal of the mission is to achieve sustainable threshold literacy rate of 75 per cent by 2007. This target falls short of the MDG goals clearly and the status is not satisfactory.

Situation in West Bengal is satisfactory in relation to the national scenario with respect to the total literacy rate, but still lag behind the MDG target. State wise Literacy Rate figures for 1991 and 2001 for West Bengal are 57.70 and 68.84 per cent respectively. There is a steady rise and the figures correspond to NLM Targets of 2007.

Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empowering Women

Target 4. Eliminate Gender Disparity in Primary & Secondary Education preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

Indicator 9. Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education.

Table 8 Gender Parity Index (GPI) enrolment in Primary Level

Region	1999	2000	2004	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
World	0.92		0.94			
Developing World	0.91		0.94			
India	0.82	0.82	0.93	0.90	0.91	0.92
West Bengal				0.98	0.98	0.98

Sources: UNMDG Report 2006 & UN Statistics, DISE 2005-06, Flash Statistics.

Table 9 GPI Enrolment in Secondary Level

Region	1999	2000	2004	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
World	0.92		0.94			
Developing Region	0.88		0.92			
India	0.69	0.70	0.80	0.82	0.83	0.84
West Bengal				0.93	0.94	0.96

Source: , DISE 2005-06, Flash Statistics.

Table 10. GPI Enrolment in Tertiary Level

Region	1999	2000	2004
World	0.97		1.03
Developing Region	0.78		0.87
India		0.65	0.66

Source:, DISE 2005-06, Flash Statistics.

From the perspective of GPI enrolment, West Bengal fared better than the national level in primacy and secondary level .As a matter of fact West Bengal has maintained a constant ratio(0.98) in the Primary level, while in the Secondary level during the last three years it maintained a steady increasing trend.

Indicator 10: Ratio of literate women to men, 15-24 yrs. Old.

Table 11

Region	1990	2004
World	0.91	0.93
Developing Region	0.88	0.91
India	0.74	0.80
West Bengal	na	na

Source: DISE 2005-06, Flash Statistics.

The Indian situation in this field is that of the land locked developing countries whose average result in 2004 is 0.83. Data on West Bengal in this regard was not available.

Indicator 11: Share of Women in Wage Employment in the non-agricultural sector.

Table 12

Region	1990	1995	2000	2004
World	35.9	37.1	38.3	39.1
Developed Regions	43.4	44.8	45.6	46.4
India	12.7	14.4	16.6	17.3
West Bengal				11.6*

Source: West Bengal Human Development Profiles 2007

The share of Women in Wage Employment in the non-agricultural sector West Bengal is lagging far behind even when compared to the country average. In 2004 it was only 11.6 %.; while the national average recorded a value equal to 17.3%

Indicator 12: Proportion of Seats held by the Women in National Parliament

Table 13 Percentage of parliamentary seats occupied by women

Region	1990	1997	2006
World	12.4	11.4	16.6
Developed Regions	15.4	15.6	21.1
Developing Regions	10.4	10.1	15.3
India	5.0	7.2	8.3

Source: UN Statistics 2006

The Indian percentage is far below all the regions. This is a much-debated issue and the government is yet to place the women Reservation Bill in the Parliament for which they had vouched 30% reservation.

Goal 4. Reduce Child Mortality.

Target 5. Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under five-mortality rate.

Indicator 13: Under five-mortality rate

Table 14. Children under five-mortality rate per 1000 live births.

Region	1990	2004
World	95	79
Developing Regions	106	87
India	123	85
West Bengal	67.6 % or number	NA
Developed Regions	12	7

Source: NFHS 3 2005-2006

No data was available to understand the present status of Children under five-mortality rate per 1000 live births in West Bengal in recent years.

Indicator 14: Infant Mortality Rate

Table 15. Infant mortality rate per 1000 live births

Region	1990	2004
World	65	54
Developing Regions	72	59
India	84	62
West Bengal	75	48

Source: NFHS 3, 2005-06 and Economic Survey 2004-05)

The National figures for Infant Mortality are annoying. Infant death and low birth weight babies are both closely and inseparably linked to maternal nutrition and health. The goal in West Bengal is to bring down infant mortality rate from 46 per 1000 live births to 30 by 2010

Indicator 15: Proportion of 1 year old immunized against measles

Table 16

Region	1990	2004
World	73	76
Developing Regions	71	73
India	42.2	58.8
West Bengal	42.5	74.7

NFHS – 1 (1992-93) NFHS – 3 (2005-06)

Significant improvement has been observed in terms of indicator15 in West Bengal during the period of 1990-2004, as a matter of fact the proportion of 1 year old

immunized against measles increased substantially from 42.5 % to 74.7 %. which appears to be far above the country average as well as average of the Developing Region.

Goal 5. Improve maternal health

Target 6. Reduce by three quarters between 1990 and 2015 the maternal mortality ratio indicators.

Indicator 16: Maternal mortality ratio per 1000 live births

Table 17

Regions	1998	2000	2002-03
World		400	
Developing Regions		450	
India	407		301
West Bengal	266		194

Source: Women Commission, UNICEFF and Govt. of W.B. Report & Report of Gender Budgeting study in W.B. (Nov. 2006),

In case of Indicator -16 West Bengal has brought down the maternal mortality rate from 266 to 194 during the span of a five year period. If this rate is maintained it would not be unwise to predict that West Bengal may be able to maintain the targeted goal. In this connection it would worth mentioning that the relative position of West Bengal is far above the national average.

Indicator 17: Proportion of Births Attended by skilled Health Professionals

Table 18

Region	1990	1992-93 (NFHS -1)	1998-99 (NFHS 2)	2004	2005-06 (NFHS- 3)	Urban	Rural
World	47			58			
Developing Regions	43			56			
West Bengal		33.9	44.2		45.7	80.2	36.8
India		33.0	42.4		48.3	75.2	39.1

Source: Women Commission, UNICEFF and Govt. of W.B. Report & Report of Gender Budgeting study in W.B. (Nov. 2006),

With respect to Indicator-17, though West Bengal maintains a slow & steady improvement in overall terms. The urban rural disparity in the distribution of the service is alarming.

Goal 6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Target 7 HIV/AIDS

Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of

Indicator 18 *age*

HIV prevalence among pregnant women aged 15-24 years of

Indicator 19

Condom use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate

19a. Condom use at last high-risk sex

comprehensive

19b. Percentage of population aged 15-24 years with

correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS

19c. Contraception prevalence rate

Indicator 20

*Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of
Non-orphans aged 10-14 years*

As per MDG India Country Report 2005 – “The first AIDS case in India was detected in 1996 realising the gravity of situation of HIV infection prevailing in the country the Government of India

Launched a National AIDS Control Program in 1987. A comprehensive five-year project was launched in 1992. The total outlay for second phase of NACO (NACP-II) is Rs.2064.65 Crores.” The report also points,” As per data available the HIV prevalence has increased from 0.74 per cent per 100 pregnant women aged 15-24 years in 2002 to 0.86 per cent in 2003. The corresponding figures for age group 25-49 are 0.80 and 0.88 per hundred pregnant women. As per Baseline BSS Report 2001, only 6.6% of the population who have sex with non-regular partners used condom and 49.3% people between ages 15-49 years have comprehensive correct knowledge about HIV/AIDS.

The report further says, “The NACP-II project has five components as given below: -

- i. Priority targeted intervention for population at high risk
- ii. Preventive intervention for the general population.
- iii. Low cost care for people living with HIV/AIDS.
- iv. Institutional strengthening.
- v. Inter sectoral collaboration.

As per the West Bengal Human Development Report 2004, “The number of HIV infected patients was 204 in 1996 and the figure has increased to 1331 in 2002.” In West Bengal the situation is not that serious but “The most vulnerable are the males between 15-44 years of age.”

As per NFHS-3 conducted in 2005-2006, the percentage of women and men in West Bengal who have heard of AIDS are 73.5 and 50.2 respectively. Key indicators from NFHS-3 denotes,” Percentage of women who know that consistent condom use can reduce the chance of getting HIV/AIDS is 29.3% with an urban and rural desegregation of 52.5% and 20% respectively. The same for men is 56% with an urban rural break up of 79.5% and 46.1% respectively.”

Regarding indicator 20, we have received no relevant data.

Target 8 Have halved by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and Other major diseases

Indicator 21 Prevalence and death rate associated with malaria
Indicator 22 Proportion of people in malaria-risk areas using effective malaria prevention and treatment measures

India Country Report 2005 on MDG states, “ About 35% population in the country resides in malaria endemic areas and 80% of malaria reported in the country is confined to areas consisting 20% of population residing in tribal, hilly, difficult and inaccessible areas. Annual Parasite Incidence (Annual number of malaria positive cases per thousand population) in 1990 was 2.57. The corresponding total nos. of deaths and Death Rate (per 1000 population) was 353 and 0.05 respectively. Provisional figure for API in 2004 was 1.75. But the total nos. of deaths had risen to 943 and the corresponding Death Rate was 0.09. In 1994, out of 784 million people, more than 2 million positive cases were detected with Slide Positivity Rate (SPR) of 2.71 and with Slide Falciparum Rate (SFR) of 1.01. As per 2004 provisional figures, out of 1050 million people, 1.84 million positive cases had been reported with SPR of 1.91 and SFR of 0.92. The figures for 1990 and 2004 clearly denote a reduction but absolute numbers of Plasmodium Falciparum cases had risen from 752118 in 1990 to 881985 in 2004.”

As per WBHDR 2004, the reported cases of malaria per 100000 population for the last 12 months(2002) are 4254 and 2168 in rural and urban areas consecutively. The report opines that though incidence of malaria in West Bengal is much less than the national scenario, it is still high in numbers and much stress should be given for malaria prevention.

As per DDHS, West Bengal, SPR in West Bengal in 1990 was 1.7 and the same in 2004 was 5.7. The total number of deaths due to malaria has risen from 4 1990 to 186 in 2004.

Indicator 23 Prevalence and Death Rate associated with Tuberculosis
Indicator 24 Proportion of TB cases detected and cured under DOTS
(Internationally recommended TB control strategy)

Prior to 2004, for estimating TB incidence there was no large-scale nationwide survey. Estimates were based on small regional surveys undertaken. There had been no representative data available on Death Rate due to TB in the country.

As per ARTI (Annual Risk of TB Infection) survey, incidence of TB is estimated on the basis of numbers of New Smear Positive(NSR) cases per 100000 population, which are :

- 85 NSP TB cases per 100000 population per year (prior to 2000)
- 75 NSP TB cases per 100000 population per year (2002-2003)
- 75 NSP TB cases per 100000 population per year (2000-2005)

As per estimates done in India TB Program Review 1992, Death rate associated with TB is estimated as 57 deaths (all forms of TB) per thousand population per year(1990). Thereafter, the estimates published in the WHO Report on Global TB Control(since 1996) have been stated at 37(2002) and 33(2003) per 100000 population. DOTS (Directly Observed Treatment Short course) implementation

started as a pilot in India in 1993 and adopted in 1997. The proportion of TB patients successfully treated under DOTS has risen from 81% in 1996 to 86% in 2003.

WBHDR 2004 quotes NFHS-2 (1998-99) results to describe TB situation in West Bengal. According to NFHS-2, the number of TB incidence for the last twelve months in the urban and rural areas are 35% and 53% respectively per 100000 populations

Goal 7 Ensure environmental sustainability .

Target 8 Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies And programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources

<i>Indicator 25</i>	<u><i>Proportion of land area covered by forest</i></u>
<i>Indicator 26</i>	<u><i>Ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area</i></u>
<i>Indicator 27</i>	<u><i>Energy use (kg. Oil equivalent) per \$1 GDP (PPP)</i></u>
<i>Indicator 28</i>	<u><i>Carbon dioxide emissions per capita and consumption of ozone- depleting CFCs (ODP tons)</i></u>
<i>Indicator 29</i>	<u><i>Proportion of population using solid fuels</i></u>

As per 2003 assessment, the total land area covered under different forests in the country was 678333 Sq.km., which is about 20.64% of the total land area. The forest cover includes 4461 Sq.km. of mangroves, which is 0.14% of the countries geographic area. Out of the total forest cover, 51285 Sq. km. is very dense forest(1.56%), 339279Sq. km. is moderately dense forest(10.32%) while 287769 Sq. km. (8.76%) is open forest cover. The reserved and protected forests account for 19% of the total land area. The Tenth Five Year Plan, while emphasizing the need for balanced and sustainable economic development along with sustainability of the environment for healthy living, has also set the target for increased forest and tree cover to 25% by 2007 and 33% by 2012.

According to WBHDR 2004, total forest area in the state is 1.19 million hectares, which is approximately 14% of the total land area of the state Out of the total forest area, 8.4% is reserve forest and 4.5% is protected forest. Contradicting the WBHDR 2004 trend analyses of gradual enlargement of the forest area of the state, Human Development Profiles 2007, West Bengal registers a reduction in the forest area. 2004-05 figure for percentage of forest area is 13.52%.

Fuel wood is a major source of energy in domestic sector of West Bengal accounting for more than 40% of overall energy source in the state.

Target 10 Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to Safe drinking water and sanitation

Indicator 30 Proportion of population with sustainable access to improved water

In 2001, about 86.77% of the rural population (642 million of the total 740 million) had access to a safe source of drinking water, much higher than 55.54% in 1991. As per 2005 estimates, 90% of the population in India has total coverage regarding rural

water supply, about 3.5% are partially covered, less than 0.5% are yet to be covered and 6% habitations with problems of water quality are to be tackled.

The WBHDR 2004 gives an account of the status of district wise status and coverage of water supply to rural households. According to 2001 figures it is seen that 90.3% of the population is covered under the water supply system.

As per the latest Census (2001) data, only 36.4% of the total population in West Bengal has latrines within/attached to their houses. However, in rural areas, only 21.9% of the population has latrines within/attached to their houses. Total Sanitation Campaign has set the targets above the MDG targets and will strive to achieve 100% coverage by 2010.

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development

As the present report is meant for the state of West Bengal and also the national report will take up the issues in respect to Goal 8, we refrain from making a detailed assessment only to avoid replication.

Chapter IV

Assessment of Crosscutting Issues

Introduction

From Chapter 3, some crosscutting issues have emerged, some of which we want to deal with in this chapter. These are hunger and malnutrition, marginalized groups and disparity, gender scenario and deficiencies in education. We have already pointed out in the Introduction that achieving Millennium Development Goals simultaneously corroborate with realization of human rights. We feel that the misconceived notion of development paradigm of the state government has resulted in several count of violation of human rights in the state which in turn negatively affected realization of MDGs. Assessment of progress regarding MDGs in the state is therefore of utmost importance in relation to the realization of MDGs in general and the progressive realization of human rights in particular

Hunger and Malnutrition in the State

Table 2 of Chapter 3 reveals an alarming picture of rural poverty in West Bengal. The Highlights of the NSS 61st Round on Perceived Adequacy of Food Consumption of Indian Households (2004-2005) states, “*The percentage of rural households ‘not having enough food everyday in some months’ was the highest in West Bengal (10.6%) followed by Orissa (4.6%), and the lowest in the states of Haryana and Rajasthan*”. In rural areas, West Bengal(1.3%) is in the third position preceded by Assam (3.6%) and Orissa. The ‘Highlights’ further elaborates that, in rural West Bengal ‘*agricultural labour*’ households are most vulnerable to perceived seasonal inadequacy of food. The households ‘*self-employed in agriculture*’ showed the lowest percentage of seasonal inadequacy of food”. Similarly statistics reveal that access to food in rural West Bengal is adversely linked with the household income. Then access to food is being adversely affected in the lower economic stratum of the rural society which reaffirms the fact that poverty has a strong class dimension in the state.

Moreover, it is found that socially disadvantaged groups like ST & SC households are more vulnerable to inadequate access (not getting enough food everyday in some months of the year) to food than other. Thus the ST 3.7% ST households face extreme poverty and lack of food followed by 3.3% of SC households in rural areas. This reveals the caste dimension of poverty in West Bengal.

Furthermore abject poverty has a regional dimension within West Bengal. This means there exist pockets of hunger in the state due to uneven development of the districts and due to increasing gap in rural urban economy. Table 19 elaborates the fact that the districts of Jalpaiguri, Coochbehar, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur, Malda, Murshidabad, Birbhum, Bankura and Purulia are all deficient in the state average of health, education and income indices as per the latest findings of the West Bengal Human Development Profiles 2007.

The above facts nullify the tall claim of the state government of achieving food security as the food security situation can never be defined in terms of total production or buffer stocks. It is the pattern of distribution and access to food producing resources that determines the right to food of the people in the final analysis. It is evident from the statistics that despite growth in food production and upward trend in GDP a major portion of the state population suffer from hunger and malnutrition either chronically or seasonally. The data mentioned in Chapter 2 points out the fact that poor rural actors lack access to productive resources and women as well as socially disadvantaged groups i.e. SC & ST are yet to be effectively benefited from the much propagated land reform measures in the state. The present policies of the state government are contradicting principles of land reforms and thus violating RTF as agrarian reform is a precondition for progressive realization of RTF in a country/state. Moreover the closure of thousands of industries in West Bengal and alarming growth in unemployment figure has added to the misery of the commons. .

These astonishing findings are squarely hitting the present day slogan of the state government “agriculture is our basis & industry is our future” as the basis is weak enough to topple any attempt of large scale industrialization which in fact is aimed at earning FDI and not for real employment generation and economic growth of rural and urban poor.

Therefore as a CSO we strongly urge the state to refrain from adopting and implementing such policies which violate RTF and hinder progressive realization of MDG targets.

Marginalized Groups and Disparity

Uneven development is very characteristic of underdevelopment. It is manifested everywhere in the world and the same is true in India and West Bengal. Uneven development gives birth to pockets of severe poverty. Table 18 gives a picture of the underdeveloped districts in West Bengal whose Health, Education and Income indices are below the state average. The total magnitude of disparity in income, education, health get crucial dimension when regional imbalance in development is added to it. It will be evident from the table that all the underdeveloped districts are mainly inhabited by SC, ST and minority population and people with low and insecure income (agricultural labourers).. From the table it becomes clear that the northern and western districts of West Bengal suffer most from this imbalanced regional development. Hence, any development planning in the state must take into account of such disparities and must try to find out reasons behind these disparities so as to address the same in an effective way through policies and programmes.

Table 19 Growing Disparity and Uneven Development in West Bengal

Region (Human Develop. Index)	% of BPL Families	Health Index	Edu. Inde.	Income Index	% of ST population (2001)	% of SC population (2001)	% of Musli m popula tion (2001)	% of agricultura l labourers Male Female.
Jalpaiguri (0.53)	35.87	0.61	0.6	0.38	18.87	36.71	10.85	14.2 25.7
Kochbehar (0.52)	46.01	0.50	0.65	0.41	0.57	50.11	24.24	24.4 43.0
Uttar Dinajpur (0.51)	40.98	0.62	0.53	0.39	5.11	27.71	47.36	34.6 51.4
Dakshin Dinajpur (0.51)	43.54	0.62	0.53	0.39	16.12	28.78	24.02	30.2 50.2
Malda (0.44)	38.81	0.49	0.48	0.36	6.90	16.84	49.72	30.6 31.0
Murshida Bad (0.46)	43.31	0.57	0.52	0.29	1.29	12.00	63.67	33.8 9.2
Birbhum (0.47)	44.02	0.53	0.61	0.27	6.74	29.51	35.08	33.5 47.1
Bankura (0.52)	42.48	0.67	0.62	0.26	10.36	31.24	7.51	28 48.7
Purulia (0.45)	43.65	0.61	0.55	0.18	18.27	18.29	7.12	25.5 52.0
West Bengal (0.61)	36.38	0.70	0.69	0.43	5.50	23.02	25.25	22.7 32.2

Source : Human Development Profiles 2007, West Bengal

Human Rights and Development Model

The achievement of MDG is also associated with realization of human rights, as we have already discussed in the Introduction. From Chapter 3 it is quite clear that our state is lagging far behind the MDG targets in terms of most of the indicators, though the state has fared good results in respect of some indicators like infant mortality rate, maternal mortality rate and in these fields the state's performance is better than the country average. But in terms of poverty eradication, education, some indicators of health, the government performance is absolutely inadequate. What is all the more important is that the recent initiatives of the government for rapid industrialization in the state have started reversing the already acquired progress in the status of MDGs by further marginalising poor actors of the society. The mindless drive of the state government for rapid industrialization in the name of 'development' is has resulted in violations of several human and fundamental rights.

The main conflict is around the steps taken by the state to dis-empower rural poor by denying their access to fertile agricultural lands in many parts of the state. The case in Singur and Nandigram is burning examples of such violations of human rights. An International People's Tribunal was held in Kolkata to adjudicate the eviction of peasants, violations of human rights in Singur, Nandigram and other areas in West Bengal. In a landmark judgment, the nine member Tribunal Bench concluded,

'The acquisition proceedings whereby the government of West Bengal has acquired fertile lands in Singur, is in violation of the fundamental rights of peasants, farmers, labourers and other people depending directly or indirectly on agriculture, as a guarantee under Article 14, 19(1)(g) and 21 of the Constitution of India. The action is violating of Article 21 read with Article 39(a) and 47 as it infringes the Right to food and Food Security.

The forced acquisition and eviction of the peasants their cropping agricultural land which is the only source of livelihood by the West Bengal Government for a small car factory of the Tatas infringes the fundamental rights of the peasants under Article 21 of the Constitution of India and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights read with different Constitutional mandates contained in Part IV of the Constitution under Directive Principles of State Policy and the 73rd Amendment of the Indian Constitution.'

The state government argued that based on the already achieved development in agriculture, there should be a transition to rapid industrialization. However, neither the patterns of industrialization have been consulted with the people nor the impacts of such a rapid industrialization drive have been adequately assessed by the authorities. In short the people's priorities have not been taken into consideration in development planning by the state government resulting into large scale mass unrest in the state. The fact remains that despite marginal decline in the share of agriculture in GDP and total employment, it still is the single largest sector providing employment to majority of rural actors. Despite this fact no adequate initiative has been taken by the state to comply with its human rights obligation under right to food i.e. promotion of agrarian reform to rejuvenate the agrarian economy of the state. It is true that agriculture is facing a lot of problems but there is still space for developing agriculture. Not only higher productivity but decentralized planning, improvement in minor irrigation, full fledged reform of the rural canal system, 100% rural electrification, development of rural market nets, utilization of the wind power resources, predominant institutional credit in agriculture and fulfilling unfinished tasks of land reform are the areas where development is needed and the Election Manifesto of the Left Front indicates most of these issues and much more without quantifying the targets.

It is true that "The share of agriculture in total employment has come down from 61.67% in 1993-94 to 58.54% in 1999-2000 and further to 54.19% in 2004-05" (Economic Survey 2006-07). But at the same time, as per Economic Survey 2006-07, "Employment growth in the organized sector, public and private combined, declined during the nineties. Annual employment growth in establishments covered by Employment Market Information System of Ministry of Labour decelerated from 1.20 per cent in 1983-1994 to -0.38 per cent per annum during 1994-2004." It is also true and encouraging for the state government that the growth in the organized private sector alone increased from 0.44 per cent to 0.61 per cent in the same period. But by realistic measures it is evident that this meager growth will not be able to tackle the soaring unemployment in the state.

In view of the above, the West Bengal Government should seriously reconsider their policy of industrialization in the light of inclusive industrialization and human rights concerns.

Gender Situation

In comparison to national averages, West Bengal presents a better picture in the field of gender development but compared to best performing states like Kerala and Tamilnadu, there is enough scope of development. In a recently conducted study by Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA) on Gender Budgeting CBGA observed various scopes of development in the gender context. The study named “Report of The Gender Budgeting Study for West Bengal” observed certain deficiencies in gender development. The Report said,

“From the proportion of elected women representatives in 2002 in the three tiers of Panchayati Raj in West Bengal, Karnataka and Tamilnadu, it may be said that here is substantial scope for improvement in political empowerment of women in West Bengal, which as per the information to 2002 lagged far behind Karnataka in this respect.”

Referring to NFHS-3 results the Report said, “As it emerges from a comparison of the data reported by three rounds of National Family Health Survey (in 1992-93, 1998-99 and 2005-06), the progress achieved by West Bengal in expansion of institutional deliveries in the state between NFHS-2(40%) and NFHS-3(43%) is arguably very slow. Moreover, the proportion of ever married women (in the age 15-49 years) in West Bengal who are anemic has in fact gone up from 62.7% in 1998-99 to 63.8% in 2005-06. Thus, the latest data reported by NFHS-3 raise further concerns regarding the well being of women in West Bengal, which must be taken into account in policy making for the women in the state.”

Government intention is clear in respect to gender development from publishing the above report. We feel that the state government is committed to the gender development in the state and hence trying to assess the ground reality and find ways to improve them. We support such attitude of the government and suggest that government should take such steps in all the spheres of development.

Chapter V

Concluding Remarks

The report has attempted to analyse the progress towards realization of MDGs in the state and it has not attempted to critically analyse different state policies which are instrumental in facilitating some of the targets of MDG like Agrarian reform. It is obvious that in a state like West Bengal without implementation of GAR, not much could be achieved in terms of comprehensive human development. However, with great concern it has been observed that the different policies of the state government have either ignored or contradicted agrarian reform principles since mid 90s. The state government has pursued land reform to a certain extent (to the extent of 42-47% as assessed by some researchers) but there is stagnation registered in the process at present. It will also be apparent from the rate of poverty alleviation in the state, which more or less equates with the national average despite having carried out land reform in a far greater scale than any other state in the country. So the requirement of the day is to assess the land reform status in the state and to take all appropriate measures to carry on the land reform to the full.

The analysis as presented in the above chapters clearly focus on the need to revisit the MDG commitments in the state and calls for better degree of awareness among Civil society actors in order to ensure a social watch on progressive realization of MDGs. At the same time the need to create better possibility for commons to access information regarding realization of MDG in west Bengal is highly felt. As is evident from the above chapters, not much in depth analysis could be carried out in West Bengal on MDG progress due to lack of data from the official sources.

The cross cutting issues have also made clear that different deprivation and violations of human rights in West Bengal, as also elsewhere, are interrelated and a holistic policy approach is needed to address these issues. MDG could only be progressively realized if a conducive climate could be created for the implementation of pro people policies and programmes, which would be shaped in consultation with the grassroots actors and which would be based on people's priorities. A genuine political will is very much required to create this conducive climate which would also ensure accountability of the state to its people. At the same time the awareness and active participation of civil society actors in governance at different levels need to be strengthened further. These initiatives together could ensure realization of MDG and considering the weak position of West Bengal in realization of MDGs, a lot needs to be done to keep the deadline.

The report would like to focus particularly on the need of the ethical quality of governance in West Bengal. By ethical quality of governance we mean two distinct qualities. One is restricting and to the extent possible eradicating corruptive practices in all levels of administration and governance. The second one is to induce commitment in the entire sphere of administration and governance

Finally, the human rights approach clearly distinguishes between duty bearers (state authorities) and right holders (people). It should always be kept in mind that the state government in West Bengal is duty bound to take adequate measures with maximum use of available resources to fulfill its human rights obligations which are in line with

MDGs. Therefore the need of the hour is to motivate deprived actors to claim their rights by demanding proper implementation of policies/programmes for achieving MDGs within the stipulated timeframe.
