

CHAPTER - 7

CASE STUDY - II

LAND ACQUISITIONS AT NANDIGRAM

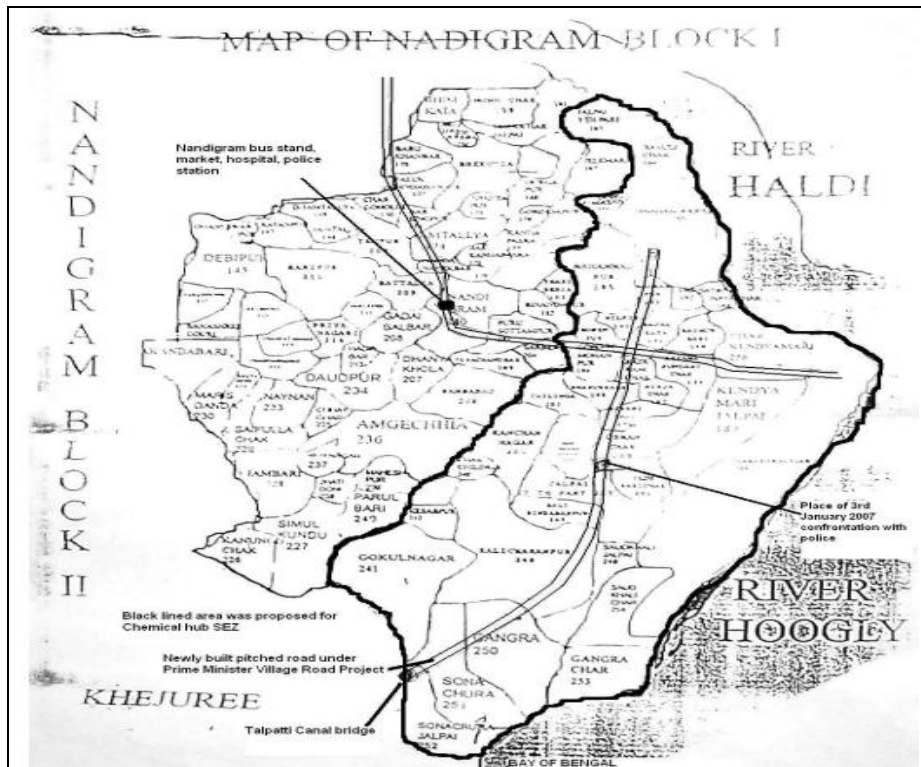
7.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, we have examined the different aspects of the anti-land acquisition movements at Singur since its inception. We have also analysed the impact of the movements on the process of agro-based transformation in west Bengal in general, pinpointing Singur as a case study. In this chapter, we propose to examine the events that took place at Nandigram in the district of East Medinipur and impacts thereof on the initiatives taken by the Government towards industrialisation in the state. Nandigram is located at a distance of 150 kilometres away from Kolkata. It is a rural area in East Midnapore (Purba Medinipur) district of West Bengal, situated opposite to the industrial town of Haldia, and falls under the jurisdiction of the Haldia Development Authority (HDA). In June 2006, a rumour began to be popular in Nandigram that a chemical hub was going to be built and over 10,000 acres of cultivated, densely populated agricultural land would be acquired for its set up. The land was to be acquired for the Indonesian multinational Salim Group, to set up a chemical hub, as a part of Special Economic Zone (SEZ). There was no attempt by the state government or local administration to hold any form of consultation about the proposed land acquisition with the people who would be affected by the project. The controversy started almost immediately, and though no formal announcement was made by the government regarding acquiring land, the ongoing events at Singur created fear among the local people.

On 15th August, in an article titled ‘Nandigram Gets Singur Jitters’, *The Statesman* reported that the ongoing protests in Singur had provoked apprehension about the fate of their land among the people of Nandigram. It is in this context that Nandigram and Singur have come to

be uttered in the same breath, whereas they are otherwise significantly different. Nandigram is less fertile, not located on the national highway and there was considerably less land speculation. Above all, the proposal in Nandigram was to set up an SEZ, whereas in Singur the acquisition of land was for a car factory. However, in Nandigram, acquisition of homestead land was also a possibility, thus evoking fear not only of dispossession of the land but also of dislocation in homestead plots. The similarity between the two cases was in the manner in which, the basic fears of the rural poor were manipulated, resulting in similar apprehensions about the loss of land and livelihood not only among the people earning their livelihood directly from agriculture but also others who had lived in the area for generations and those providing various services to them.

Map 7.1. Proposed Special Economic Zone at Nandigram¹



Source: 1 Note: Special notification of Chief Executive officer of HDA, 28 December 2006 (in Bengali) in Annexure C, Calcutta High Court's own Petition, p.41, in All India Citizens Initiative, 'Nandigram: what really happened?' Based on the report of the People's Tribunal on Nandigram, 26-28 May, 2007, Delhi, 2007 (People's Tribunal on Nandigram, & All India Citizens Initiative., 2007)

7.2. Nandigram in History

The 1940s was the most dramatic period in Nandigram and the surrounding areas like Tamluk and Contai subdivisions. During this period, the subdivision of Tamluk and Contai were worst hit by natural and man-made disasters, and also took part in the Quit India Movement(1942) when the local people and their leaders declared the area independent of the British state and formed Tamralipta Jatiya Sarkar (Tamralipta National Government) under the leadership of Satish Chandra Samanta.

¹ Lakshman Seth, Chairman of the Haldia Development Authority(HAD) and M.P. from Tamluk, presented this map to residents of Nandigram in December 2006, informing them of the area to be acquired. The Manthan Samayiki, a Kolkata magazine, added the subsequent annotations.

In April 1942, fearing Japanese attack following the fall of Burma, the colonial government identified Tamluk and Contai as a possible gateway for invasion and declared them an emergency area. To disrupt transportation, the government removed, and destroyed, buses, bicycles and boats – and denied petrol an action known as the Denial policy. At Nandigram, the vast majority of boats in the area were destroyed, which had severe economic and social consequences as transportation by water which was crucial for food and fishing in this coastal region. Compensation for this was meagre and was also denied to people involved in the anti-British activity.

The Bengal famine of 1943-44 killed an estimated three and a half million people, devastating the region. Midnapore was one of the worst-hit areas. According to Paul Greenough, there was an adequate supply of rice in 1943 despite the past 80 years being characterised by hunger and economic insecurity, and starvation occurred only after a series of fateful human errors. Tamluk and Contai along with a subdivision in East Bengal were among the worst hit and had the highest mortality rates in Bengal. The colonial government exacerbated the famine in Tamluk and Contai by privileging military needs over local needs, which made survival exceedingly difficult for the common people (Greenough, 1980).

The evidence suggested that the people in Nandigram were forced into prostitution or selling babies to survive, highlights their sufferings during this period. Compounding the suffering was the political atrocities led loose by the British forces.

By March 1943, the British government had driven the Jatiya Sarkar mostly underground and it was disbanded by the leadership in September 1944, in response to Gandhi's wishes. Hitesranjan Sanyal notes that it was the turn to terrorism that eventually moved people against the movement, especially considering the strong influence of Mahatma Gandhi in the area. Mahatma Gandhi visited the place in December 1945 when he remarked, "What you have done is heroic and glorious. However, you have deviated from the path of non-violence"

(Chakrabarty, 1992, p. 79). Peasant solidarity had remained strong between 1942 and 1944. After this movement, the internal divisions and antagonisms again rose to the surface, represented by the struggles of the share-croppers through the *Tebhaga* movement.

The Bengal Provincial Krishak Sabha (BPKS) launched the *Tebhaga* struggle, which fought for sharecroppers to retain two-thirds share of the produce as opposed to the half that was typical prevailed in 1946. Tamluk was a centre of the struggle, with significant Kisan Sabha, CPI and Congress activities and a large concentration of sharecroppers. Nandigram also took part in the *Tebhaga* struggle. In one instance, after the police and landlords armed with lathis (security personnel armed with bamboo batons) had come to retrieve paddy, *Kisan* (peasant) women rushed to save it with their bare arms carrying broomsticks and sand to throw at their opponents 'eyes'. Amazingly, this caused broomsticks to be banned in Nandigram. Peter Custer's has demonstrated the prominent role played by women during this period and at Nandigram, the movement was led by woman leadership (Custers, 1986).

Since *Tebhaga* movement, little has been written about East Midnapore and Nandigram. After independence, East Midnapore became known as a reactionary district, rather than as a centre of resistance. For example, Joya Chatterjee presents the *mahishyas*, three million strong and the largest Hindu community in Bengal, as an example of the client-patron relationship that developed in post-colonial Congress-ruled West Bengal. Furthermore, Chatterjee described the Midnapore Congress as lacking sympathy for East Bengal refugees. Medinipur's initial support for the reactionary Jana Sangha was noted and Sajal Basu pointed out that the Bangla Congress, established in the 1960s, was based in the district of Midnapore (Basu S. , 1990).

From a rather different perspective, Amrita Basu discussed women's activism in Tamluk and Midnapore in the 1980s. Basu challenged the discourse that had previously glorified women's roles in movements such as in the formation of the Jatiya Sarkar and launching of *Tebhaga* movement (Basu A. , 1993). This discourse, evident particularly in Rina Pal's work, ignored

the often secondary and supportive role of women in these movements and emphasised the involvement of upper-caste and upper-class women (Pal, 1996). women remained in a supportive and secondary role at Nandigram in 2007.

7.3. Land Acquisition Initiatives

On 31 July 2006, the Government of West Bengal signed a deal with the representatives of the Salim Group. The agreement specified that the Indonesian company would set up, among a slew of other infrastructural projects, a chemical hub Special Economic Zones(SEZ) at Nandigram as part of the proposed Petrochemicals and Petroleum Investment Region (PCPIR). The projects, it was said, were to bring in investments worth ₹ 400 billion to investment-starved West Bengal. In 2005, the Chief Minister (Buddhadeb Bhattacharya) made a trip to Singapore and Jakarta and returned with what he called a ‘package deal’ with the Indonesian business giant. The projects he carried back could not, however, be implemented as there was strong opposition by farmers in Bhangar, South 24 Parganas, a rural locality near Kolkata, to land acquisition for one of the projects. In any case, state assembly elections were drawing near and it was thought to be prudent to shelve the ‘package’ for the time being. Queried about Salim’s political antecedents, the Chief Minister replied that he would not look at the colour of capital as long as it brought investments to Bengal. Meanwhile, the anti-acquisition movement in Singur was peaking. At Haripur, where a nuclear power plant was planned, villagers put up a roadblock to prevent the entry of government officials, a situation that continues for years. In Deganga in North 24 Parganas district, angry village women beat up district officials and police when they came to serve the land acquisition notice for a plywood company's plans to set up a factory there. The mood in Nandigram, too, was gradually reaching a boiling point as days passed and CPI(M) functionaries began to talk about the imminent acquisition.

However, it was not until December 27, 2006 that Lakshman Seth, the local MP (One key piece of evidence, presumably leaked and available within Nandigram, was a memo dated 12 September 2006) Lakshman Seth, Chairman of the Haldia Development Authority (HDA) and Member of Parliament, Tamluk sent a memo to Nirupam Sen, the Industry Minister, containing a list of 38 mouza to be acquired. The CPI(M) later denied the existence of this memo. On December 29, 2006, Laxman Seth, addressed a public meeting at Nandigram market on behalf of the Government and announced plans to acquire land. Laxman Seth stated that panchayat offices would post the details on January 3, 2007. On January 2, 2007, HDA issued a preliminary notice indicating a plan to acquire about 14,500 acres of land in twenty-seven mouzas in Nandigram Block-I and two mouzas in Khejuri Block-II. It was also made clear that 12,500 acres in Nandigram would be acquired immediately because the construction work would soon begin for the mega chemical hub by the Salim Group and a ship-building-cum-repairing unit by the Pawan Ruia industrial group. As the news spread, resistance broke out, led by the inexperienced *Bhumi Uchchhed Pratirodh Committee*.

7.4. Protest and Resistance at Nandigram

The first instance of protest and resistance was reported on January 3, 2007 - with conflicting reports emerging about the confrontation between the police and protestors in which several people were injured, with each side blaming the other for the violence. Following these confrontations, local people dug up roads and destroyed several bridges to prevent the police from entering their villages. Nandigram became cut off from the rest of the state and sporadic violence erupted in the area on an almost daily basis. At least six people were killed as armed men, allegedly backed by local CPI(M) cadres, fired and hurled bombs at groups of protestors on January 7, 2007. There were several reports of illegal weaponry being dumped at Nandigram and tension continued to mount despite repeated attempts by the authorities to restore peace.

On February 12, 2007, the Chief Minister of West Bengal (Buddhadeb Bhattacharya) stated in a public meeting at Haldia that no land would be acquired from unwilling landowners. to give it. But however Mr. Lakshman Seth (Local CPI(M) M.P. from Tamluk), in a press conference held the very next day, asserted that land mentioned in the 'notice', issued by the Haldia Development Authority, 'would be acquired' (Nandigram: What really happened? : based on the report of the People's Tribunal on Nandigram, 2007). The protesters had dug the roads to cut-off communication so that the state authorities cannot enter the site and execute the acquisition process. On 13th March 2007, Mr. Subhendu Adhikari, MLA, TMC wrote to the Chief Minister of the state about the panic created among the common people by the police authorities. People were aware that the police would try to enter their area on 14 March 2007 (Calcutta High Court Judgment, 2007, pp. 20,21), the BUPC met on the night of March 13, 2007, and decided to organize puja and Koran reading sessions at the two locations where the police forces would have to cross the cut in the roads or 'bundh' made by protesting villagers. Use women and children as a shield, assuming the police would not fire on women and children, was adopted as a strategy to fail police atrocities.

According to newspaper reports and the People's Tribunal on Nandigram (2007), on March 14, 2007, two forces comprised of 300 and 500 armed policemen gathered at two entry points into Nandigram- one from the Tekhali Bridge, Gokulnagar, Adhikaripara and the other from the side of Bhangabera Bridge, near Sonachura. at around 9.30 am, the police entered the area from the sides of Nandigram and Khejuri respectively. The forces, as alleged by the opposition group included local leaders and hundreds of Communist Party of India (Marxist) cadres as well, clothed in khaki police dress, with sandals on their feet and caps. The police fired indiscriminately at people, including women and children. Fourteen people died, one went missing, and hundreds were injured, the majority of whom were women. Many women were also alleged to have been sexually assaulted both by the police and the party cadres.

Surprisingly, the local police did not even record a First Information Report (FIR) or report these incidents to the District Magistrate. The Times of India observed in its 15th March issue: “In a shameless display of muscle power, thousands of CPI(M) men sealed off all access points along a 30 Kilometres radius around Nandigram and disallowed journalists from entering the area, while the police continued a bloodbath on Wednesday morning. In a carefully orchestrated plan, the administration stayed away from Digha Road — the highway from which numerous roads meander into Nandigram. Instead, CPI(M) supporters took the position, setting up checkpoints at strategic points to flush out media persons from vehicles headed towards Nandigram” (The Times of India, 2007, p. 1).

A statement was issued by the Governor of West Bengal on the evening of March 14, 2007 admitting that “the news of deaths by police firing in Nandigram this morning has filled me with a sense of cold horror” (Calcutta High Court Judgment, 2007, p. 5). Soon after, the Calcutta High Court passed an order on its own motion to initiate public interest litigation, observing: “prima facie we are satisfied that this action of the police department is wholly unconstitutional and cannot be justified under any provision of law” (Calcutta High Court Judgment, 2007, p. 6), and called for a special inquiry into the incident by the Central Bureau of Investigation. There were reports that human rights organisations while moving towards Nandigram, were obstructed by CPI(M) cadres. It was also found that there was an urgent need for medical and material help for the people of Nandigram. The Calcutta High Court issued an order allowing free movement of the people for the purpose of relief work. The People’s Tribunal Report categorically gave the verdict that the West Bengal government, particularly the district administration, engaged police forces along with armed ruling party hooligans to teach a lesson to the poor villagers in Nandigram. The conclusive recommendation of the report was that in order to prevent a recurrence of the incidents of 14th March in any form, the government should make a solemn declaration that force would not be used against local people

for the ‘so-called restoration of law and order and control of administration’ (Nandigram: What really happened? : based on the report of the People's Tribunal on Nandigram, 2007, p. 65).

With series of violent clashes and protest over the land acquisition, finally, the Chief Minister of West Bengal on September 3, expressed to shift the project to a sparsely populated island of Nayachar around 30 kilometres away from Nandigram.

Map 7.2. Nandigram and Nayachar²



Source: Satellite Image collected from Google Earth

7.5. ‘Community’ and the *Bhumi Uchchedh Pratirodh Committee*

In understanding the linkage and interactions between the community and the *Bhumi Uchchedh Pratirodh Committee* formed at Nandigram it is quite pertinent to refer to Partha Chatterjee’s conception of ‘community’. The threat of losing control of the land reconstituted the community and defined its ‘other’ as those in favour of the land acquisition. The community

²Nandigram and Nayachar. Satellite Image collected from Google Earth: Retrieved July 23, 2018, from <https://earth.google.com/web/@22.06399185,88.03082285,5.73422264a,81380.14258211d,35y,40.63696234h,60t,0r/data=KAI>

articulated the importance of ‘land’ in a collective sense: collective control of land being imperative to the survival of the community. This collective shift was exemplified by the many diverse groups that came together to form the BUPC at *Bhuta More* (a place) on January 6, 2007. The BUPC was formed with the existing groups that were opposed to acquisition such as the *Jamiat*³, and other localised anti-acquisition groups and local representatives of the West Bengal political parties. These included the TMC, Congress, SUCI and the People’s Democratic Conference of India (PDCI). The BUPC adopted the ‘black flag’ to represent its independence and as a symbol of resistance.

The bulk of support for the BUPC came from dissatisfied CPI(M) supporters. David Hardiman has explained the ‘community’ as one that ‘exists in a relationship of opposition to those who are not of the community’ (Hardiman, 1993, p. 79) This shift best exemplifies the reconstitution of the community in Nandigram. By signalling its intention to acquire land, the CPI(M) positioned itself outside the community. Local CPI(M) politicians, workers and supporters left the party, joining or supporting the BUPC and later the TMC. Bulu Adak from *Southkhali* was typical in stating:

“What was the point of doing CPI(M) all our lives? I have been a CPI(M) follower for 30 years, but what did I get? I am the local secretary of the Ganatantrik Mahila Samiti⁴, but when I realized they were going to take my land by force, I joined the BUPC”⁵.

By 2009, there were 35 members out of 42 Trinamool Congress Committee members in Nandigram had previous links to the CPI(M). Most of the 834 CPI(M) cardholders were inactive or had joined the opposition (The Indian Express, May 6, 2009). All ten *Gram*

³ Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind or Jamiat Ulama-I-Hind is one of the leading organizations of Islamic scholars belonging to the deobandi school of thought in India. It was founded in 1919 by a group of Deobandi scholars. Siddiquallah Chowdhury is the president of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind’s West Bengal Branch.

⁴ The all India Democratic Women’s Association(AIDWA)(*Ganatantrik Mahila Samiti*) is the women’s wing of the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

⁵ Final Interim Report of an Independent Citizens’ Team from Kolkata on the Current State of Affairs in Nandigram, March 10,2008

Panchayats were headed by former CPI(M) members and many of the branch committees of the party were closed or had become defunct. For example, Nishikanta Mandal and Sheikh Sahauddin, prominent local CPI(M) leaders before 2007, became firstly BUPC members and later Trinamool Congress leaders, and ran the Sonachura and *Kendamari* village panchayat respectively (The Times of India, May 7, 2009).

Dwaipayan Bhattacharyya has characterised rural West Bengal as a ‘party society’ with political parties dominating the key institutions in the countryside (Bhattacharyya, 2009). The BUPC reflected this, as it was also schooled in CPI(M) techniques of organisation and discipline. Therefore, the BUPC moved first to control land. Once this was established, control of government followed, in this case, the various Panchayat institutions. This explains the BUPC turn toward the Trinamool Congress after March 2007. The TMC offered a better means to establish control by offering more resources. Therefore, the BUPC was a product of the system it was challenging, confirming Timothy Mitchell’s point that resistance does not stand outside the state, but was often born from these same institutions, which use the same disciplines within to challenge power relations (Mitchell, 1991).

7.6. Delineated Area of the Study

Nandigram I & II Blocks are situated at Haldia Subdivision of the East Medinipur district of West Bengal. The area is bounded by distinct physical boundaries namely the Hooghly River and Haldi River on two sides, Khejuri and Chandipur Blocks on the other two sides. The total area of the two-block is 287.58 sq. km.

The area comprises two Blocks – Nandigram I (99 mouzas) and Nandigram II (41 mouzas). A basic outline of the administrative units within Nandigram I and II Blocks is given in Table 7.1 and 7.2.

Table 7.1. Administrative Units in Nandigram I & II Blocks⁶

Administrative Units	Name of Units	No of Units
Block	Nandigram I, Nandigram II	2
Gram Panchayats	<p>Nandigram I Block: Bhekutia, Daudpur, Gokulnagar, Haripur, Kalicharanpur, Kendamari, Mahammdpur, Nandigram, Shamsabad, Sonachura</p> <p>Nandigram II Block: Amdabad-I, Amdabad-II, Birulia, Boyal-I, Boyal-II, Khodambari-I, Khodambari-II</p>	(10+7)=17
Census Towns	Nandigram(CT) in Nandigram-I Block and Ashadtalya(CT) in Nandigram-II Block	2
Police Station	Nandigram PS	1

Table 7.2. Silent Feature of Nandigram I & II Block

Blocks	Mouzas (no.s)	Area(sq km)	Population
Nandigram-I	99	181.84	202032
Nandigram-II	41	105.74	117945
Total	140	287.58	319977

Source: (Census of India, 2011)

The delineated area has been divided into smaller units called. These units have distinct existing characteristics as well as very different future growth potential. While delineating the unit boundaries (*mouza* boundaries in particular) have been taken into consideration. The calculation is based on District level Published data, Census of India, 2011; Purba Midnapore District Statistical Handbook, 2013, Economic Review 2012-13; Agricultural Statistics 2010-13.

Table 7.3. Growth Areas of Nandigram and their Salient Characteristics

Growth Area	Name	Population in 2011 (decadal growth rate)	Growth Prospects
Urban Area	Nandigram	59,145 (19.8 per cent)	Urban functions, Administrative centre, Commerce, Banking, Institutional facilities
Growth Area I	Gholpukuria – Hanu Bhunya	13,832 (14.8 per cent)	Multi-modal (rail – road-based) transshipment; agro

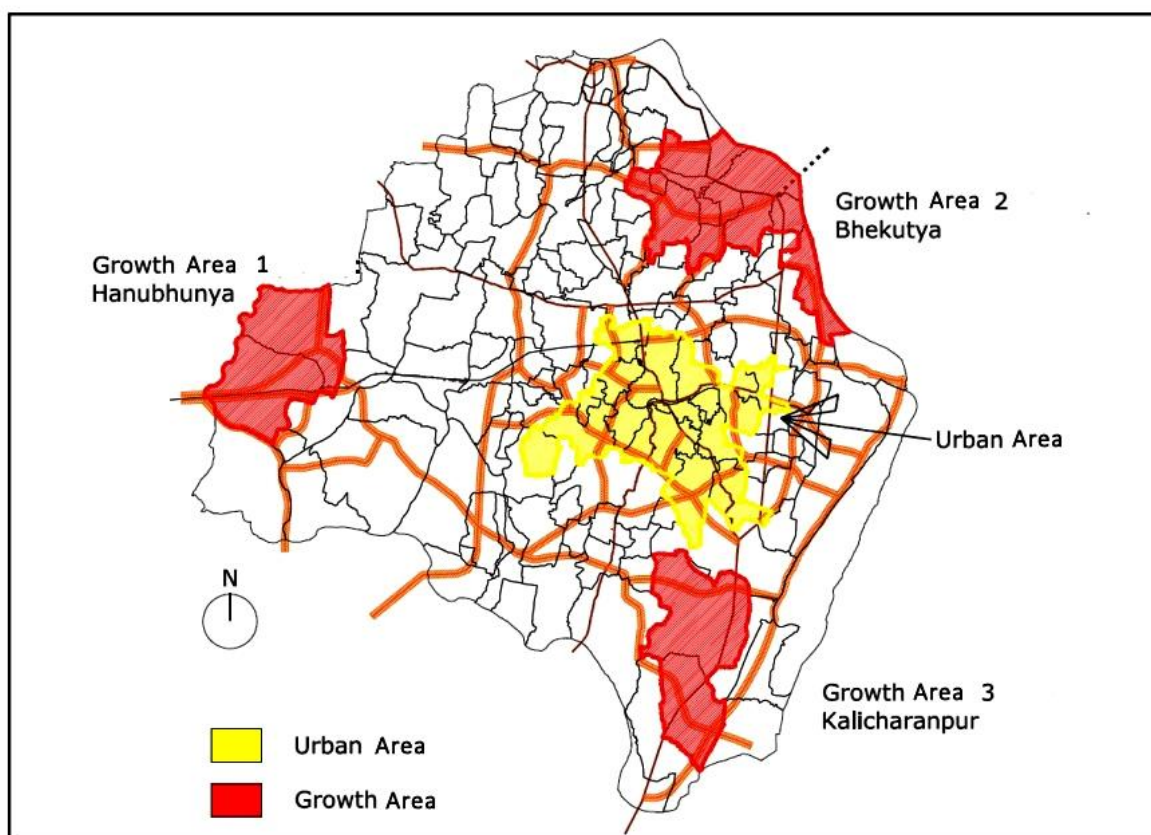
⁶ District Administrative Setup of East Midnapore Retrieved July 23, 2018, from <http://purbamedinipur.gov.in/admn.htm>

			market, agro-processing, cold storage facilities
Growth Area II	Bhekutia-Manuchak Manuchak Jalpai Manasaka Bharatchak Jalpai V-Durgapur Jelenara-Banelichak Gobindapur Babukhanbarh (1st part)	13,039 (16.2 per cent)	Improved connectivity to Haldia Industrial Area; Packaging and Processing activities
Growth Area III	Kalicharanpur – Gangra	13,976 (16.4 per cent)	Proximity to pisciculture activities; coastal road alignment Food processing; cold storage; gateway to eco-tourism (Nayachar)
Rural Area	Remaining Rural Areas	2,19,985 (15.7 per cent)	Boost in farm sector productivity; Improvement accessibility, In irrigation, knowledge dissemination; Promotion of rural non-farm sector to supplement farm sector income and employment.

Source: (Census of India, 2011), (Director, Bureau of Applied Economics & Statistics, 2014), (District Human Development Report : Purba Medinipur, 2011)

The area of study consists of three broad divisions has been –

Map 7.3. Areas Depicted in Nandigram / Depicted Areas of Nandigram and their Salient Characteristics



Source: Source: (Census of India, 2011), (Director, Bureau of Applied Economics & Statistics, 2014), (District Human Development Report : Purba Medinipur, 2011)

(1) Urban Areas: consists of 17 nos. of *mouzas* with high population density in and around Nandigram Village. The population of this Urban Areas was 59145 in 2011 covering an area of 24.57 sq.km. It consists of 8.5 per cent share of geographical area and 18.5 per cent share of the total population in the Nandigram I & II Blocks. Prominent signs of urbanism, i.e. an urban way of living are evident in predominance of non-primary economic activities and employment pattern, housing characteristics, household assets etc. Existing higher-order social amenities serving the Nandigram I & II Blocks are all located in this centre i.e. important administrative offices, trade and commercial functions, banking facilities, college, hospital, police station, bus terminal, etc.

Growth Area: consists of 14 *mouzas* distributed in three strategic locations and the selection of these three Growth Areas are based on certain features and are an outcome of a certain process.

Firstly, this Growth Area consists of *mouzas* identified for having a population of more than 5000. Secondly, they have some inherent locational advantages which are of strategic interest to the kind of development that the stakeholders want to pursue.

The location of the Growth Area has been worked out with the development of the proposed Regional Road Network (including bridges and water transport links) within the Growth Area to provide better connectivity within the Nandigram I & II Blocks as well as with the important centres lying outside i.e. Haldia, Chandipur, Khejuri, Digha and Contai.

(2) Growth Area I consists of Gholpukuria & Hanubhunya mouza; located on the eastern part of the Growth Area along with proposed rail link to Nandigram from Panskura (partly constructed). Given the proximity of this node to the Digha Chandipur-Nandakumar alignment, this area will also act as a gateway from Nandigram to the outside region lying in the northern side.

(3) Growth Area II: consists of Bhekutia-Manuchak-Manuchak Jalpai-Manasaka Bharatchak-JalpaiV-Durgapur-Jelenara-Banelichak-Gobindapur-Babukhanbarh located on the northern side of the Growth Area, this area is very close to the proposed bridge location to connect Nandigram with Haldia Municipal Area (near Balughata). This Growth Area will turn into the gateway to Nandigram from the Haldia Town and exert tremendous development pressure. Given its proximity to river Haldi and the growth potential of this location with due attention to the sensitive coastal environment.

(4) Growth Area III: consists of Kalicharanpur & Gangra mouza; located at the southern side of the Growth Area and located along with the proposed connection to Khejuri-Digha coastal belt as well as to Nayachar (proposed waterway connection). This area has already emerged as

a trade and commerce destination for fishery-related produce owing to its proximity to coastal belt.

(5) Rural areas: remaining all 109 *mouzas* which have predominantly, rural character and therefore based on farming activities.

The division of the area into smaller units helps in studying the existing characteristics across the Nandigram I & II Blocks.

7.7. Demographic and Socio-Economic Profile of Nandigram

Nandigram is a predominantly rural area dependent on primary sector activities. Apart from agriculture, pisciculture has gained a lot of attention in recent times along with poultry farming. Though there are as many villages where the population is quite high and reliance on non-farm sector employment is also significant.

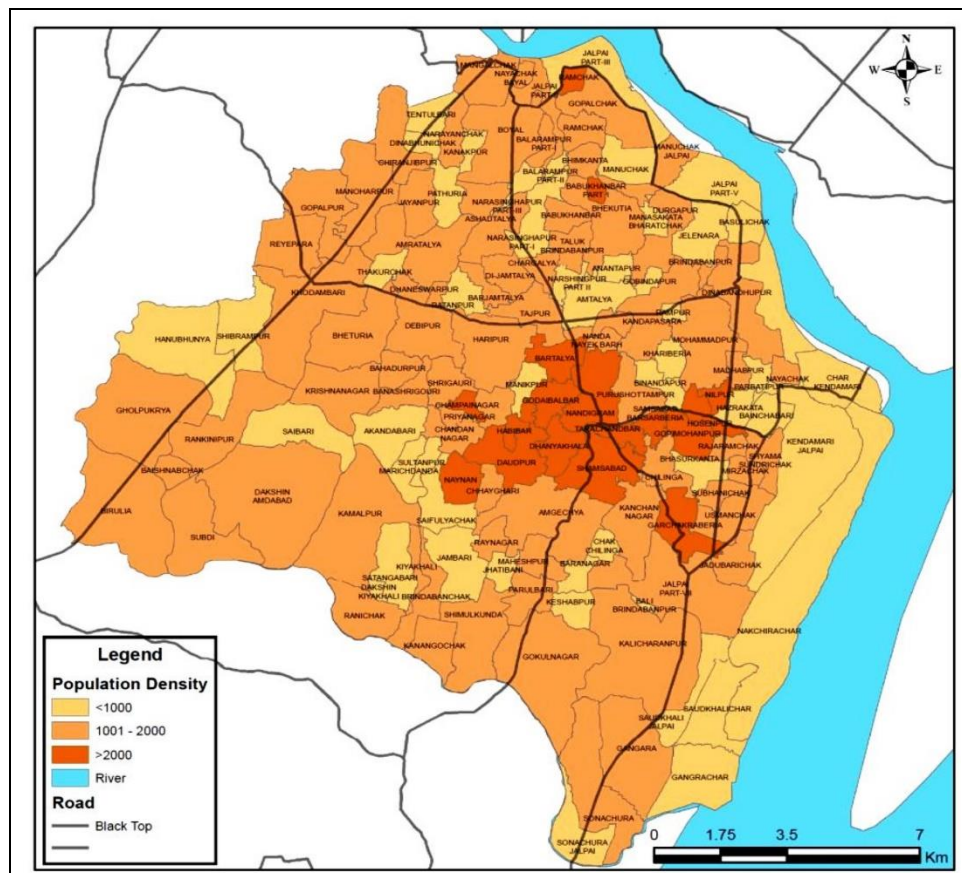
Settlement Pattern: Out of 140 villages in Nandigram I & II Blocks, 02 of them have been identified as Census Town (CT) in 2011. There are 99 villages in Nandigram I Block and 41 in Nandigram II Block. Owing to the proximity of the Digha-Nandakumar road link, villages in Nandigram II Block have experienced comparatively higher growth in population and economic activities. The detailed distribution of settlement according to their population sizes has been shown in Map No. 7.4.

As per the Census of India 2011 Nandigram I Block has a population of approximately 2.02 lakhs, whereas Nandigram II Block has 1.18 lakhs. The combined population in Nandigram I & II Blocks was 3.2 lakhs.

The overall population density in the Nandigram I & II Blocks is found to be 1112.6 person per sq.km (as per Census of India 2011). The population density distribution in the area is shown in Map No. 7.4. The population density in *mouzas* around Nandigram village is found 2407 which is quite high compared to the rest of the area. This dense core comprising of 18

no.s of mouzas has been designated as Urban areas. This Urban area with a total population of 59,145 spread across only 24.57 sq.km comprises of 8.5 per cent of the area but accommodates 18.5 per cent of the population. It also has a decadal growth rate of 19.8 per cent, which is much higher than the rest.

Map 7.4. Distribution of Population Density Across the Study Area



Source: (Census of India, 2011), (Director, Bureau of Applied Economics & Statistics, 2014)

7.8. Economy of the Study Area

The farming sector is the lifeline of a predominantly rural economy of Nandigram as well as East Medinipur district. It is mainly dependent on the Low Capacity Deep Tube wells (around 50 per cent) or High Capacity Deep Tube wells (around 27 per cent) for irrigation, as the district does not have a proper network of canals, related to some of the adjoining districts. In numerous cases, the canals are drainage canals at times of high tide or the rainy season get the backflow of river water. The average size of landholding in East Medinipur, in 2005-06, was

0.73 hectares against 1.01 hectares in West Bengal (District Human Development Report : Purba Medinipur, 2011)⁷.

In 2013-14, the total area irrigated in Nandigram-I Block was 2,986 hectares, out of which 2,865 hectares were irrigated by tank water and 121 hectares by other means (District Statistical Handbook : Purba Medinipur,2014)⁸. In Nandigram II Block was 2,836 hectares, out of which 735 hectares were irrigated by tank water, 1,500 hectares by shallow tube wells and 600 hectares by other means (District Statistical Handbook : Purba Medinipur,2014)⁹. In 2013-14, persons engaged in agriculture in Nandigram I and II Blocks could be classified as follows:

In Nandigram I Block, *bargadars* are 13.85 per cent, *patta* (document) holders 21.46 per cent, small farmers (possessing land between 1 and 2 hectares) 1.66 per cent, marginal farmers (possessing land up to 1 hectare) 29.40 per cent and agricultural labourers 33.62 per cent among the total farmers engaged in agriculture (District Human Development Report : Purba Medinipur, 2011)¹⁰. In Nandigram II Block, *bargadars* are 14.65 per cent, *patta* (document) holders 11.14 per cent, small farmers (possessing land between 1 and 2 hectares) 2.71 per cent, marginal farmers (possessing land up to 1 hectare) 33.19 per cent and agricultural labourers 38.32 per cent among the farmers engaged in agriculture (District Statistical Handbook : Purba Medinipur,2014)¹¹.

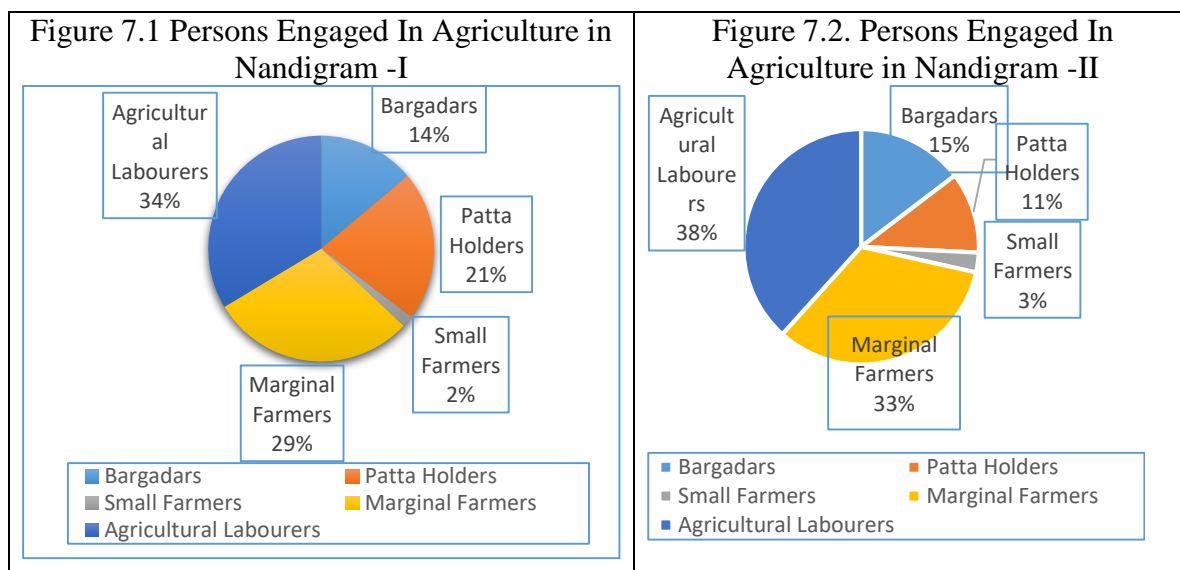
⁷ District Human Development Report : Purba Medinipur.(2011). Pages:26,30-3. Kolkata: Development & Planning Department, Government of West Bengal. Retrieved July 22, 2018, from https://www.wbspm.gov.in/SiteFiles/Publications/13_21062017105756.pdf

⁸ Director, Bureau of Applied Economics & Statistics. (2014). District Statistical Handbook, Purba Medinipur-2014. Tables- 2.7,2.1,8.2,16.1. Kolkata: Department of Statistics & Programme Implementation, Government of West Bengal.

⁹ 8 Tables- 17.2,18.1,18.2,18.3,3.3.

¹⁰ 7 Pages:30-33,37

¹¹ 8 Tables- 2.7,8.2, 16.1, 17.2, 18.1, 18.3, 3.3.



- Depicts the Various Categories of Farmers Engaged in Agriculture

In 2013-14, Nandigram I Block produced 44514 tonnes of *Aman* paddy, the main winter crop, from 23845 hectares, 6514 tonnes of *Aus* paddy, the summer crop, from 3187 hectares, 3069 tonnes of *Boro* paddy, the spring crop, from 810 hectares, 41 tonnes of jute from 3 hectares and 7209 tonnes of potatoes from 429 hectares. It also produced pulses and oilseeds. In 2013-14, Nandigram II Block produced 11,449 tonnes of *Aman* paddy, the main winter crop, from 8,527 hectares, 5,451 tonnes of *Boro* paddy, the spring crop, from 1,470 hectares, 292 tonnes of *Aus* paddy, the summer crop, from 143 hectares and 4,112 tonnes of potatoes from 230 hectares. It also produced pulses and oil seeds (District Statistical Handbook : Purba Medinipur,2014)¹².

It is worth mentioning that betel vine is a major source of livelihood in East Medinipur district, particularly in Contai and Tamluk subdivisions. In 2008-09, betel vine production was the highest amongst all the districts and was around a third of the total state production. In 2008-

¹² 8 Tables 2.7,2.1,8.2,16.1,17.2,18.1,18.3,3.1,3.3

09, East Medinipur produced 2789 tonnes of cashew nuts from 3340 hectares of land (Raychaudhuri, 2011)¹³.

East Medinipur's net district domestic product derives one-fifth of its earnings from fisheries, the highest amongst all the districts of West Bengal (District Human Development Report : Purba Medinipur, 2011)¹⁴. The total area available for effective Pisciculture in Nandigram I Block in 2013-14 was 1,040.45 hectares. 6,520 persons were involved in the profession and approximate annual production was 40,022 quintals¹⁵. In Nandigram-II Block area available for effective Pisciculture in 2013-14 was 600.00 hectares. 3,355 persons were engaged in the profession and approximate annual production was 22,860 quintals (District Statistical Handbook : Purba Medinipur,2014)¹⁶.

The economy primarily consists of primary sector activities with a nearly two-third population of the employment generated in farm-based activities. Recently diversification in rural economy has taken place – agriculture is supplemented with pisciculture and poultry farming activities. Nandigram II Block has a greater reliance on pisciculture and poultry farming as evident from the considerably larger output compared to its size. Most of the people employed in agriculture belong to marginal farmer and agricultural labourer class, which is more pronounced in Nandigram II Block (71.6 per cent of the total agricultural workforce) when compared to Nandigram I Block (63 per cent of the total agricultural workforce). The share of the workforce involved in the agricultural sector has been provided in Table 7.4.

¹³ 7 Pages: 61-63.

¹⁴ 7 Pages: 89-94

¹⁵ 8 Table: 18.3

¹⁶ 8 Table 4.4

Table 7.4. Persons Engaged in Agriculture in the Study Area

Name of Block	Bargadars	Patta Holders	Small Farmers	Marginal Farmers	Agricultural Labourers
Nandigram-I	13.9	21.4	1.7	29.4	33.6
Nandigram-II	14.7	11	2.7	33.2	38.4

Source: (District Statistical Handbook, Purba Medinipur- 2013)¹⁷

Apart from the farm sector, the rural non-farm sector is also on rise, primarily to cater to the growing demand for trade and commerce in the farm sector as well as household consumption goods and services.

The major crop produced in these two Blocks are rice, pulses, mustard and potato. However, the yield obtained is not comparable to those obtained in districts like Bardhaman or 24 Paraganas (South). Moreover, it was also observed that Nandigram I has a higher share of farmland dedicated to paddy cultivation, hence net output from rice cultivation is higher in Nandigram I when compared to Nandigram II. It can also be seen that most of the product is obtained from the *Aman* crop. The yield rates are comparable in these two Blocks and the yield from the *Boro* crop is highest. The details of rice and jute cultivation are provided in Table 7.5.

Table 7.5. Area, Production and Yield rates of Major Crops in the Study Area

Name of Block	<i>Aus</i>			<i>Aman</i>			<i>Boro</i>			<i>Jute</i>		
	Area*	Prod**	Yield#	Area	Prod	Yield	Area	Prod	Yield	Area	Prod	Yield
Nandigram-I	3501	6.942	1983	13005	20.956	1611	1135	3.948	3478	13	0.201	15.43
Nandigram-II	150	0.297	1983	8005	18.935	2365	1448	5.079	3507	-	-	-

Source: (District Statistical Handbook, Purba Medinipur- 2013)¹⁸

*Area in Hectare, **Prod in 00 MT, # Yield in Kg/Ha

It is also observed that the area put to the cultivation of pulses, mustard or potato is higher in Nandigram I Block when compared to Nandigram II Block. This may be attributed to higher

¹⁷Director, Bureau of Applied Economics & Statistics. (2015). District Statistical Handbook, Purba Medinipur-2013. Table- 17.2. Kolkata: Department of Statistics & Programme Implementation, Government of West Bengal.

¹⁸ 17 Table-18.1

accessibility of commercial or *Gramin* banks in Nandigram I Block. The details of crops produced, area utilized and yield rates are furnished in Table 7.6.

Table 7.6. Major Crops Produced, Area, Productivity, and Yield

Name of Block	Potato			Mustard			Khesari		
	Area*	Prod**	Yield#	Area	Prod	Yield	Area	Prod	Yield
Nandigram-I	952	18.683	19625	42	0.054	1290	3000	5.113	1704
Nandigram-II	359	8.649	24092	22	0.028	1290	1220	2.079	1704

Source: (District Statistical Handbook, Purba Medinipur- 2013)¹⁹

*Area in Hectare, **Prod in 00 MT, # Yield in Kg/Ha

The total area under irrigation schemes is only around 10 per cent of the total area under cultivation, where the ratio of land under irrigation to land under cultivation is higher in Nandigram II as compared to Nandigram I. The distribution of the source of irrigation facilities has been shown in Table 7.7.

Table 7.7. Source of Irrigation in the Study Area

Name of Block	STW		Tank		DTW		Others		Total	
	No.	Area*	No.	Area*	No.	Area*	No.	Area*	No.	Area*
Nandigram-I	2	16	18000	2500	-	-	-	100	18002	2616
Nandigram-II	8	80	10000	1500	40	975	-	-	10048	2555

Source: (District Statistical Handbook, Purba Medinipur- 2013)²⁰

DTW: Deep Tube well, STW: Shallow Tube well, * Area in Hectare

The other major local economic pursuit of the people in Nandigram I & II Block is pisciculture related activities. Many of the inland water bodies have been converted to fisheries for production of shrimps and prawns. As shown in Table 7.8, Nandigram I Block is dominant in terms of area under pisciculture and number of person involved in the profession – but only in absolute figures. Nandigram II Block is much smaller in the area but has commensurately higher values in all production parameters.

¹⁹17 Table-18.1(a),(b)

²⁰ 17 Table- 18.2

Table 7.8. Pisciculture Activities in the Study Area

Name of Block	No. of Govt. Schemes Operated	Expenditure ('000 ₹)	Assistance to Needy Fishermen ('000 ₹)	Net Area Available for Pisciculture(Hect.)	Net Area under Effective Pisciculture(Hect.)	No. of Persons Engaged in the Profession	Approx. Annual Production(Qt l.)
Nandigram-I	2	183	144	1400	1285.5	6210	39560
Nandigram-II	2	159	120	800	700	3200	21500

Source: (District Statistical Handbook, Purba Medinipur- 2013)²¹

Another important economic pursuit of the people in Nandigram I & II Blocks is rearing of livestock and poultry. As depicted in Table 7.9, Nandigram II Block is dominant in poultry and rearing of goats. Nandigram I Block is dominated in the rearing of cattle stock.

Table 7.9. Live-stock and Poultry in the Study Area

Name of Block	Live-stock					Poultry Birds
	Cattle	Goats	Buffaloes	Sheep	Others	
Nandigram-I	46050	33852	-	3972	29	148706
Nandigram-II	42455	35084	7	885	68	288406

Source: (District Statistical Handbook, Purba Medinipur- 2013)²²

7.9. Infrastructural Development

Nandigram I & II Block is well connected with the important growth areas in eastern India via road, rail and river linkages. It does not have air connectivity. Regional connectivity of Haldia is of tremendous importance due to its port functions.

National Highway(NH)- 41 connects Haldia with NH-6, via which it is linked with Kolkata Metropolitan Area in the east and Kharagpur, Medinipur, Jhargram, and important growth centres in Jharkhand in the west. NH-6 is connected to NH-2 near Dankuni, which provides access to the industrial agglomeration in Asansol and Durgapur and connecting it further to

²¹ 17 Table-18.3

²² 17 Table- 19.1

Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi (part of Golden Quadrilateral). NH-6 also links with NH-5 (near Kharagpur) which connects it to the destinations in Orissa via Balasore. Recently NH-60 has been upgraded for capacity augmentation which will connect Raniganj and the industrial agglomeration in Asansol-Durgapur with Balasore via NH-5.

State Highway(SH)-4 connects on one side Haldia with Mahishadal, Tamluk and finally meets NH-6 near Mecheda. Another side of the SH-4 (renamed as NH-116B) branches off from Nandakumar which connects Haldia Planning Area with Digha and all other coastal settlements in East Medinipur up to Chandaneswar in Odisha. SH-4 and NH-116 B are double lane links. This is the only road link to Nandigram area, though no part of Nandigram I & II Blocks get direct access to it. They are connected through intermediate lane and single lane roads connecting the NH-116 B. Nandigram I & II Blocks are also well connected to Khejuri Blocks, mostly via single-lane roads.

There is a bus terminal facility existing in Nandigram village – however, there are many paratransit terminal facilities at many other places. A large volume of passenger movement takes place via ferry transit services, primarily to Haldia Town via *ferry ghat* at Balughata and Port Township. Travel to Haldia Municipal Area via road necessitates significant detour as the only available river bridge crossing is on the Digha-Nandakumar link.

Haldia is connected by a double line rail connection via Panskura. A new single line is under construction which will connect Nandigram Blocks with Tamluk. The proposed railway station is near Nandigram village.

Though a lot of road widening programme, road surface up-gradation schemes, rail line construction etc. are going on under the stewardship of Haldia Development Authority and other governmental organisations, lack of intra-regional and inter-regional accessibility seems to be the most influential constraint hindering the development of this study area.

7.10. Conclusion

The majority of people's in Nandigram are involved mainly in agriculture. Along with agriculture pisciculture also plays a vital role in the economic prosperity and livelihood of peoples of the said area. The agricultural and economic profile along with dependency on agricultural land gives a vivid picture of the agro-based economy in Nandigram. It was the local geographical conditions and history of the area that presents a view of struggling and determined character of the local people in the past on various issues. Nandigram, and the surrounding Tamruk in Medinipur district, played a historic role in organizing Quit India Movement(1942) (Jana, 1996, pp. 19-28) and this area also played a unique role in West Bengal's history, functioning as a '*nerve-centre*' of nationalist and share-cropper agitation (Gangopadhyay, 2008, p. 60).

In 2007, the *Bhumi Uchchedh Pratirodh Committee* (BUPC) was formed to resist land acquisition by the government. The existing historiography identifies Nandigram as an example of a broad movement that developed in India in opposition to CPI(M)'s industrial policy. When viewed from this perspective, the protesters of Nandigram and Singur challenged the proposed industrial development model of the CPI(M) and its implementation in states throughout India. At Nandigram, the opposition was not much articulated as 'against' CPI(M) industrial policy, and there was little consciousness among the protesters of the movement in challenging CPI(M) industrial policy. Instead of blaming the industrial policy as such for events at Nandigram, civil society blamed the CPI(M), criticising it for badly managing the process of land acquisition. The Trinamool Congress led by Mrs Mamata Banerjee primarily viewed Nandigram as an opportunity to remove the CPI(M) from power, through the government programme of industrialisation was abandoned at Nandigram by the Chief Minister.

People in Nandigram were aware of their past resistant and used the memory of these movements to strengthen their resolve and reform their tactics in 2007. The CPI(M) control of rural West Bengal stifled dissent, forcing the peasantry at Nandigram to reject not only land acquisition but also the rule of the left led by CPI(M). The BUPC thus rejected CPI(M)'s rule and was able to resist the government's actual control for eleven months, despite attacks by the police and CPI(M) cadre. Through their actions, the people at Nandigram asserted their 'right to exist in and for themselves' (Hardiman, 1993, p. 59).

Indeed, Nandigram has had little direct influence on policy at the national level. In April 2007, the SEZ Board of Approval (BoA) (Final minutes of 10th BOA (SEZ) meeting , 2007) and the Empowered Group of Ministers (EGoM) met, resulting in restrictions to SEZs legislation. Thereafter, multi-product SEZs required 50 per cent of the land to be dedicated to industry, state governments were not permitted to acquire land for investors (leaving it to the market), and the SEZs were limited to 5000 hectares (Jai & Jai, 2007). The CPI(M) claimed a victory, arguing that their principled opposition to SEZs had resulted in these 'improvements' (Communist Party of India (Marxist), 2007). This ignored the more likely explanation that events at Nandigram had influenced these changes. However, neither the BoA nor the EGoM acknowledged that events at Nandigram had anything to do with these changes. It is an accepted claim that Nandigram acts as an inspiration for organisers and participants to organise similar type of movements taking place in remote areas like Bhangar, Baruipur (South 24 Parganas), Rajarhat (North 24 Parganas), Thermal Project, Katwa (Bardhaman), Nuclear Power Plant, Haripur (Purba Medinipur) etc. Other movements resisting or opposing land acquisitions or demanding an increase of in compensation and demanding settlement getting their strength from the Nandigram episode. The Lok Sabha elections held in 2009 and the West Bengal Assembly Election, 2011 saw marked the defect of the left parties including CPI(M) and the victory of the Trinamool Congress. The arrogance of CPI(M) along with insensitivity to the

dissenting opinion in Nandigram had exposed the contradictions in the policy and strategy of CPI(M) and contributed to its electoral defeat in 2011 (Bardhan, 2007). Voter's rejection of the CPI(M) in West Bengal, for the first time in 34 years, has been increasingly viewed as a major event that bears under implications for the economy and development in West Bengal in subsequent years. It is a fact that the Nandigram impasse did not continue for long period in comparison to the Singur episode, it may be said that agitation Nandigram made the beginning, though in a diffused manner, which was tried crystalized and structured at Singur culminating in a sea-change in West Bengal's politics. The importance of the movements in Nandigram lies in the fact that it initially changed the course and direction of the strategy of agro-based transformation of the rural economy of West Bengal.