

CHAPTER VII

Policy implications and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

The study area and its surrounding regions are experiencing a situation characterized by unemployment, underemployment, and low economic performance. A need for more job opportunities leads to a shortage of employment prospects in the studied region. Despite the abundance of land, cheap labor, and well-connected roads and railways in the study area, the area is primarily rich in forest resources. The study area is enriched by folk dance and song performances (*Chhau, Baul, and Kirtan*), as well as artisan and other handicrafts such as *chhau* masks, clay pottery, wall painting, and embroidery works. However, only *Chhau* and *Baul* are gaining prominence on a local and national scale. Therefore, this study aims to ‘*glocalize*’ the locally produced items through the innovative marketing system. Chapter seven evaluates existing public policies that promote access to infrastructure and extension services, land tenure, and reform policies. Based on these aspects, our work provides suitable suggestions.

7.1.1 Findings from the present research

From the entire study, it is clear that with the optimum level of technology, available resources, and the prices of produced goods, it is possible to increase the average annual income level and create employment opportunities. It can be beneficial to marginal households through the efficient use of different farm activities. On the other hand, an optimal allocation of scarce resources among alternative uses of off-farm activities can also be a viable source of year-round livelihood in the local areas. In the course of our study, four types of land holding pattern have been observed, as follows—

- i) The average size of a marginal farm <0.50 acre with irrigation and without irrigation,
- ii) The maximum size of the marginal farm ± 1.0 acre with irrigation and without irrigation,

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- iii) The average size of a small farm is ± 1.50 acres with irrigation and without irrigation, and
- iv) The maximum length of a small farm is 2.0 -3.0 acres without irrigation.

The first types of land holding are more prominent in Jhargram, Binpur I and Binpur II, Medinipur Sadar, and Raipur CDBs. Some CDBs, namely Raipur, Ranibandh, Jhargram, and Binpur I fall under type 2 of the above-stated landholding pattern. The third type of landholding with irrigation facilities is located in some particular pockets of the CDBs of Jhargram, Garhbeta II, Sarenga, Ranibandh, and Raipur from the districts of Jhargram, Paschim Medinipur, and Bankura. Further, the fourth type of land-holding pattern with irrigation facilities is located in Garhbeta II CDB, while this land-holding pattern with no irrigation facilities is situated in the CDBs of the Purulia district, including Baghmundi, Jhalda I, and II. Therefore, the gross annual crop production in the entire region needs to be more satisfactory. A significant effort has been made to get an overall picture of the findings and their causes and consequences.

The present study considered 576 (N) households with a population of 3602 people. Among these, 1691 are dependent. There needs to be a significant gap in respondents' average annual income. The maximum average annual income is Rs. 280000. At the same time, the minimum is Rs. 70000. Further, the highest average monthly income of these households is Rs. 15000, and the lowest is Rs. 4000. The maximum earnings of the male members are Rs. 9000 per month, and the lowest is Rs. 1000 per month. The highest earnings for females are Rs. 6,000 per month, while the lowest is Rs. 3000 per month. It is noticed that there is a considerable gap in daily wages according to job types. The respondents earn a maximum of Rs. 280 per day. Further, A significant gap has been found in daily expenses, too. The highest daily expense is Rs. 150, while the lowest is Rs. 70. Furthermore, our field survey revealed that alcohol consumption consumes the maximum amount of earnings, exceeding Rs. 3000 per month. Almost the same situation prevailed in the villages closed to CD blocks and district headquarters.

This work tried to pinpoint the key indicators of chronic poverty and underdevelopment. These include monocrop cultivation. Furthermore, Kharif crops

(Aman) occupy 88% of the total agricultural land (1754 sq. km). Notably, 27% of our respondents are landless, and 74% are marginal. It has found that 93% of the respondents dropped out of school before the first board examination. Further, 85% of our respondents work as casual laborers in farmland factories or construction sites, and 75% of our respondents' children assist them in family farming, household work, or any other work for earning. All these factors have affected the economic status of the people of *Jangal Mahal*. Therefore, it is difficult for them to escape the poverty trap. As a result, they were compelled to take loans from informal sources at very high rates, and then it has discovered from the primary data that a total of 62% of our respondents are indebted. The overall crop productivity for paddy in the CDBs of Paschim Medinipur district is higher than 7–8 quintals per bigha. In contrast, it is lower in the selected CDBs of Bankura and Jhargram districts. In Bankura and Jhargram, potato production is insignificant in selected CDBs. However, CDBs such as Garhbeta II and Salboni commercially produce potatoes. Furthermore, potatoes serve as their primary source of sustenance.

In this regard, the current government has taken some measures to develop the underprivileged corners of the state. There is no such thing as farming drought-resistant crops. Only a few pockets within our study area produce oilseed. These CDBs are in Garhbeta II, Raipur, a part of Jhargram. Consequently, this situation creates a crisis situation for marginal households.

In addition to agricultural pursuits, the range of employment prospects within the study region is limited to the construction industry and activities associated with the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) programme. MGNREGA (100 days of work) endeavours to safeguard the sustenance of people residing in rural regions by ensuring a hundred days of paid employment during a fiscal year for adult members of rural families who engage in unskilled manual labour (Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, 2020). However, it is essential to note that the MGNREGA provides relatively less access nowadays. It is inadequate for the sustenance of a household, as the overall allotment of this work is a total of 100 days, including all family members. However, the government has raised wages in different phases (from Rs. 178 to Rs. 289, effective

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from April 2024 onwards; the government recently upgraded the daily wages). However, it should mention the role in livelihood promotion during the crisis phase in our study area.

Furthermore, the potential for implementing MGNREGA in such a plateau fringe could be significantly enhanced. Each adult member can engage only for 10–20 days a year. Therefore, the selected respondents have made a significant claim. In this area, there are some other notable avenues for chronic poverty.

7.2 Spatialized policy implications

- **Infrastructure Development:** The government has focused on improving the infrastructure in the region by constructing roads, bridges, and other transportation facilities. This has helped to connect remote areas and improve accessibility.
- **Education and Healthcare:** The government has established schools and healthcare facilities in *Jangal Mahal* to provide better education and healthcare services to the people. This has helped in improving literacy rates and healthcare access in the region.
- **Employment Generation:** The government has initiated various employment generation programs in *Jangal Mahal* to provide livelihood opportunities to the local population. This includes skill development programs, self-employment schemes, and promoting small-scale industries.
- **Agricultural Development:** The government has implemented various agricultural development programs in *Jangal Mahal* to improve farming techniques, provide access to better seeds and fertilizers, and promote sustainable agriculture practices. This has helped in boosting the agricultural productivity and income of the farmers.
- **Social Welfare Schemes:** The government has taken initiatives to introduce several social welfare schemes in *Jangal Mahal*, such as providing financial assistance to people experiencing poverty, providing support to marginalized communities, and implementing schemes to empower women.

- **Tourism Development:** The government has also focused on promoting tourism in *Jangal Mahal* by developing tourist spots, improving tourist facilities, and organizing cultural events. This has helped to attract tourists and generate employment opportunities in the tourism sector.

The current research proposes measures to encourage development and improve the living standards of the *Jangal Mahal* people. In light of the current research, it would like to mention the role of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA). The ministry has implemented new initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life for rural residents. The following section elaborates on the different developmental policies undertaken by the government and how these are beneficial for rural people.

The government's involvement in fostering the economic growth

The government's involvement in fostering the economic growth of a resilient rural economy through communication technologies in rural education is critical. Here are some significant roles that the government may play–

- **Infrastructure development:** The government should provide substantial communication facilities in rural regions, such as broadband internet. This will connect educational institutions and people to access online resources and engage in remote learning programmes.
- **Policy and regulation:** The government can enact laws and regulations that encourage the use of communication technologies in rural education. Incentives for educational institutions to employ technology-based learning aids, data protection and security, and fostering digital literacy in rural areas are all possibilities.
- **Funding and grants:** The government can give funding and donations to support the deployment of communication technologies in rural education. This can supply schools with laptops, tablets, internet access, and teacher and student training programmes.
- **Working with stakeholders:** To promote resilient rural economies through communication technology in education, the government should interact with

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various stakeholders, including educational institutions, technology businesses, and non-profit organizations. To benefit rural areas, this partnership can identify and address problems, exchange best practices, and use resources.

- **Research and development:** The government can fund research and development projects to find new methods to use communication technology in rural education. This might entail funding studies on the efficiency of technology-based learning strategies, creating regional content and apps, and encouraging entrepreneurship in the tech industry.
- **Monitoring and evaluating:** The impact of communication technologies on rural education: The government should set up systems for this. This will make it easier to find areas that need improvement, evaluate the success of treatments, and guarantee responsibility for using resources.

By aggressively carrying out these responsibilities, the government can support the development of a robust rural economy through the utilization of communication technologies in rural education. The researcher has proposed these measures to encourage development and improve the living standards of the *Jangal Mahal* people. The current research underscores the crucial role of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA). The ministry has implemented new initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life for rural residents. The following section elaborates on the different developmental policies undertaken by the government. Images 7.1 and 7.2 show the policy execution at the local level. These two images show the implications for the beneficiaries.



Image 7.1 shows the policy execution at local level



Image 7.2 shows Bangla Awas Yojana implementation in Binpur-II

7.2.1 Role of government policies

- **Agricultural Development Policies** like the Kisan Credit Card Scheme, Krishi Krishak Bondhu Scheme, and Organic Farming Promotion have a significant role in rural development and enhancing the rural infrastructure in the CDBs of Jhargram, Garhbeta II, Raipur and Salboni of the districts Bankura and Paschim Medinipur. However, the respondents from Purulia districts are not receiving the benefits of the recent schemes. It may be caused by unawareness and educationally underprivileged from Fig 7.1.
- **Credit and Financial Support Policies** through Self-Help Groups, and Capacity Building programmes are insignificant in our study area. Moreover, the **Social Welfare Schemes and Policies** like Rupashree Prakalpa (RP) and Kanyashree Prakalpa (KP) and other **Jangal Mahal Development Policies** are also inadequately executed here.
 - Paschim Banga Society for Skill Development (PBSSD),
 - Bangla Swanirbhar Sahayata Kendra (BSSK),
 - West Bengal Khadya Sathi Prakalpa,
 - Bangla Sundar Gramme Yojana, and others.

The investigation found that the role of rural cooperatives and *Jangal Mahal* Development Programs is negligible. Local civil society organizations and NGOs like

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PRADAN, *Jangal Mahal* Social Welfare Education, and Cultural Society have a significant role in education and livelihood building.

7.2.1.1 Employment generation programmes on 2011s onwards

The West Bengal government has developed several employment generation programmes for rural areas on 2011 onwards. These special programmes provide employment opportunities to the local people. Here is a list of some of the programmes are —

- **The West Bengal Rural Employment and Production Act (WBREPA)** seeks to increase rural employment and entrepreneurship in *Jangal Mahal*. It encourages the establishment of small-scale industries, agro-based firms, and rural crafts to create jobs.
- **West Bengal State Employment Bank:** The government formed the State Employment Bank to help job seekers and employers find work there. It is a website where job searchers can register and companies may post job openings.
- **Skill Development Programmes:** To increase the employability of the local population, the government has launched skill development programmes in the region. These programmes provide training in various fields, including agriculture, handicrafts, tourism, and healthcare, preparing people for employment.
- **Self-Help Groups (SHGs):** To stimulate entrepreneurship and income production, the government supports the development of Self-Help Groups in the focused area, particularly among women. SHGs provide loans, training, and assistance in developing small enterprises and creating revenue.

7.2.1.2 Employment initiatives for rural areas

The West Bengal government's recently implemented employment-generating initiatives in the 2011 onwards in *Jangal Mahal* area, which include—

- **Paschim Banga Society for Skill Development (PBSSD):** The PBSSD is a government project offering youth in the studied area skill development training.

It provides a variety of skill development courses in industries such as IT/ITeS, retail, hospitality, and others to improve employability.

- **Bangla Swanirbhar Sahayata Kendra (BSSK):** BSSK is a government initiative in *Jangal Mahal* that encourages self-employment and entrepreneurship. Residents are given financial aid, training, and advice to create enterprises and generate income.
- **Jangal Mahal Development Board (JDB):** The JDB is a government entity designed to undertake different development projects in the area, including job creation activities. It focuses on agriculture, rural industries, tourism, and infrastructural development to provide job opportunities.
- **West Bengal Khadya Sathi Prakalpa:** This plan guarantees food security for poor people by distributing subsidized food grains. It also creates jobs by involving residents in implementing and managing fair-priced businesses and distribution centers.
- **West Bengal Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (WBMDFC):** The WBMDFC assists minority communities in the studied region with financial support and skill development training. It strives to improve their employability and encourage self-employment through numerous plans and programs.

7.2.1.3 Employment initiatives for *Jangal Mahal*

Following the 2011s, the West Bengal government implemented many employment creation programmes in *Jangal Mahal* to give livelihood access. These initiatives are—

- **Bangla Abas Yojana:** This programme helps homeless and landless natives in the selected area with shelter and job possibilities. It focuses on building low-cost homes and creating jobs through rural development initiatives.
- **Utkarsh Bangla:** Utkarsh Bangla is the West Bengal government's flagship skill development programme. It provides skill training to *Jangal Mahal* youth in hospitality, tourism, healthcare, IT/ITeS (Information Technology Enabled Service), and others to their employability and foster entrepreneurship.

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- **Bangla Sundar Gramme Yojana:** This programme focuses on developing rural regions in the *Jangal Mahal*. It comprises programmes for infrastructure development, agro-based enterprises, rural crafts, and tourism marketing, all of which create job possibilities for the local populace.
- **Paschim Banga Society for Skill Development (PBSSD):** PBSSD, founded in 2013, continues to give skill development training to adolescents in the area. It provides courses in IT/ITeS, retail, banking, and others to help students gain employment.
- **West Bengal Swarajgar Corporation Limited (WBSCL):** WBSCL is a government agency encouraging self-employment and entrepreneurship in the studies area. It provides financial help, training, and support to persons wanting to start enterprises or engage in income-generating activities.
- **West Bengal State Rural Livelihoods Mission (WBSRLM):** The WBSRLM focuses on poverty eradication and livelihood enhancement. It executes various programmes, including skill training, microenterprise development, and loan access, to improve income-generating options for impoverished people.

These are particular of the creating job opportunities programmes launched by the West Bengal government after 2011s to give livelihood chances in *Jangal Mahal*.

7.2.2 Recent agricultural development programmes

The government has conducted different agricultural development programmes to boost farming skills. Several agrarian development programmes were launched in *Jangal Mahal*, West Bengal, after 2011. Some of these programmes are—

- **Krishi Bikash Shilpa Kendra (KBK):** The KBK programme seeks to promote sustainable agriculture and increase farmer income in the region. It gives farmers training, technical aid, and financial assistance to help them embrace modern agricultural practices.
- **Integrated Pest Management (IPM):** The IPM programme focuses on eliminating chemical pesticides and encouraging ecologically friendly pest

management practices. Farmers receive training in pest identification, monitoring, and biological control strategies.

- **Soil Health Management:** This programme uses various techniques, including soil testing, balanced nutrient management, and organic fertilizers, to increase soil fertility and production. Farmers are given the required direction and support while being informed about the significance of soil health.
- **Promotion of High-Yielding Varieties:** The government encourages the cultivation of crop varieties with high yields appropriate for the area's agroclimatic conditions. Farmers are encouraged to use enhanced seed types to increase their agricultural production.
- **Agricultural Mechanisation:** Some agrarian automation projects have been developed to decrease reliance on manual labour and increase efficiency. Farmers receive financial assistance and subsidies to purchase farm gear and equipment.
- **Watershed Development:** Watershed development programmes aim to conserve water resources, avoid soil erosion, and increase irrigation water availability. This contributes to increased agricultural production and sustainability.
- **Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs):** The formation of FPOs aims to empower farmers by providing them with collective negotiating strength, market access, and value-addition possibilities. These organizations assist farmers in increasing their income and quality of life.

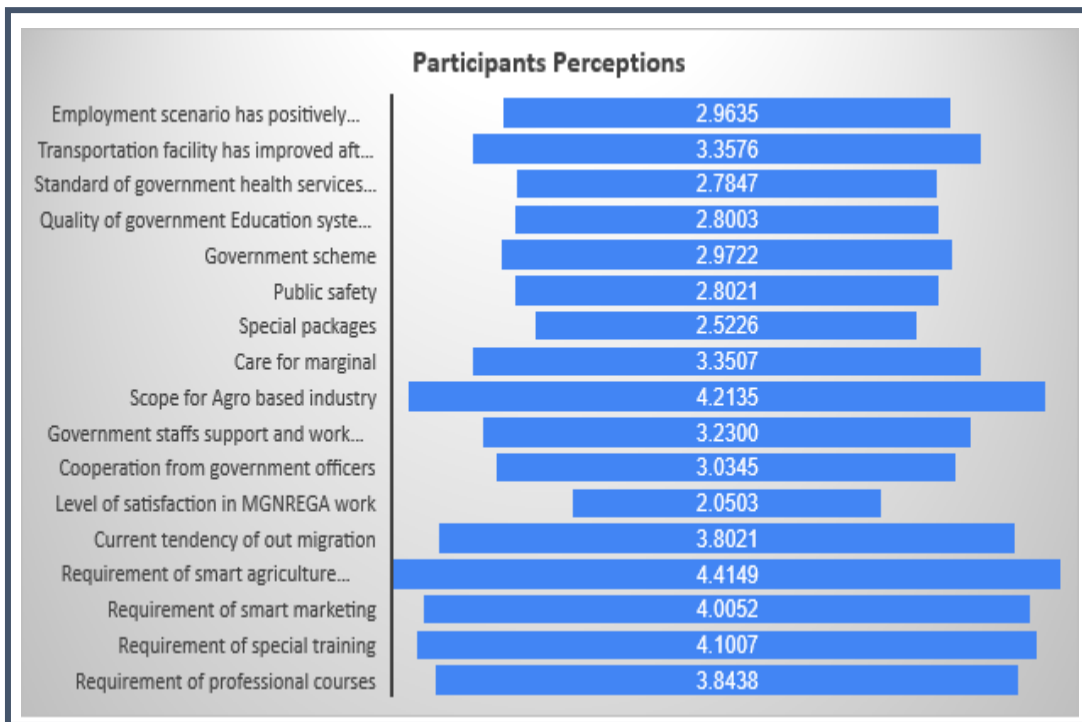
These programmes have been established to address the issues that farmers to confront and enhance farming practices, productivity, and general agricultural growth in the region.

7.3 Participants responses to the current social welfare schemes

During the field survey, the researcher recorded our respondents' responses regarding the effect and impact of recent development policies on their daily lives. To do so, this calculation ranked the reactions on a 1 to 5 scale in Fig. 7.1. The average has been calculated. The figure shows a considerable requirement for innovative agricultural

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practices (extension facilities, drought-resistant crops, land zoning, and crop selection). The response's mean value is more significant than 4.4. It means that our participants agreed on intelligent agricultural practices. The respondents express the least satisfaction with MGNREGA's (100 days' work). The mean value of satisfaction is 2.05, indicating that people are dissatisfied. They reported that the average annual work availability per person is less than 10–15 days within a financial year. Prior to the year 2015s, they received their wages at regular intervals. However, the situation worsened from 2016 onward; they received the payment irregularly. Our respondents asserted that they had to pay a specific amount to local-level political leaders to register as job card holders and access their wages. In this way, educationally impoverished people lose their earnings.



1= strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree

Fig. 7.1 Mean of the responses from the selected participants

7.4 Ground truthing: The role (implication and execution) of SDGs

During the First and Second Five Years Plan (1951–56 to 1956–61), Gandhian Development's main motto was Rural Industrialization, which emphasized the enhancement of the rural cottage industry. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MoRD) has introduced policies explicitly targeting the introduction of handicrafts in rural areas, with each settlement focusing on one particular handicraft. The Ministry of Industry has introduced policies to promote craft villages that produce ceramics, pottery, and leather goods. Therefore, an industrial development pattern has been made that consciously aims to accommodate the increasing number of people (Swaminathan, 1991). The rationale for rural industrialization policies has been to boost rural employment, revitalize rural settlements, stem the migration of younger people to urban areas, improve living standards in the countryside, reduce rural poverty, and narrow the rural-urban divide (Gough and Rigg, 2012).

Purulia, Jhargram, and Bankura districts have a long-standing dependency on handicraft and folk art activities, particularly in the CDBs, namely Baghmundi, Jhalda I, and Jhalda II, Raipur, Ranibandh, Jhargram, Binpur, and Sarenga. Recently, the government has emphasized promoting cottage industries in this sector. However, based on the entire discussion, the primary focus is to establish a self-reliant rural economy and ensure livelihoods through the integration of SMSE (small and medium-scale industries) into low-investment sectors, as illustrated in Figures 7.3 and 7.4. As a result, the current work proposes enhancing the local handicraft industries in Fig. 7.3. It needs a proper market to sell the products and integrate the rural economy. Generally, according to the analysis, almost all rural households, including farmers, are involved in artisan work. During the dry season(s), when there was less work on the farm, women would turn to making baskets and mats, while men would repair houses and farm equipment. An integrated village economy, firmly rooted, included handicrafts, creating a spatial intersection of settlement, livelihood activities, and social and cultural structures and practices. This does not imply that settlements existed in isolation. Some settlements evolved with a specialization in specific handicrafts, which then played a part in a broader regional economy. To do so, it is required to focus on rural education, specifically employment-based education.

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Therefore, this study proposes skill-building professional courses after class VIII to reduce dropout rates at a "zero cost" in the locality.

7.5 Suitable strategies for self-reliant community building

The community resilience programme should be framed by targeting stakeholders. It is badly required to eliminate gender-based discrepancies. Therefore, it can be said that Figs. 7.2 and 7.3 have shown the most viable ways of livelihood diversification to enable marginalized people to access agricultural and non-agricultural endeavours, limiting seasonal mobility and internal migration. It is also needed to enable rural people to participate in a 'learning with earning' programme (Fig. 6.1) through the government's intervention with rural entrepreneurs to establish small-scale firms with locally available resources in the rural market centres (Figs. 7.2 and 7.3).

Historical, political, cultural, and agroecological factors have played an important role in individuals' and families' decisions to locate in certain areas. The government's engagement in the creation of a resilient rural economy by forming viable demand-oriented strategies and their implementation at the grassroots level is required on an urgent basis. The preceding analysis clarifies that small and marginal farms generally are not economically sustainable production units.

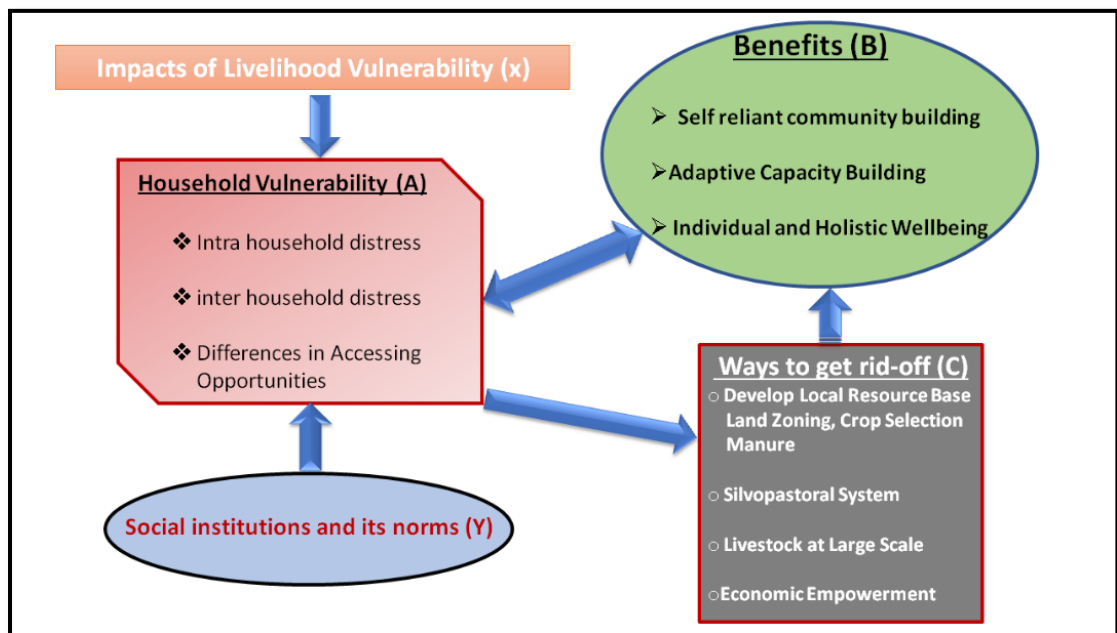


Fig. 7.2 Sustainable livelihood-based capability building framework

Fig. 7.2 illustrates the livelihood-related vulnerability and its impact on livelihood through the characters X and A. Social institutions play a crucial role in generating livelihood crisis-related problems for both X and A, as illustrated by Y. It can be minimized or overcome household vulnerability (A) by implementing the strategies outlined in C. Therefore, following the path of C can minimize household distress. Thus, by practicing the proposed farming system (C), marginalized people can achieve economic well-being.

Because it requires government agencies' intervention to collaborate with economic entities to support rural enterprises, skill-based professional education can also help rural communities become self-reliant.

Therefore, it can say that $A=X+Y$, and $B=A-C$

However, SL (Sustainable livelihood) $B=A+C$

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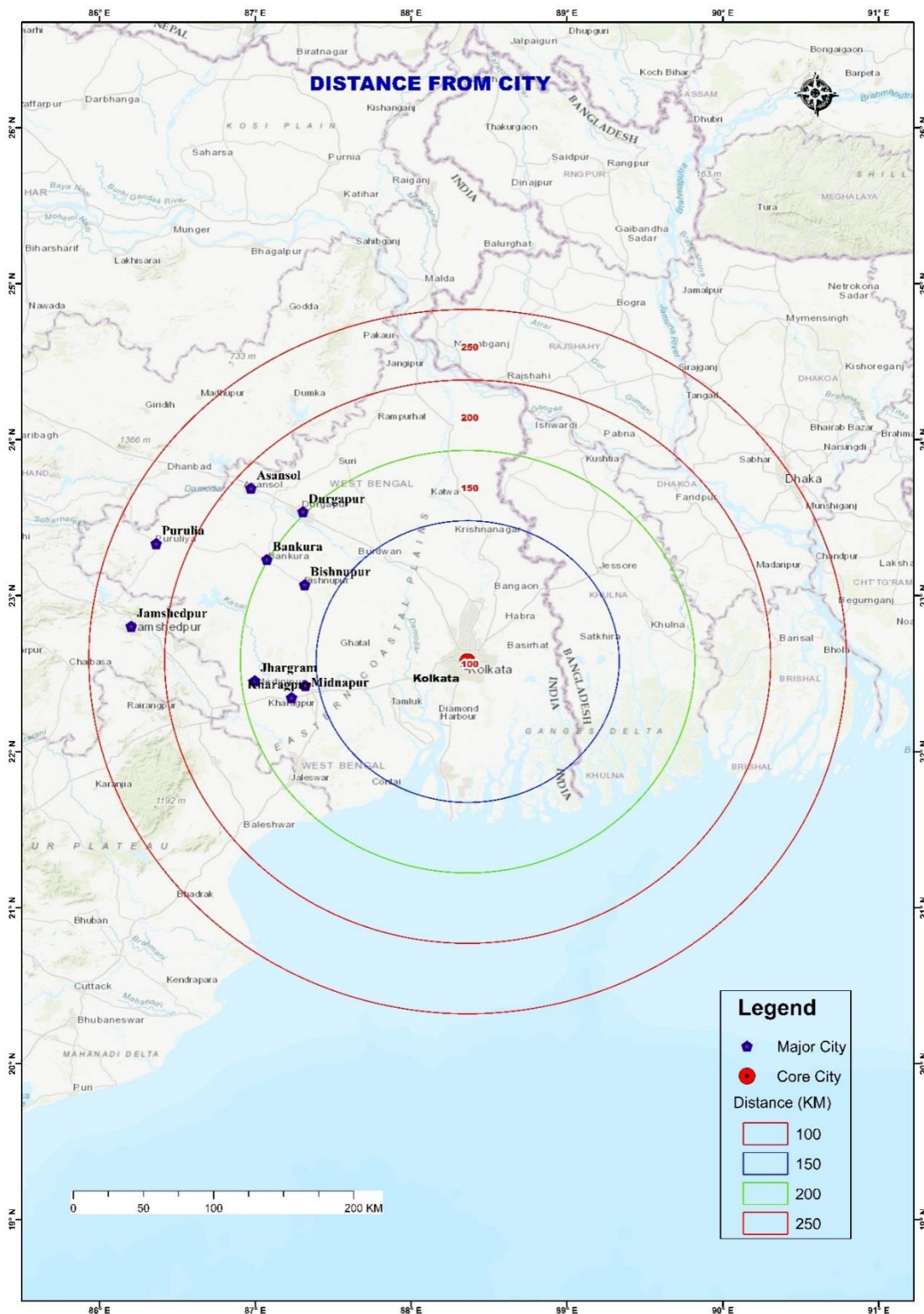


Fig. 7.3 shows the favorable location of rural small scale industry

Fig. 7.3 depicts the cities where the majority of marginalized people moved for their livelihood within the state. This map makes it clear that nearby market areas or district towns within the *Jangal Mahal* region (100–150 km) exist. Therefore, this study has explored the area's potential avenues for sustainable livelihood. This research has proposed viable and resilient livelihood-building strategies based on the territory's resource availability. Fig. 7.2 shows the possible ways to enhance the scope for increasing income and employment for the marginalized population in their native places (CDB market centres). These zones are well connected to urban areas, district towns, and interior areas, allowing them to supply the required materials and export the produced goods.

The small scale industries should be established in each CDB based on locally produced goods and resources. Meanwhile, this research proposed to set up area specific specialized livelihood sources. It may be agro based products like organic foods, beverages, baby foods, handicraft products particularly *Chhau* masks, clay pottery, *Dogra*, and soft wood products, by applying sustainable technologies and skilled professionals (Fig. 7.2.). In this way, the nearby small scale industries will diversify the rural livelihood and restrict the seasonal livelihood crisis, pseudo employment, and circular mobility. Besides, these strategies can absorb the vast laborer and pseudo employment. Images 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5 show the needed crop selection for the study area.

7.5.1 Crop selection and livelihood strategy: Food provision and income generation

It can be believed that a large section of small and marginal farmers will benefit from cultivating their lands. Their daily lives and living standards will reflect the role of agriculture in their livelihood strategies, as illustrated in Fig. 7.2. Images 7.3, 7.4, and 7.5 show the new drought-resistant cropping system in selected pockets of the research area. A few of our respondents started this type of farming to cope with livelihood crisis-related risks.

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Image 7.3 shows the drought resistant plantation in Jhargram CDB



Image 7.4 shows mixed farming in Salboni CDB



Image 7.5 shows the drought resistant farming

7.6 Limitation

The remote location of the study has created challenges during the field survey. The researcher confronted significant difficulties in accessing the interior villages as a consequence of poor communication and transportation networks. The study area is home to a wide range of population. A lack of amenities like transportation, time constraints, and other resource provisions, a representative sample size was chosen through the multistage sampling method from the entire study region. Additionally,

this research utilized data from the 2011 Census of India and the SECC. In 2011, no census took place.

7.7 Future prospects

There are some genuine prospects of this research work. It highlights the need for more research on rural agro-based small-scale industries for economic prosperity and enabling self-sufficiency in disadvantaged communities.

Academicians and scholars can explore the various aspects such as rural credit systems, rural education, nutrition and women's health, women's participation in rural development, drought-prone area cultivation, and more.

