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Rural Livelihood Pattern in Pingla block of Paschim Medinipur Districts: A Special Reference to Some Villages

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Abstract

This study examines the patterns of rural employment and livelihood strategies in Pingla Block of Paschim Medinipur district, West Bengal. Rural livelihoods are characterized by a combination of farm and non-farm activities, shaped by seasonal employment, socio-economic constraints, and emerging market opportunities. The study particularly highlights the role of traditional occupations such as agricultural labour, and informal sector activities in sustaining household income. Using a micro-level approach based on primary data, the research analyzes occupational diversification, income sources, and coping strategies adopted by rural households. It also evaluates the impact of institutional support, market access, and skill development on livelihood security. The findings indicate that dependence on agriculture alone is declining, with increasing reliance on non-farm and informal employment due to instability in farm income and limited landholding. However, these diversified strategies often remain survival-oriented rather than growth-oriented. The study concludes that while livelihood diversification enhances resilience, structural constraints such as low wages, informalization, and lack of stable employment continue to hinder sustainable rural development. Policy interventions focusing on skill enhancement, market integration, and rural industrialization are essential for improving livelihood outcomes in Pingla Block.

Keywords: Rural Livelihood, Livelihood Pattern, Rural Employment, Occupational Structure, Livelihood Diversification

Introduction

Rural employment and livelihood strategies constitute a central theme in development discourse, particularly in agricultural economies like India (Robert Chambers & Gordon Conway, 1992). Despite significant economic growth, rural areas continue to face challenges such as underemployment, seasonal job scarcity, and income instability. In states like West Bengal, where a large proportion of the population depends on agriculture and allied activities, the dynamics of rural employment have undergone considerable transformation over the past few decades (Amit Bhaduri,1973). Traditionally, rural livelihoods were predominantly based on agriculture. However, increasing population pressure on land, fragmentation of holdings, declining farm profitability, and climatic uncertainties have led to

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a gradual shift away from agriculture as the sole source of income. As a result, rural households are increasingly adopting diversified livelihood strategies, combining farm and non-farm activities such as wage labour, small businesses, services, and traditional crafts (Frank Ellis, 2000). Ray (2025) exactly considered artisan livelihoods in Pingla Block and observed that traditional handicrafts, numerical outreach, and institutional support contribute significantly to rural non-farm employment. This diversification is often a response to economic vulnerability rather than a sign of structural transformation. The concept of livelihood extends beyond mere income generation; it encompasses the capabilities, assets, and activities required for a means of living (Chambers and Conway, 1992). A sustainable livelihood is one that can cope with and recover from shocks while maintaining or enhancing its capabilities over time (Chambers and Conway, 1992). In this context, understanding employment patterns and livelihood strategies becomes crucial for designing effective rural development policies. Pingla Block in Paschim Medinipur district represents an important microcosm of rural economic transformation. However, the sustainability and growth potential of these livelihood options remain uncertain due to issues such as limited market access, lack of institutional support, and low levels of skill development. Moreover, rural employment patterns in Pingla are shaped by various socio-economic factors including education, gender, caste, landholding, and access to resources. Inequalities based on these factors often influence the distribution of opportunities and income, thereby affecting overall livelihood security. While some households achieve and improve their economic condition, others persist imprisoned in low-income, unstable occupations. In this context, a micro-level analysis of employment patterns and livelihood strategies is essential to capture the ground realities of rural life. Such an analysis helps to identify the determinants of employment, the extent of diversification, and the challenges faced by rural households. It also provides insights into how policy interventions can be tailored to promote inclusive and sustainable rural development. Therefore, the present study seeks to examine the patterns of rural employment and livelihood strategies in Pingla Block, with a focus on understanding the interplay between farm and non-farm activities, socio-economic determinants, and livelihood outcomes. The study aims to contribute to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence from a localized context, thereby offering policy-relevant insights for improving rural livelihoods (Ray, 2025).

Review literature

Dilruba Khatun and B.C. Roy (2012) studied the determinants and constraints of rural livelihood diversification in West Bengal. The study found that education, social status, access to credit, infrastructure, and agro-climatic conditions significantly influence livelihood diversification. The authors also observed that poor households face barriers such as inadequate assets, lack of training, and poor rural infrastructure, which restrict their livelihood opportunities.

Manoranjan Ghosh and Somnath Ghosal (2021) analysed rural non-farm livelihood diversification in West Bengal. Using logistic regression techniques, the study found that wage labour, non-farm businesses, and service activities play a major role in household livelihood strategies. The study also highlighted that landholding size, distance from urban

centres, food insecurity, and MGNREGA participation significantly affect non-farm employment choices.

Amit Kundu and Sangita Das (2021) examined occupational diversification among agricultural labour households in West Bengal. Their findings suggested that agricultural labour households diversify occupations mainly due to seasonal unemployment and insufficient farm income.

Mishra et. Al. (2024) explored the agriculture–livestock–forestry nexus and income diversification in selected villages of West Bengal. The study found that technology transfer, skill development, livestock activities, and financial support positively influence rural income diversification and livelihood sustainability, especially in the post-COVID period.

Chandrasekhar (1993) analysed agrarian change and occupational diversification in West Bengal. The study argued that non-agricultural employment growth in rural areas was not entirely a result of agricultural modernization but also reflected distress-driven diversification caused by inadequate agricultural opportunities.

Objectives of the study

In this brief background the present paper sets threefold objectives for itself:

- To examine the structure and composition of rural employment
- To identify major sources of livelihood among rural households.
- To analyse the pattern of livelihood with respect to employment and income of the sample household

Sources of data and methodology

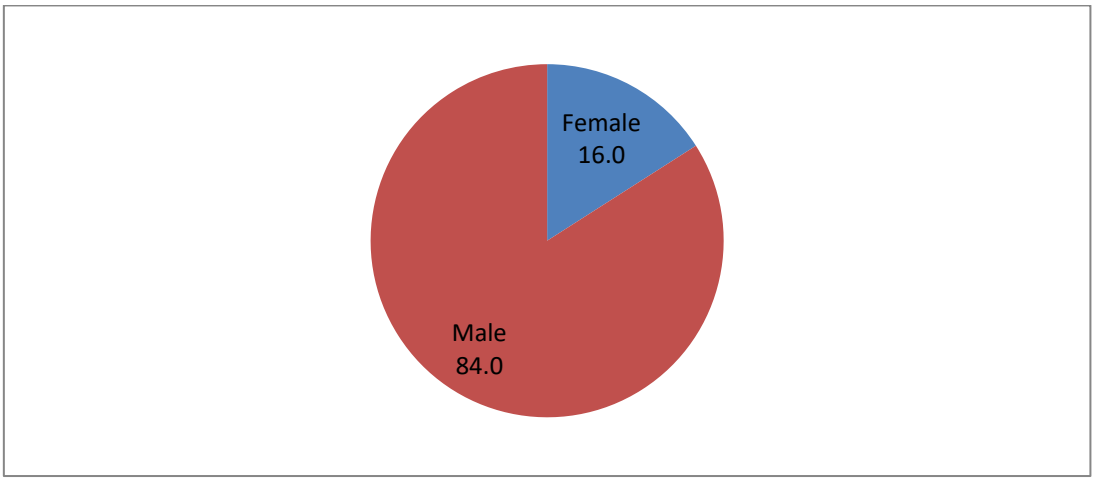
It is based on primary data relating to rural livelihood and employment generation in different sector in Pingla block of Paschim Medinipur District. Few related evidence has been extracted from various websites. I have been collected 75 sample household from three village namely, Kuilachak, Tentulmuri and Palgeria in Pingla block of Paschim Medinipur district. We have also used econometric analyse with OLS estimation.

Plan of the Study

The rest of the paper is divided into four sections. Section II determine the status of Rural Employment. Section III to explore the Income Generation Patterns across Different Sectors in Pingla Block. Section IV analyse the Livelihood Pattern of Sample Household. Section V Econometric Analysis pattern of livelihood and Employment of the Rural Sample Households Finally, Section VI makes the concluding observations.

II. Status of Employment of Pingla Block

Figure 1 Distribution of Labour by the Gender category of Employment in 2023-24



Source: Field Survey, 2023-24

Percentage share of employment to total employment by gender distribution of the Pingla block are presented in Figure 1. Share of male employment is higher than that of the female employment in Pingla block of Paschim Medinipur district. Percentage share of rural male employment is 84.0 percent whereas rural female employment stand at 16.0 percent. In our study suggested that rural male employment dominated to rural female employment.

Table 1 Distribution of Labour by the Gender category of Employment in 2023-24

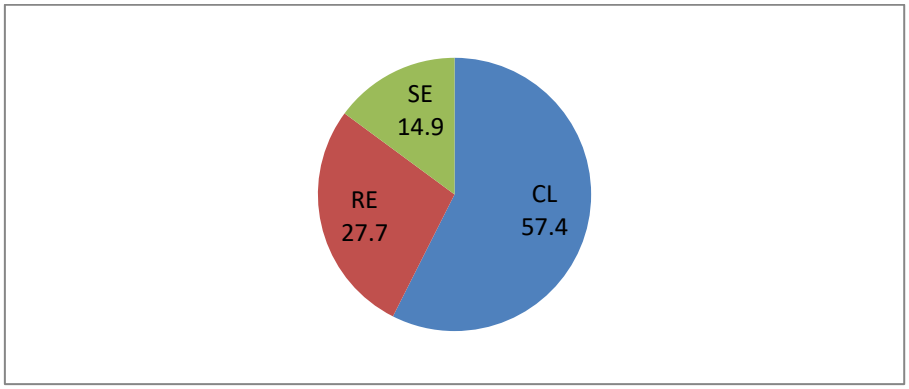
Name of Village	Male	Female	Total
Kuilachak	88.6	11.4	100
Tentulmuri	71.4	28.6	100
Palgeria	90.3	9.7	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023-24

The gender-wise distribution of labour across the sample villages—Kuilachak, Tentulmuri, and Palgeria—reveals a pronounced disparity in employment participation between male and female workers (In Table 1). The data specifies that male labour overwhelmingly dominates the workforce in all three villages. In Kuilachak, males constitute 88.6 percent of the employed labour force, leaving only 11.4 percent for females. A similar pattern is observed in Palgeria, where male participation is even higher at 90.3 percent, while female participation is limited to 9.7 percent. Tentulmuri, however, presents a relatively different scenario, with female participation reaching 28.6 percent, significantly higher than in the other two villages, though still considerably lower than male participation (71.4 percent). This inequality may be accredited to factors such as outmoded gender roles, limited access to education and skill development for women, wage discrimination, and restricted mobility. The relatively higher participation of women in Tentulmuri indicates potential for enlightening gender inclusion

through targeted involvements. Strengthening gender equality in employment is vital for achieving inclusive rural development and improving household livelihood security.

Figure 2 Distribution of Labour by the Status of Employment in 2023-24



Source: Field Survey, 2023-24

Percentage share of rural employment by employment's status in Pingla block of Paschim Medinipur district is shown in Figure 2. Distribution of Casual labour is higher than that of the self-employment and regular employment of Pingla block. Percentage share of Casual labour stand at 57.4 percent while Self-employment and regular employment is 14.9 percent and 27.7 percent in Pingla block of Paschim Medinipur district. Share of self-employment employment is lower in Pingla block of Paschim Medinipur district. In our study indicates majority of rural employment is self-employment. They also self-dependent, not only other dependent. The employment structure of Pingla Block echoes a mainly informal rural economy, with substantial dependence on casual labour and limited access to unchanging employment. Strengthening rural infrastructure, promoting skill development, and encouraging small-scale enterprises could help improve employment quality and economic stability.

Table 2 Village wise distribution of Labour by the Status of Employment in 2023-24

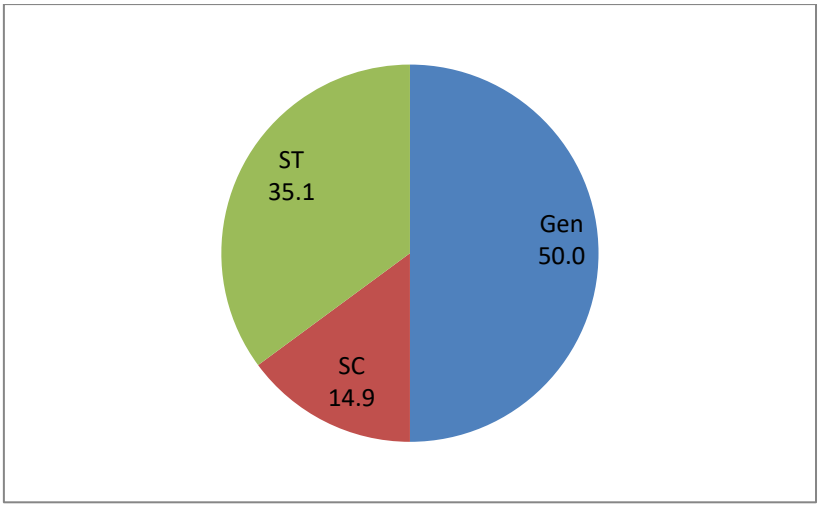
Village Name	Casual Labour	Regular Employment	Self-Employment	Total
Kuilachak	57.1	25.7	17.1	100
Tentulmuri	60.7	21.4	17.9	100
Palgeria	54.8	35.5	9.7	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023-24

The village-wise distribution of labour by employment status in 2023–24 highlights the predominance of insecure and informal forms of employment across the study area. In all three villages—Kuilachak, Tentulmuri, and Palgeria—casual labour constitutes the largest share of employment (In Table 2). Tentulmuri records the highest proportion of casual labourers at 60.7 percent, followed by Kuilachak (57.1 percent) and Palgeria (54.8 percent). This dominance of casual labour indicates a heavy reliance on daily wage work, reflecting limited job security and irregular income among rural households. In contrast, regular

employment accounts for a comparatively smaller share, though notable variations exist across villages. Palgeria exhibits the highest proportion of regular workers at 35.5 percent, suggesting relatively better access to stable employment opportunities. Kuilachak (25.7 percent) and Tentulmuri (21.4 percent) show lower levels of regular employment, indicating fewer opportunities for secure jobs in these villages. Self-employment remains the least dominant category in all three villages. Tentulmuri (17.9 percent) and Kuilachak (17.1 percent) display moderate engagement in self-employment activities, such as small-scale farming, petty trade, or household enterprises. However, Palgeria reports a significantly lower share (9.7 percent), pointing to limited entrepreneurial or independent economic activities. This structure underscores the vulnerability of rural livelihoods, as dependence on casual labour often leads to income instability and economic insecurity. The variation across villages suggests differing levels of access to employment opportunities and resources.

Figure 3 Distribution of Labour by the Social group in 2023-24



Source: Field Survey, 2023-24

Percentage share of rural employment by social groups in Pingla block of Paschim Medinipur district is shown in Figure 3. Percentage share of general rural employment stands at 50.0 percent while schedule caste and schedule tribe is 14.9 percent and 35.1 percent in Pingla block of Paschim Medinipur district. Share of rural employment is lower in schedule Cast while higher rural share is general caste.

III. Income Generation Patterns across Different Sectors in Pingla Block

Table 3 Income (in Lakh) of Labour from different sectors in 2023-24

Income from different sources	Kuilachak	Tentulmuri	Tentulmuri	Total
Income from Agriculture	28.1	11.0	17.2	56.3
Income from Trade Activity	3.0	0.5	10.4	13.9
Income from Assets	9.6	4.7	25.7	40.0

Income from Other than Agriculture	35.8	21.1	63.8	120.7
Total	76.4	37.3	117.1	230.9

Source: Field Survey, 2023-24

The income structure of labour households across the sample villages reveals a diversified but uneven pattern of livelihood sources (In table 3). The total income of the surveyed households amounts to ₹230.9 lakh, with noteworthy difference across sectors and villages. A major share of income is derived from non-agricultural activities, which account for ₹120.7 lakh, indicating the growing importance of rural non-farm sectors in sustaining livelihoods. Among the villages, the third village (likely Palgeria, based on prior tables) contributes the highest share (₹63.8 lakh) from non-agricultural sources, followed by Kuilachak (₹35.8 lakh) and Tentulmuri (₹21.1 lakh). This reflects a structural shift away from traditional agriculture toward diversified income-generating activities. Agricultural income, though still important, contributes ₹56.3 lakh to the total income. Kuilachak records the highest agricultural income (₹28.1 lakh), signifying relatively better land productivity or better dependence on farming, while Tentulmuri reports the lowest (₹11.0 lakh). The third village contributes ₹17.2 lakh, indicating moderate agricultural engagement. This pattern highlights the declining dominance of agriculture as the primary income source. Income from trade activities remains relatively limited at ₹13.9 lakh, though its distribution is uneven. The third village stands out with ₹10.4 lakh, indicating a stronger presence of small-scale business or market-linked activities, whereas Kuilachak (₹3.0 lakh) and Tentulmuri (₹0.5 lakh) show minimal engagement in trade. A notable component is income from assets, which totals ₹40.0 lakh. The third village again records a substantial share (₹25.7 lakh), suggesting better ownership of productive assets such as livestock, land, or rental properties. Kuilachak (₹9.6 lakh) and Tentulmuri (₹4.7 lakh) lag behind, indicating disparities in asset ownership and wealth distribution. The income pattern reveals that rural livelihoods are progressively multi-dimensional, with a strong dependence on non-agricultural sources together with agriculture. The dominance of non-farm income reflects both opportunity diversification and distress-driven shifts due to the limitations of agriculture, such as small landholdings and low productivity.

Table 4 Income (in Lakh) of Labour by Gender Category in 2023-24

Village	Male	Female	Total
Kuilachak	63.1	13.3	76.4
Tentulmuri	31.2	6.1	37.3
Tentulmuri	109.4	7.7	117.1
Total	203.7	25.2	230.9

Source: Field Survey, 2023-24

The gender-wise distribution of income among labour households in 2023–24 reveals a significant disparity between male and female earnings across all sample villages (In Table 4). The total income generated amounts to ₹230.9 lakh, of which a disproportionately large

share—₹203.7 lakh—is contributed by male workers, while female workers account for only ₹25.2 lakh. This indicates that female income constitutes barely around one-tenth of the total, highlighting a pronounced gender gap in earnings. At the village level, Kuilachak records male income of ₹63.1 lakh compared to ₹13.3 lakh for females, suggesting relatively better female participation than in other villages, yet still substantially lower than male earnings. In Tentulmuri, male income stands at ₹31.2 lakh, while female income is limited to ₹6.1 lakh, reflecting a similar pattern of disparity. The third village (likely Palgeria, though mislabelled in the table) shows the widest gap, with male income reaching ₹109.4 lakh compared to only ₹7.7 lakh for females, indicating extremely low female contribution to total income despite higher overall earnings. Overall, the findings underscore a highly gendered structure of rural income, where men dominate income generation while women remain economically marginalized. This imbalance not only affects individual welfare but also limits overall household income potential and economic development.

Table 5 Income (in Lakh) of Labour by status of employment in 2023-24

Village	Casual Labour	Regular Employment	Self-Employment	Total
Kuilachak	34.2	29.6	12.6	76.4
Tentulmuri	11.0	21.1	5.2	37.3
Tentulmuri	30.3	51.0	35.9	117.1
Total	75.5	101.7	53.7	230.9

Source: Field Survey, 2023-24

The distribution of income by employment status across the sample villages highlights important differences in earning patterns and livelihood security (In Table 5). The total income of ₹230.9 lakh is unevenly distributed among casual labour, regular employment, and self-employment, reflecting varying degrees of stability and productivity in rural occupations. At the aggregate level, regular employment emerges as the largest contributor, generating ₹101.7 lakh, followed by casual labour with ₹75.5 lakh and self-employment with ₹53.7 lakh. This indicates that although casual labour accounts for a larger share of employment (as observed earlier), regular employment provides higher income stability and earnings, making it a crucial component of rural livelihoods. At the village level, Kuilachak shows a relatively balanced income distribution, with ₹34.2 lakh from casual labour, ₹29.6 lakh from regular employment, and ₹12.6 lakh from self-employment. This suggests a diversified livelihood structure, though still with a reliance on wage-based work. In Tentulmuri, income from regular employment (₹21.1 lakh) surpasses that from casual labour (₹11.0 lakh), indicating relatively better access to stable jobs compared to other villages, while self-employment remains limited at ₹5.2 lakh. The third village (likely Palgeria, though mislabelled in the table) stands out with significantly higher income levels across all categories. Regular employment dominates with ₹51.0 lakh, followed by self-employment at ₹35.9 lakh and casual labour at ₹30.3 lakh. This pattern reflects a more economically advanced and diversified livelihood structure, with greater access to stable employment and entrepreneurial

activities. Overall, the findings suggest that while casual labour remains a major source of employment, it does not generate the highest income, underscoring its low productivity and vulnerability. In contrast, regular employment and self-employment contribute more substantially to income, highlighting the importance of stable jobs and independent economic activities in improving rural livelihoods.

IV. Livelihood Pattern of Sample Household

Table 6 Village wise Expenditure on Food and Non-Food items

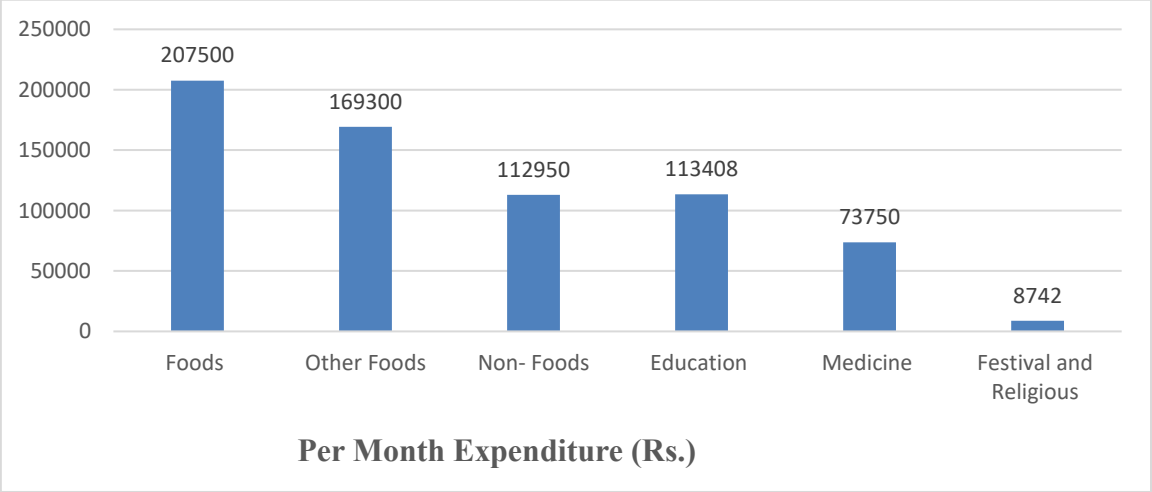
Village	Expenditure on Food (Rs.)	Expenditure on Non-Food (Rs.)
Kuilachak	97000.00	874300.00
Tentulmuri	68800.00	537600.00
Palgeria	211000.00	2294300.00
Total	376800.00	3706200.00

Source: Field Survey, 2023-24

The expenditure pattern of sample households provides crucial insights into their livelihood strategies and standard of living. Table 6 reveals a clear distinction between spending on food and non-food items across the three villages—Kuilachak, Tentulmuri, and Palgeria. The total expenditure on food amounts to ₹376,800, whereas expenditure on non-food items is significantly higher at ₹3,706,200, indicating a strong shift toward non-food consumption. At the village level, Palgeria records the highest expenditure on both food (₹211,000) and non-food items (₹2,294,300), suggesting relatively higher income levels and a more diversified consumption pattern. Kuilachak follows with ₹97,000 spent on food and ₹874,300 on non-food items, while Tentulmuri shows the lowest expenditure levels, with ₹68,800 on food and ₹537,600 on non-food items. Despite these differences, a common pattern emerges across all villages: non-food expenditure overwhelmingly exceeds food expenditure. This dominance of non-food expenditure reflects changing rural consumption behavior, where households allocate a substantial portion of their income to items such as education, healthcare, housing, transportation, and social obligations. However, it may also point to rising costs of essential services, which place financial pressure on households.

Figure 4 revels per month expenditure (Rs.) by different item of sample household in Pingla block of Paschim Medinipur district. The expenditure pattern of the sample households reflects the socio-economic condition, consumption behaviour, and livelihood characteristics of rural households. The distribution of expenditure among different heads indicates the priority areas of household spending and the changing nature of rural consumption patterns. Food expenditure constitutes the largest share of total monthly expenditure, amounting to Rs. 207,500.

Figure 4 Per Month Expenditure (Rs.) by different Item of Sample Households



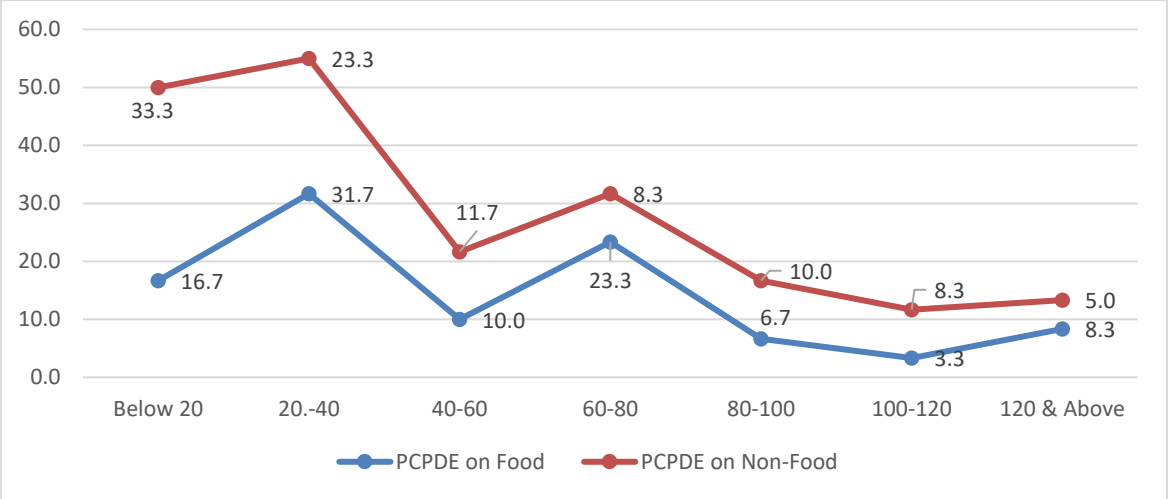
Source: Field Survey, 2023-24

The high expenditure on food indicates that basic subsistence remains the primary concern of rural households. Rising food prices, dependence on market purchases, and the need to maintain household nutritional requirements may have contributed to the large share of food expenditure. The expenditure on other food items is also significantly high at Rs. 169,300. This category generally includes milk products, fish, meat, fruits, snacks, beverages, and processed foods. Non-food expenditure accounts for Rs. 112,950 per month. This includes expenditure on clothing, transport, fuel, communication, electricity, and other household necessities. It reflects the gradual modernization of rural life and increasing dependence on market-based goods and services. Education expenditure is estimated at Rs. 113,408, which is one of the major components of household expenditure. Expenditure on education may include school fees, tuition, books, uniforms, and transportation. Medical expenditure amounts to Rs. 73,750, indicating that healthcare costs impose a considerable financial burden on rural households. Limited public healthcare facilities, dependence on private medical services, and increasing health-related problems may be responsible for the high medical expenditure. Festival and religious expenditure is comparatively low at Rs. 8,742. The lower expenditure may indicate financial limitations and prioritization of essential consumption over ceremonial activities.

Comparison on Food & Non-Food item

Figure 5 presents the distribution of sample households according to Per Capita Per Day Expenditure (PCPDE) on food and non-food items. The expenditure groups indicate the economic condition and consumption behavior of rural households.

Figure 5 Comparison of Sample Households Between per capita per day Expenditure on Food and Non-Food Item (Rs.)



Source: Field Survey, 2023-24

The comparative analysis of PCPDE on food and non-food items reveals significant variations among different expenditure groups (in figure 5). In the case of food expenditure, the highest proportion of households (31.7 percent) belongs to the Rs. 20–40 expenditure group, followed by 23.3 percent in the Rs. 60–80 group. This indicates that a large section of rural households spends a moderate amount on food consumption, reflecting the importance of food as a basic necessity. On the other hand, non-food expenditure is highly concentrated in the lowest expenditure category. About 33.3 percent of households fall under the "Below Rs. 20" group for non-food items, which is much higher than the corresponding food expenditure group (16.7 percent). This suggests that many households have very limited capacity to spend on non-food necessities such as clothing, education, transport, healthcare, and recreation. The middle expenditure categories (Rs. 40–60 and Rs. 60–80) show a comparatively higher share in food expenditure than non-food expenditure. This reflects that households prioritize food consumption before allocating income to non-food items. In rural areas, food security remains the primary concern, especially among low and middle-income households. In the higher expenditure groups (Rs. 80 and above), the percentage of households gradually declines for both food and non-food items. Only 8.3 percent of households spend Rs. 120 and above on food items, while only 5 percent spend the same amount on non-food items. This indicates the limited presence of high-income households within the sample villages.

V. Econometric Analysis of Food and Non-Food Items of the Rural Sample Households

OLS Estimation of Rural Food and Non-Food Items

OLS regression model is used to analyse the variation of per capita per day expenditure on food and non-food item across sample households. The Pooled Regression Model (Model 1 and Model 2) for the estimation of Food PCPDE and Non-Food PCPDE is given in equation 1 and equation 2.

$$\text{Food PCPDE}_{it} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{INCOME}_{it} + \alpha_2 \text{EDU}_{it} + \alpha_3 \text{HHZ}_{it} + \alpha_4 \text{LAND}_{it} + \alpha_5 \text{OCCUP}_{it} + \alpha_6 \text{CAST}_{it} + \alpha_7 \text{GEN}_{it} + U_{it} \quad \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots \text{Eq}(1)$$

$$\text{Non} - \text{Food PCPDE}_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{INCOME}_{it} + \beta_2 \text{EDU}_{it} + \beta_3 \text{HHZ}_{it} + \beta_4 \text{LAND}_{it} + \beta_5 \text{OCCUP}_{it} + \beta_6 \text{CAST}_{it} + \beta_7 \text{GEN}_{it} + u_{it} \quad \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots \text{Eq}(2)$$

Where, α's is the coefficient of the independent variables and U & u is the error term. 'i' is used to denote the individual and 't' for time and i = 1,2,3, ...,75 (No. of households).

Table 7 Results of OLS Estimation of PCPDE on Food Items

	Coefficient	t-Value	P>t	
INCOME	0.465	5.40	0.000	
EDU	1.732	2.50	0.014	Number of Observation = 75
HHS SIZE	-1.968	-2.18	0.031	
LAND	3.114	2.98	0.004	F (7, 67) = 16.82
OCCUPTION	4.287	2.38	0.019	Prob > F = 0.0000
CAST	-3.256	-2.19	0.030	R-squared = 0.503
Gender	2.845	1.74	0.084	Adj R-squared = 0.472
CONS	13.576	2.71	0.008	

The regression results indicate that income, education, landholding, and occupation positively influence food expenditure among rural households. Family size negatively affects per capita expenditure because larger households distribute resources among more members. The caste variable has a negative and statistically significant coefficient, suggesting that SC/ST households spend comparatively less on food consumption than Non-SC/ST households. This reflects socio-economic disparities in the rural economy. The gender coefficient is positive, indicating that male-headed households tend to spend more on food items compared to female-headed households. However, the significance level suggests that gender differences are moderate. The R-squared value of 0.503 implies that approximately 50.3 percent of the variation in food expenditure is explained by the explanatory variables included in the model.

Table 8 Results of OLS Estimation of PCPDE on Non-Food Items

	Coefficient	t-Value	P>t	
INCOME	0.398	4.91	0.000	
EDU	2.284	3.44	0.001	Number of Observation = 75
HHS SIZE	-1.746	-1.95	0.053	

LAND	2.653	2.61	0.010	F (7, 67) = 15.94
OCCUPTION	5.102	3.02	0.003	Prob > F = 0.0000
CAST	-2.874	-2.11	0.037	R-squared = 0.487
Gender	3.418	2.25	0.026	Adj R-squared = 0.454
CONS	10.864	2.29	0.024	

The regression results show that household income has a positive and statistically significant effect on non-food expenditure. This implies that households with higher income spend more on education, healthcare, transport, clothing, and other non-food necessities. Education positively influences non-food expenditure, indicating that educated households invest more in human capital and quality of life. Family size negatively affects per capita non-food expenditure because larger households face greater financial pressure. Landholding and occupational stability significantly improve expenditure capacity, reflecting the importance of productive assets and secure employment in rural livelihoods. The caste variable has a negative coefficient, suggesting that SC/ST households spend comparatively less on non-food items than Non-SC/ST households. This indicates the persistence of socio-economic inequality. The positive coefficient of the gender variable implies that male-headed households have relatively higher non-food expenditure than female-headed households, possibly due to differences in income opportunities and earning capacity. The R-squared value indicates that nearly 48.7 percent of the variation in non-food expenditure is explained by the explanatory variables included in the model.

VI. Concluding Observation

The study reveals that rural livelihood patterns in Pingla Block of Paschim Medinipur district are gradually shifting from traditional agriculture-based occupations toward diversified livelihood strategies. Due to increasing population pressure, fragmented landholdings, seasonal unemployment, and unstable agricultural income, rural households are increasingly dependent on non-farm activities, wage labour, small businesses, migration, and allied agricultural sectors for sustaining their livelihoods. The analysis further indicates that socio-economic factors such as education, gender, social caste, land ownership, and household income significantly influence livelihood diversification and expenditure behaviour of rural households. The findings also show that households with diversified income sources generally experience better livelihood security and higher expenditure capacity on food, education, health, and non-food items. However, economic inequality, limited employment opportunities, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of skill development continue to constrain sustainable rural development in the study area. Therefore, the study suggests that effective policy measures focusing on rural employment generation, skill training, financial inclusion, agricultural modernization, and development of rural non-farm sectors are essential for improving livelihood security and socio-economic conditions in Pingla Block.

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