

COOCHBEHAR

Overall scenario of the district

Coochbehar district is located in the northeastern part of the state and bounded by the district of Jalpaiguri in the north, state of Assam in the east and by Bangladesh in the west as well as in the south.

As a result the district has location wise advantages in terms of sourcing of raw materials and marketing of finish products to the North-Eastern states as well as Bangladesh.

The district constitutes of [as per district statistical handbook, 2009]

- ✓ Municipalities -6
- ✓ Blocks - 12

The district ranks 11th in terms of literacy rate and 11th in terms of sex ratio among all other districts of West Bengal.

The rivers in the district of Cooch Behar generally flow from northwest to southeast. Six rivers that cut through the district are the Teesta, Jaldhaka, Torsha, Kaljani, Raidak, Gadadhar and Ghargharia.

District Profile:

Population:

According to Census Data (2011), the Total Population of the district is 28,22,780 out of which there are 14,53,590 males (51.49%) & 13,69,190 females (48.51%). As of 2011 it is the third least populous district of West Bengal (out of 19), after Dakshin Dinajpur and Darjeeling. The population density in the district is 833 persons per sq km.

Some of the major areas in terms of density of population (according to 2001 census) are:

- Cooch Behar(M) (9273 persons per sq. km),
- Haldibari (M) (9093 persons per sq. km),
- Dinhata(M) (7533 persons per sq. km),
- Mathabhanga(M) (6263 persons per sq. km),
- Tufanganj(M) (5149 persons per sq. km).

Other major settlements in the district (in terms of total number of population) are Khagrabari, Guriahati, Mekhliganj (M), Kharimada Khagrabari, Bhagni Pratham Kanda.

The above places can be targeted for marketing of processed food products. The target customer group can be considered as people belonging to age group of 05-25 which is shown in the table below:

Distribution of population over different age group (Census, 2001):

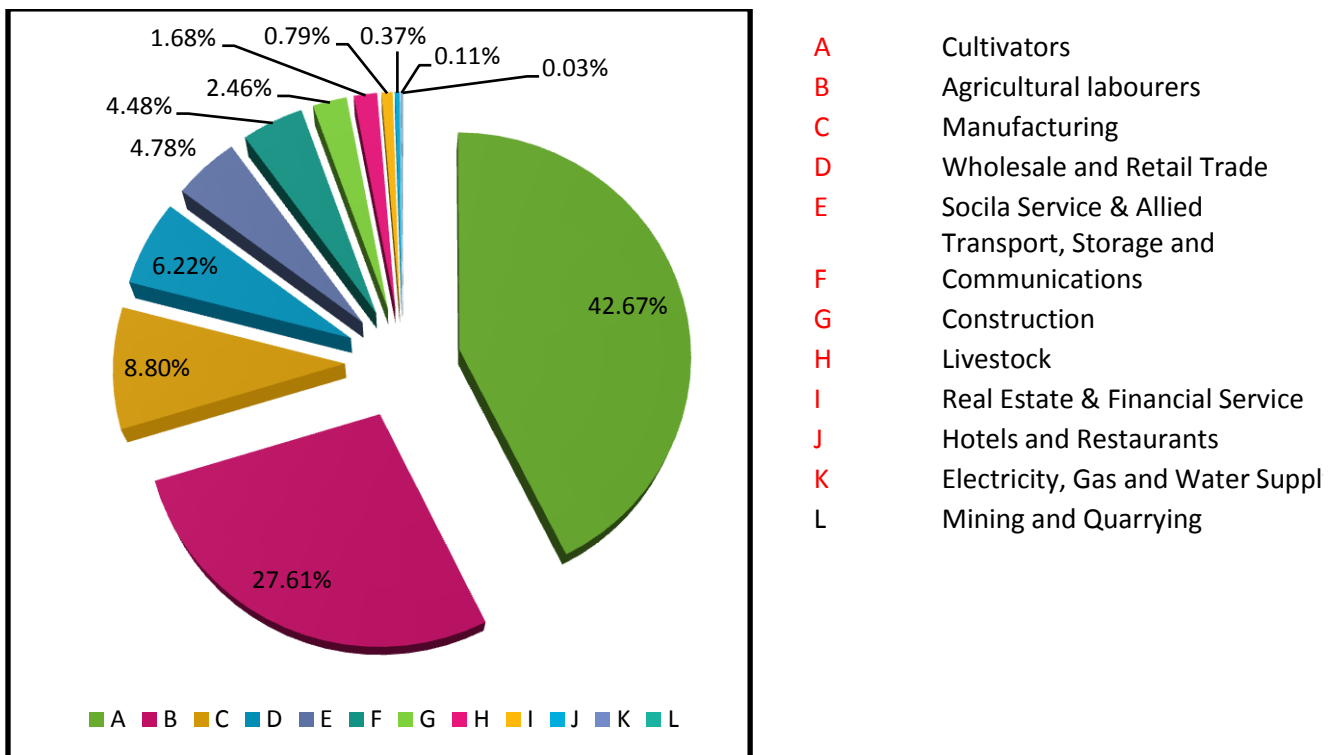
Age group	% of total population
0-4	10.45
05-24	43.07
25-59	39.34
60 and above	6.88

Source: Census, 2001

Around 1.57% total population, 24,79,155 (2001) living in the district are from outside of West Bengal, among them, notable states are:

- ✓ Assam,
- ✓ Bihar,
- ✓ Rajasthan
- ✓ Uttar Pradesh

Work force constitutes 27.40% of total population and the distribution of the same is as follows:



Source: Census Data, 2001

The per capita income in the district was found out to be Rs 16657/- during the year 2003-04. Around 70% of total work force depends on agriculture for their livelihoods.

Infrastructure:

The district is well networked with other parts of the states through:

Road ways:

- National Highway: NH 31
 - Lane: 4
 - Length of NH within the district: 56 KM
 - Connected other states: The highway starts in Barhi, Jharkhand at the NH 2 and generally traverses in Northeast direction passing through Jhumri Tilaiya & Koderma in Jharkhand, Nawada, Bihar Sharif, Bakhtiarpur, Mokameh, Begusarai, Purnea, & Kishanganj in Bihar Dalkhola, Bagdogra & Siliguri, Malbazar, Mainaguri, Dhupguri, CoochBehar & Tufanganj in West Bengal, Kokrajhar, Nalbari in Assam and ends at Jalukbari, Guwahati.
 - Connected other districts: Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling
 - Blocks on the NH: Cochbehar-II, Tufanganj-I, Tufanganj-II
- State Highway (SH):
 - 1 SH
 - SH-12A connecting Changrabandha, Mathabhanga, Coochbehar, Baneswar & Alipurduar

Source: West Bengal Public Works' Department

Railway:

- Nearest major railway junction is New Jalpaiguri and Jalpaiguri which is treated as gateway of North Eastern States.

Other social infrastructure:

- Technical Education:
 - Polytechnics: 01
- Health:
 - Standard health network like district hospital, block hospitals and Private nursing home/clinics are observed
- Entertainment:
 - Standard cinema halls are observed.

Source: District Statistical Handbook, 2009

➤ Banking Infrastructure:

- Lead Bank - Central bank of India and the Following are the other banks found in the district

Name of Bank	No. of Branches
SBI	18
Allahabad	5
UBI	9
UCO	3
BOI	3
CBI	34
ICICI	2
BOB	4
IDBI	2

Sources: Individual bank's website

Power Infrastructure:

Supply Stations (SS) are:

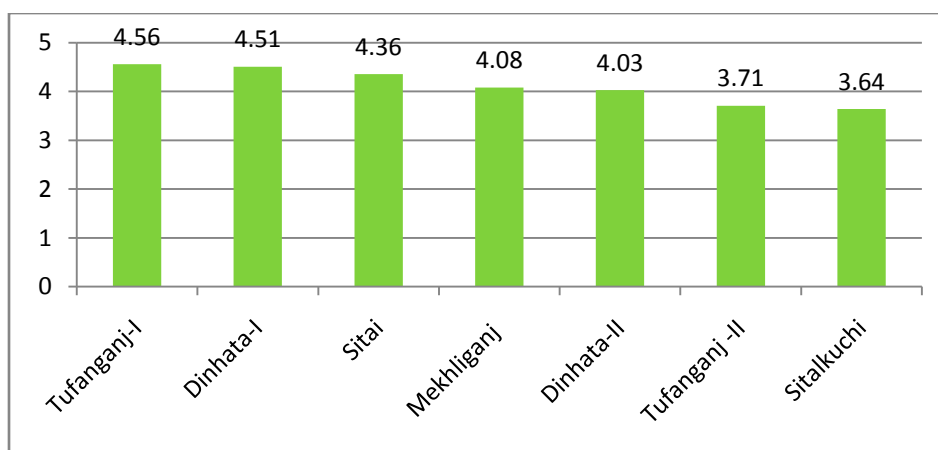
Sl. No	SS name	Capacity (KVA)
1	Coochbehar	132

Source: West Bengal State Electricity Transmission Company Limited

Ground water:

It has been observed that one of the major sources of water for food processing units in West Bengal is ground water.

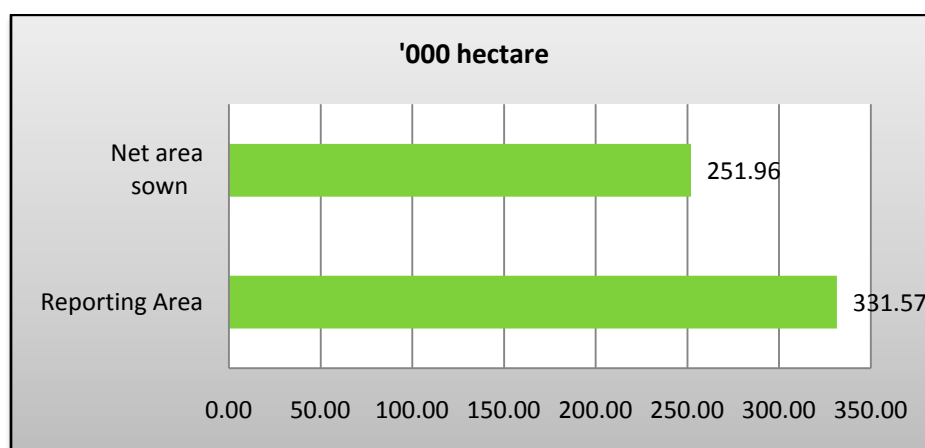
Blocks with average depth of ground water more than 3.5 meters during April, 2011 are:



Source: State Water Investigation Directorate

Agriculture & Horticulture:

Reporting area in the district is 331570 hectare. Net sown area is 75.99% of total reporting area. Hence the district is rich in agricultural production.



Source: District Statistical Handbook, 2009

Agriculture, Horticulture and Livestock production:

Position of the district in terms of State's production:

Cooch Behar	Crops/ Fruits/ Veg/ livestock	Rank in the state	Production, 000' MT	% to states' production
Agricultural produce	Linseed	4th	0.22	15.74
Vegetables	Tomato	1st	149.11	14.02
	Aurum	1st	68.68	23.09

Cooch Behar	Crops/ Veg/ Fruits/ livestock	Rank in the state	Production, 000' MT	% to states' production
	Watermelon	2nd	33.31	14.27
	Cucurbits	4th	158.25	7.43
	Cauliflower	4th	136.78	7.70
Fruits	Jackfruit	2nd	29.95	15.61
	Pineapple	5th	10.17	3.30

Source: Evaluation Wing, Directorate of Agriculture GoWB 2009-10, Bureau of Applied Economics & Statistics, Livestock Population Handbook 2009, Dept. of FPI & H 2010-11

Other than the above items following fruits and vegetables are also available in significant quantity in the district:

FRUITS

Banana

VEGETABLESCabbage
Elephant food**Related infrastructure:**

- Research station:

Name	Location	Area in acre
Horticulture Development Farm	Cooch Behar	2.18

Source: Dept of Food Processing Industries & Horticulture

- Uttar Banga Krishi Vishwa Vidyalaya, Pundibari is dedicated to activities of Research & Development in agricultural sector.

Major agricultural/ horticultural markets:

Regulated market:

- Cooch Behar Sadar Regulated Market
- Tufanganj Regulated Market
- Mathabhanga Regulated Market
- Dinhata Regulated Market
- Mekhliganj Regulated Market
- Haldibari Regulated Market

Source: West Bengal State Marketing Board & I-Win Analysis

Storage facilities:

- Potato storage:
 - 11 cold storage having total capacity 2795399.05 quintal
- Multipurpose cold storage:

Block	No.	Total capacity (qt)
Coochbehar-I	1	30000
Coochbehar RMC (under construction)	1	870
Tufanganj RMC (under construction)	1	870
Mathabhanga RMC (under construction)	1	870
Mekhliganj RMC (under construction)	1	870
Dinhata RMC (under construction)	1	870
Haldibari RMC (under construction)	2	1740

Source: Directorate of Agri Marketing, West Bengal State Marketing Board

Growth Centre: WBIIDC Growth Centre

- 4 kms from Cooch Behar Town on Cooch Behar Natabari Road.
- Connectivity: 0.5km from NH 31 by road, 2kms from New Cooch Behar Railway Station .
 - Total Area- 131 acres
 - Allotable Land- 93 acres
 - Alloted Land- 91 acres
 - Operating unit- Essem JuteTwines Pvt. Ltd., Mahina Cold Storage, Gram Valley Agro Pvt. Ltd.

Source:WBIIDC

Food Processing Industries:

Till 2006-07, number of food processing units in the district was 232. New units registered since 2007 is as given below. According to definition of MSME act 2006, the distribution of the units is as follows:

Units	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	Total
Micro	88	51	55	45	91	330
Small	2	2		1	1	6
Total	90	53	55	46	92	336

Sources: DIC and I-WIN analysis

Sector wise and year wise distribution of the new units is as follows:

Sector	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	Total
Cereals & Pulses Processing	6	1	2	1	3	13
Confectionery/Biscuit	5	2	5		2	14
Diary & Milk	6		9		1	16
Fruits & vegetable processing	2					2
Oil	2	4			1	7
Others	3		1	1	1	6
Packaged Drinking Water		1		1	1	3
Paddy Processing	62	43		41	80	226
Poultry, Meat Processing			38			38
Snacks/Pasta	4	1		1	1	7
Spices		1		1	2	4
Total	90	53	55	46	92	336

Sources: DIC and I-WIN analysis

Employment scenario in the food processing industry of the district for the new units is shown in the table below:

Sector	2007-08		2008-09		2009-10		2010-11		2011-12		Total	
	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem	Male	Fem
Cereals & Pulses Processing	70		6		3	8	7		12	0	98	8
Confectionery/Biscuit	32		22		32	27			15		101	27
Diary & Milk	36				54	3			3	1	93	4
Fruits & vegetable processing	65										65	0
Oil	32		56						6		94	0
Others	13				5	3	1		3		22	3
Packaged Drinking Water			22				17	5	15		54	5
Paddy Processing	232		184		154	9	146	16	230	4	946	29
Snacks/Pasta	37		2				1	4	8		48	4
Spices			5				1	3	10		16	3
Total	517	0	297	0	248	50	173	28	302	5	1537	83

Sources: DIC and I-WIN analysis

Hence a total of 1620 people are directly involved in the above mentioned food processing industries for their livelihoods.

Some of the big players having manufacturing unit in the district are:

Name of the company	Product
M/s Modan Mohan Rice Mill Pvt. Ltd.	Rice
M/s R.M.Agrotech Products Pvt. Ltd.	Rice
M/s Somnath Flour Pvt. Ltd.	Flour
M/s Poddar Food Products Pvt. Ltd.	Fruit juice, Pickle, Canned food product

Sources: Dept. of C & I, GoWB, and I-WIN analysis

Food Manufacturing unit under FSSAI [Erstwhile FPO]:

No. of units in the district which acquired FPO license under different food category is given below:

Group Name	No. of Units
Jam Group. Squash Group, Tomato sauce, Vegetable Sauce, Non Fruit-Vinegar, Pickles, Chutney ,Non Fruit Jelly,Sauces(Other than Tomato & Soya)	1

Source: Food Safety and Standards Authority of India Office, eastern region

Investment opportunities:

This relatively sparsely populated (by state standards) district is primarily agrarian with over 70% of residents being engaged in agriculture with little manufacturing activity. Strategically located in the so called "chicken neck" area, it forms the entry point of the narrow corridor that connects the entire north east to the rest of India.

Today the district is connected to the rest of the state by road (NH31) and railway system. Today the much talked about commercial airport at Cooch Behar, which was re-opened 3 years ago, does not have any scheduled or unscheduled airport. Only sometimes a helicopter service operates from this airport.

The district is not widely known for any major Horticulture. However it ranks 4th highest producer of linseed in the state, 1st in tomato (Haldibari area) and aurum cultivation, second highest producer of watermelon and jackfruit. However there is hardly any horticulture processing. It can also depend heavily on rich horticulture produce from the North East like pineapple, passion fruit etc. and cheap oranges from neighboring Bhutan.

The bountiful tomato produce in Haldibari can be processed at Haldibari itself. In bumper crop years, much of the produce rots. The bulk of the produce is usually exported out of the state to Delhi area or

exported to Pakistan through the Wagah border as fresh produce. The outlet can be through New Jalpaiguri which is closer to Haldibari than District HQ at Cooch Behar. The tomato processing facility can be the nucleus for setting up a major Fruit and Vegetable Processing manufacturing unit. And this unit can be developed in PPP mode. The required land for this unit can be found in the Block Seed Farm in Haldibari, with an original area of 25 acres owned by the state Government. Some of this land was later transferred to Agriculture Marketing Department.

The Department had commissioned a Detailed Project Report for this project and the Report is already with the Department and the PPP modeling. The only tomato processing unit in Haldibari is now closed.

Elsewhere in the district, a large number of SME units can be set up at different locations. These can be for pre-processing tomato for "table" usage, for extracting watermelon juice for selling in pouches, jack fruit pre-processing and packaging for market sale etc.

Oil can be extracted from linseed and sold for further processing. There were some such units in the district which one does not hear about any more. Low cost oranges from Bhutan can also be used for extraction and pouching and sold.