

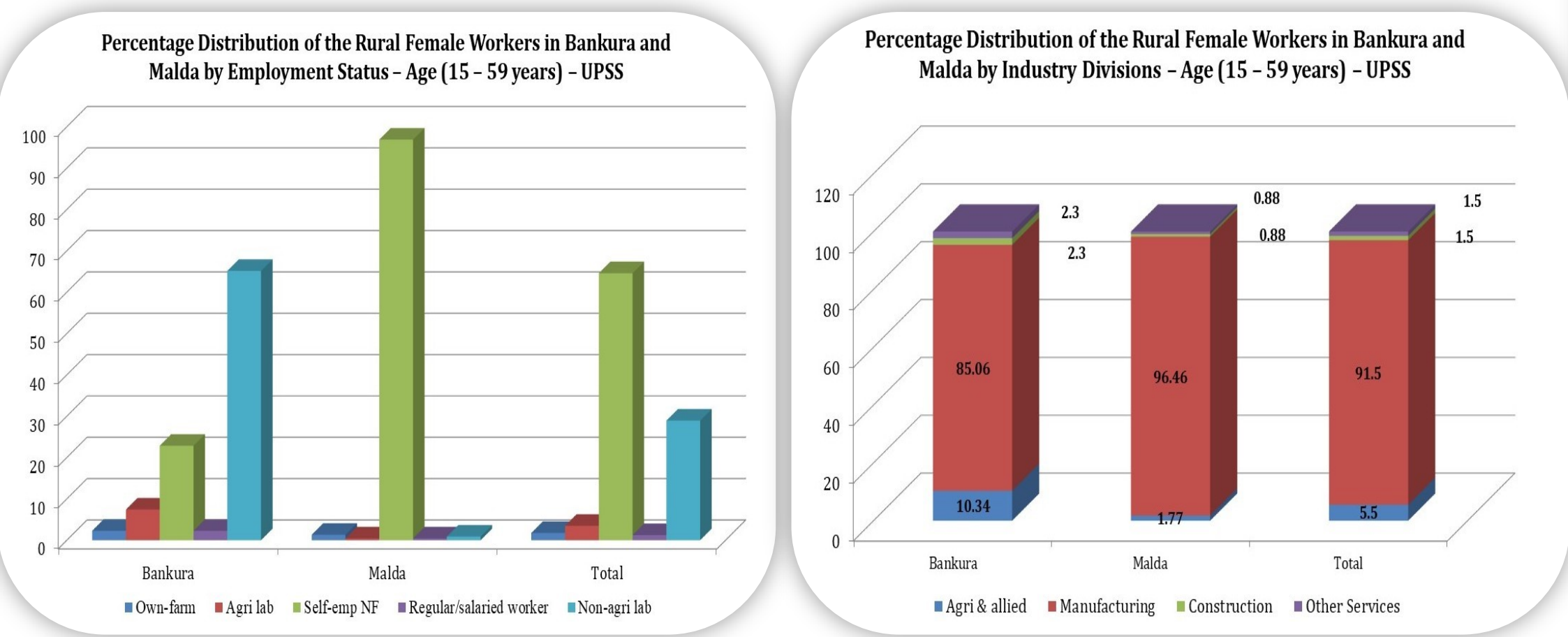
# Employment and Determinants of Participation of Females in Rural West Bengal: A Field Based Analysis of Bankura and Malda

**Dr. Priyanka Chatterjee, Sr. Programme Coordinator—Public Health Resource Network**

## Background

- Stagnation of agricultural sector—forced rural workers to migrate either to the urban areas or the non-agricultural sector (RNFS) - all sectors other than agriculture and allied activities
- Females joined workforce for supplementing low household incomes from the agricultural sector — distress driven employment.—Decline in LFPR of females in both rural and urban sectors of different states over these years.
- West Bengal experienced shift of rural workforce from agriculture to RNFS - high proportion of female employment's proportion in RNFS in the period when other major states experienced fall
- This entails the study the working condition of the females working in the RNFS of West Bengal

## Employment Status and Industry-wise Employment



## Types of Work in Bankura and Malda

- Bidi rolling in Malda
- Brick kiln works in Bankura
- MGNREGA work in both districts
- Self-employment in Non-farm activities in Bankura
- Regular wage./salaried workers
- Mathol preparation
- Agricultural activities in Bankura and Malda

## Determinants of Rural Female Workforce Participation in Bankura and Malda

- Two Logistic regression models
- (i) participating in total rural (both farm and non-farm) workforce
- (ii) participating as Self-employed in RNFS in the survey areas.

Determinants of Rural Females' Workforce Participation	Determinants of Female Workforce Participation as Self-employed in RNFS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Chance of workforce participation of the <i>Married</i> females is significantly higher than the <i>Never married</i> group.</li><li>Higher participation of the females who are head of the households is more as compared to females who belong to the male-headed household.</li><li>Chance of participation of Hindu SC and Muslim females is significantly higher than the Hindu upper caste.</li><li>Household size and distance of the workplace have negative relationship with the probability of female workforce participation.</li><li>Probability of female workforce participation is less for all the education level.</li><li>Probabillity of the female workforce participation of Malda district is significantly more i.e. almost double than that of</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Engagement of the female workers as self-employed in RNFS increases with educational attainment.</li><li>Female workers with <i>Middle</i> and <i>Secondary &amp; above</i> education have significantly higher chance of participating as Self-employed in RNFS.</li><li>Female workers' participation as self-employed in RNFS of the sample surveyed increase with increasing consumption quintiles.</li><li>Female workers' participation as self-employed in RNFS is significantly five times more in Malda than in <i>Bankura</i>.</li></ul>

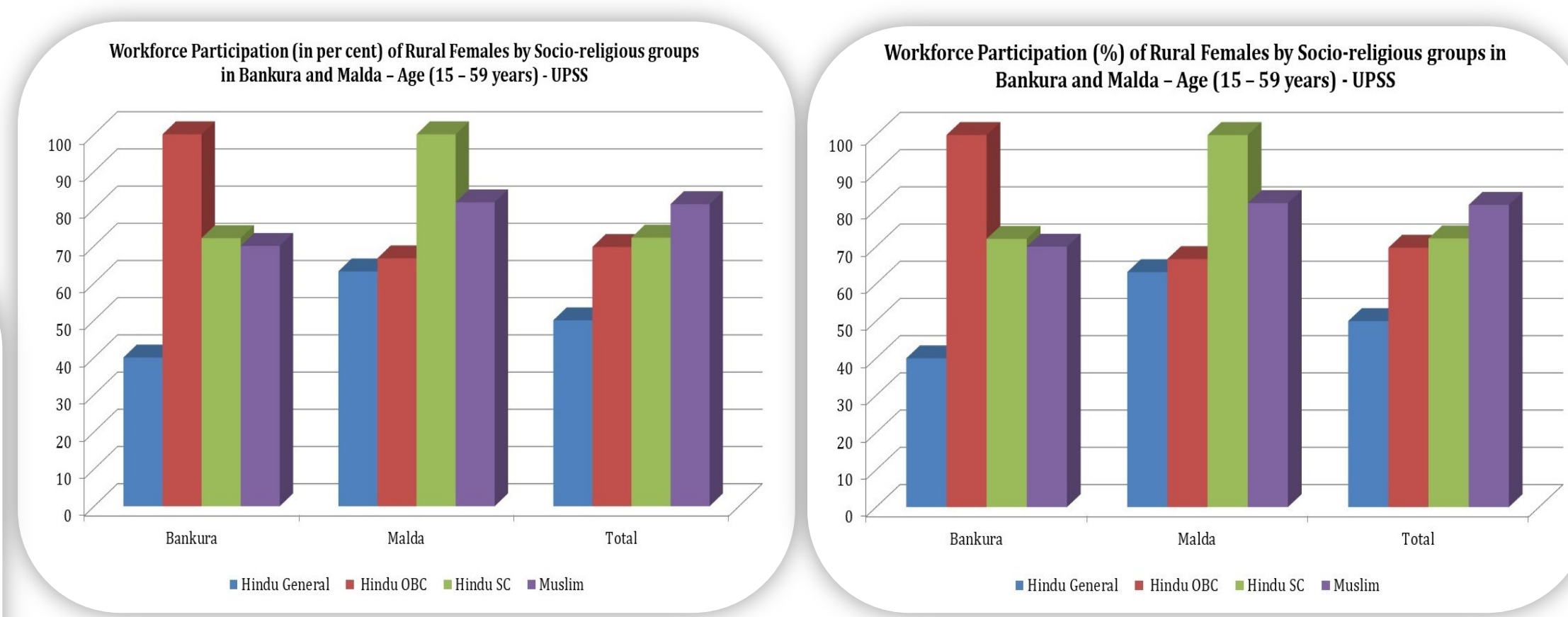
## Conclusion

- Female's workforce participation—mainly distress-driven, conditioned by specific kinds of available works
- Availability of the home-based manufacturing work - one reason for the females' high participation in RNFS of West Bengal
- Mostly engaged in low grade, low paying, unskilled jobs, dependency on the contractor - no availability of social security benefit
- Bidi workers—highest number of days worked in the last one year but earned lowest average yearly income earned - bidi workers are found to be in worse situation
- Poor implementation of the MGNREGA scheme—delay in payment by 4 to 5 months

## Data and Methodology and Socio-Economic Profile of Households Surveyed

- Primary Survey—Bishnupur (Bankura) & Kaliachak-II (Malda); 4 villages—400 Households; Sampling method—Systematic random sampling
- Methods**— Descriptive statistics & logistics regression
- Malda - *Muslim* dominated; Bankura - *Hindu* dominated; No tribal population
- 59% HHs - Landless; highest among the *Hindu SC* followed by *Muslims* - lowest proportion of *Landless* households is *Hindu General* group

## Demographic and Socio-economic Characteristics and Workforce Participation



## Working Conditions

### Bidi rolling work—Malda

- Homebased workers—*Self-employed in non-agricultural activities*—Majority of the females are engaged
- Workers' dependency on contractor for supply of ingredients and delivery of the finished products—*Dependent workers or Sub-contracted workers*.
- 2 kinds of bidi—1 No. Pataka bidi and 2 No. Pataka bidi (local brand)
- Average working hours per day —4 hours
- Average working days—231 days; average annual income earned— Rs 11777.68.
- Only 1 No. Pataka bidi workers earned a provident fund which is voluntary.

### MGNREGA

- 54 females engaged — only 2 from Malda.
- Average number of days of work—23
- Payment are made on *Daily* basis with a wage rate of Rs 174.
- Payment often delayed by 4 to 5 months
- Average yearly income earned— Rs 3886.67.

### Regular wage/Salaried workers

- Malda—1 female working as governess
- Bankura—2.29% female workers engaged as domestic help
- Average yearly income earned—Rs 3222.50.

### Brick kiln workers—Bankura

- 95% Non-agricultural labour—working in brick kiln.
- 3 types of work in the brick kiln - moulding bricks along with the male members, carrying bricks to the furnace and clearing debris
- Average working hours per day— 5.5 hours
- Method of payments depends on the nature of the works—mainly piece rate payment except for the one who are collecting debris
- On an average, the females worked for 137 days over the past 12 months earning an average yearly income of Rs 22587.22.

### Self-employed in non-agricultural sector

- 22.86% females of the sample surveyed in Bankura are engaged as *Self-employed in non-agricultural activities* in Manufacturing sector.
- They are *Home-based workers* but are not dependent on contractor.
- On an average for 255 days with average 5 working hours per day. .
- Average net income earned is Rs 22683.67
- Malda—Female workers prepare "mathol" hat made of bamboo sticks—*home-based workers* and *Manufacturing* sector.

### Own-farm activity

- Malda—1.33% females engaged in Silk-worm rearing
- Duration of cultivation each time - 25 days—done four times in a year
- Average working hours per day—11 to 12 hours - Subsidiary works.

## Policy Recommendation

- Government of West Bengal has introduced scheme for the welfare of Home-based bidi workers— Initiative to be taken for proper implementation
- Initiative to improve MGNREGA implementation in West Bengal—focus on the schemes specially included in MGNREGA for attracting female employment.
- Strengthening SHG groups to function as employment generating group.

