

MODERNIZATION AND SANSKRITIZATION OF KORA TRIBES IN WEST BENGAL: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

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Abstract

The present study is about the modernization and Sanskritization at one of the distinctive tribe, the “KORA” in eastern India. As per the Indian constitution order (1950), the KORA community had been placed of twentieth number in West Bengal. KORA is a small tribal community in the eastern India. In West Bengal, the Kora tribes have rightly adopted all the religious customs and practices of Hinduism. Kora are somehow isolated from the sophisticated Hinduism through their economic background, social segregation and a general lack of direct access to literate Hindu Tradition. Certain symbolic traits at the Kora also do not support their abovementioned aspiration and pull-down their claim to the level at ‘very low’ castes. Therefore, this study intends to focus upon the effects of modernization and sanskritization on the Kora community in West Bengal with special reference to Bankura and Purulia district.

Keywords: Kora tribes, Modernization, Sanskritization

INTRODUCTION

The present study is about the modernization and sanskritization at one of the distinctive tribe, the “KORA” in eastern India. According to the constitution of India (Scheduled Tribes orders), the second amendment Bill, 2011 – “Tribal follow some specific criterion like having primitive traits, distributive culture geographical isolation, shyness at contact with the community at large and backwardness. In General usage, the word “tribe” is taken to denote a primary aggregate of peoples living in a primitive or barbarous condition under a headman or chief. The unnecessary moralistic overtones that this usage implies can be avoided or minimized by the use of the expression “tribal society,” which is to be preferred to such synonyms as “primitive society” or “preliterate society.” At the same time, the word “tribe” need not be discarded. Indeed, it has become a technical term denoting a territorially defined political unit, a usage that recalls the original Latin use of the word for

the political divisions or patrician orders of the Roman state. The concept “tribal society,” therefore, although having general utility as an idealized type of society, is in no sense an absolute category. Some societies are merely more or less tribal than others. In the classification of societies according to their scale, “tribal society” can be regarded at most as a loosely bounded area at the opposite end of the continuum to that of “modern society.”

As per the Indian constitution order (1950), the KORA community had placed the twentieth number in West Bengal. KORA is a small tribal community in eastern India i.e in West Bengal. In West Bengal houses KORA tribes are found in every hook and look at the region. KORA has its habitats all over West Bengal especially in Paschim Midnapur, Bankura, Purulia, Birbhum, Burdhaman, Hoogly. Besides West Bengal KORA tribe is located in the state of Bihar, Jharkand. The KORA is also known as KHORA or CORA are indigenous tribes at the great Andaman’s people, originally living on the eastern part at north, Andaman Island (George weber, 2009). As per the 2001 census Report, the total population at the KORA community was 142,789, and 3.2 percentage at the total scheduled tribes’ population in West Bengal.

The word ‘KORA’ has got a significant meaning. It signifies earth digging. So it becomes quite obvious that the profession that this KORA is related to cultivation. “The caste (kora believes tank digging, road making and earthwork generally to be their characteristics. Profession and it may be surmised that their adoption of comparatively degraded occupations, necessarily involving a more or less wondering Manner of life may be the cause which lad to their separation from the Mundas, who are above all things settled agriculturists, conspicuous for their attachment to their original villages” (Risley: 1891, 506-507). As per the 2011 census report, in the state at West Bengal the total no. of scheduled tribes was 5,296,953 (Rural – 4,8555,115 Urban- 441,838). Literacy rates at tribes (2011) 68.2% male, 47.7% female in West Bengal.

The West- Bengal the KORA tribes have rightly adopted all the religious customs and practices at Hinduism. KORA are the same what isolated from the sophisticated Hinduism through their economic background, social segregation and a general lack of direct access to literate Hindu Tradition. Certain symbolic traits at the KORA, also do not support their above. Maintained aspiration and pull-down their claim to the level at ‘very low’ cases.

Therefore, this study intends to focus upon the effects of modernization and sanskritization on the KORA community at West Bengal which special reference to Bankura and Purulia district.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To examine the social changes in the KORA community with reference to modernization and sanskritization.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The present researchers want to study one of the most dominant tribes in West Bengal i.e. the KORA in respect of their education and how it affects their day to day lives with the help of Ethnographic methodology. Ethnography deals with the study of the diversity of human cultures in

their particular setting. This method has developed in early anthropological field research carried out in non-western culture'. Ethnography is an extremely broad area with a great variety of practitioners and methods. It is a methodology that deals with the systematic description of different cultures. According to Kathleen M. Adams (2012), Ethnographic methods fall into the broader category of qualitative methodologies and are aimed at understanding culture practices, human belief and behaviors and socio-culture changes over time. Ethnography is a branch of Anthropology.

Ethnography is a qualitative research design aimed at exploring cultural phenomena. The resulting field study or a case report reflects the knowledge and the system of meanings in the lives of a cultural group. "Ethnography literally means 'a portrait of a people.' Ethnography is a written description of a particular culture - the customs, beliefs, and behavior - based on information collected through fieldwork." (Marvin Harris and Orna Johnson, 2000). Ethnography is a means to represent graphically and in writing, the culture. The term ethnography has come to be equated with virtually any qualitative research project where the intent is to provide a detailed, in-depth description of everyday life and practice. This is sometimes referred to as "thick description" (Clifford Geertz, 1970). Ethnography, as the empirical data on human societies and cultures, is a branch of anthropology but has also become popular in the social sciences such as Cultural studies, sociology, economics, social work, education, musicology, folklore studies, religious studies, linguistics, and communication studies. The typical ethnography is a holistic study and so includes a brief history, and an analysis of the terrain, the climate, and the habitat. Ethnography may be defined as both a qualitative research process and method (one conducts an ethnography) and product (the outcome of this process is an ethnography) whose aim is cultural interpretation. The ethnographer goes beyond reporting events and details of the experience.

The present study would be geographically delimited in the area of Bankura and Purulia district in the Indian state at west Bengal. It is part of Medinipur divisions one of the five administrative divisions of West Bengal. Bankura district is situated between 22° 38' and 23° 38' north latitude and between 86° 36' and 87° 46' east longitude. As per census 2011, the total population at Bankura 3, 596, 292, population Density (2011) 520/km² (1400/59mi). Total area 6,882km² and sex Ratio 914.

Purulia lies between 22.60 degrees and 23.50 degrees north latitudes and 85.75 degrees and 86.65 degrees east longitudes. Compass Declination 0°22'W. The geographical area of the district is 6259 km². This district is bordered on the east by Bankura, Paschim Medinipur districts, on the north by Bardhaman district of West Bengal state and Dhanbad district of Jharkhand state, on the west by Bokaro and Ranchi districts of Jharkhand state and on the south by West Singhbhum and East Singhbhum districts of Jharkhand state. Purulia is the westernmost district of West Bengal with all-India significance because of its tropical location, its shape as well as function as a funnel.



Photo-1: Group discussion with young Kora people

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The details findings along with interpretations have shown below:

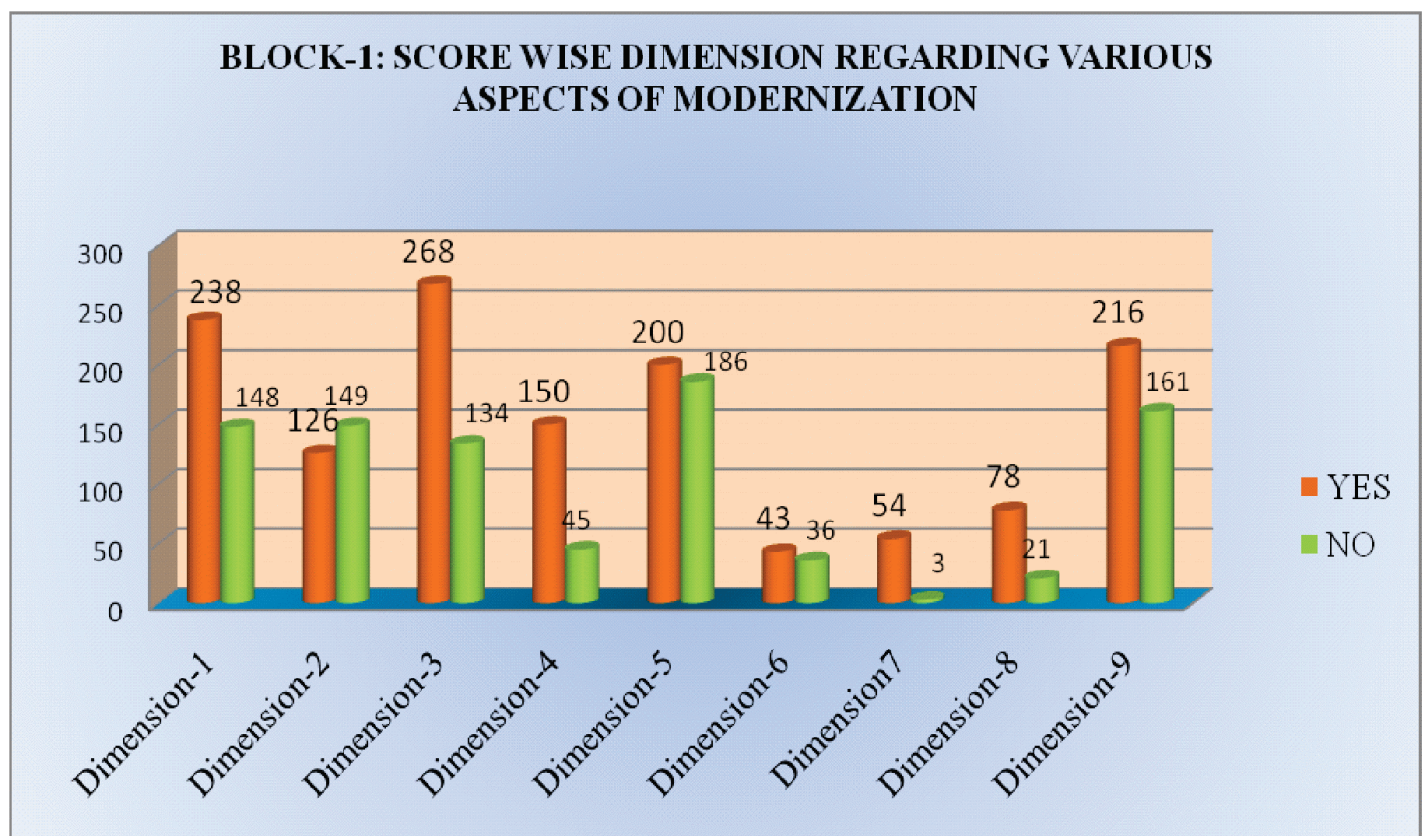
Table 01: Percentage of the respondent regarding the various dimension of modernization in Hirbandh block

BLOCK-1

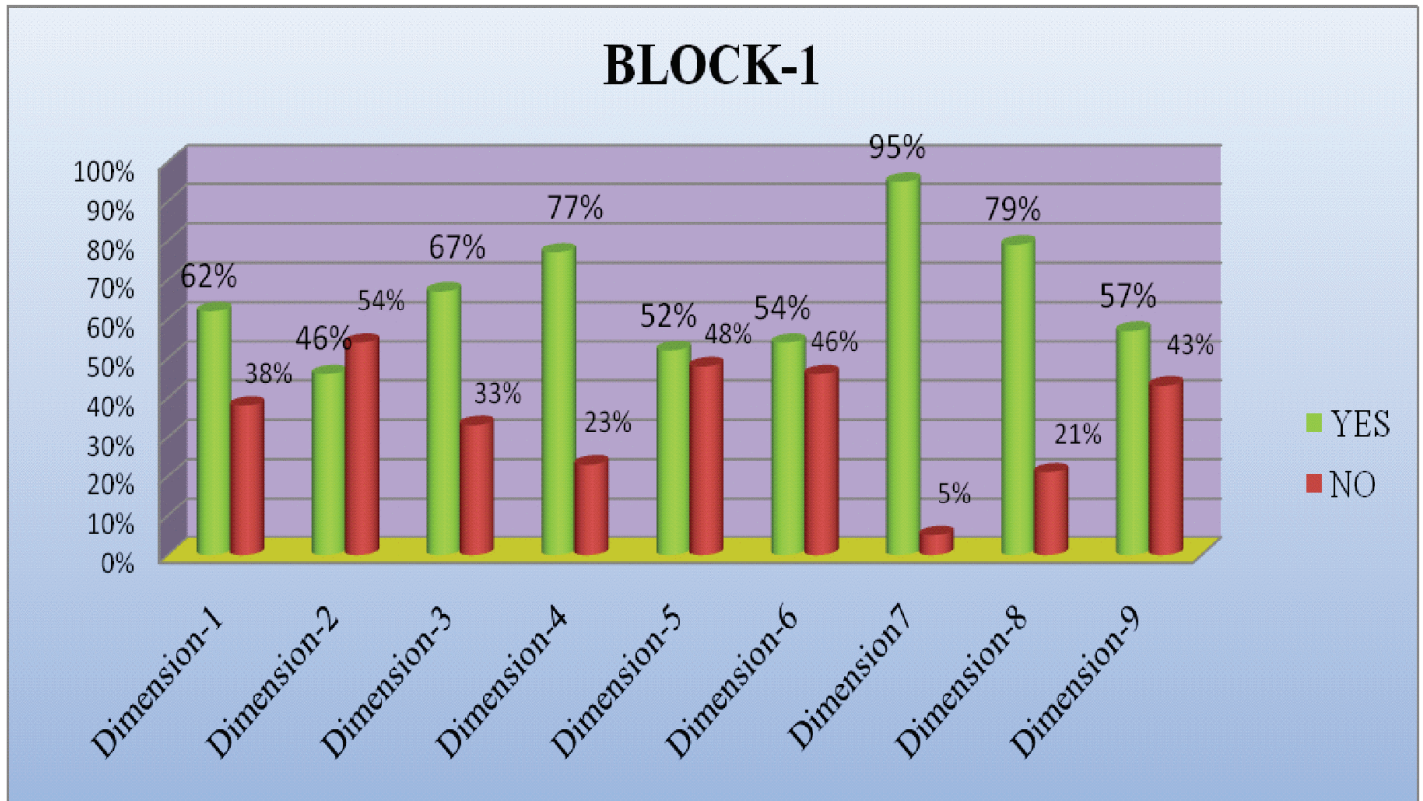
DIMENSION NO	YES	NO	DIMENSION NO	YES	NO
Dimension-1	238	148	Dimension-1	62%	38%
Dimension-2	126	149	Dimension-2	46%	54%
Dimension-3	268	134	Dimension-3	67%	33%

DIMENSION NO	YES	NO	DIMENSION NO	YES	NO
Dimension-4	150	45	Dimension-4	77%	23%
Dimension-5	200	186	Dimension-5	52%	48%
Dimension-6	43	36	Dimension-6	54%	46%
Dimension-7	54	3	Dimension-7	95%	5%
Dimension-8	78	21	Dimension-8	79%	21%
Dimension-9	216	161	Dimension-9	57%	43%

Figure-1



Source-Field Study

Figure 2

Source- Field Study

Interpretation

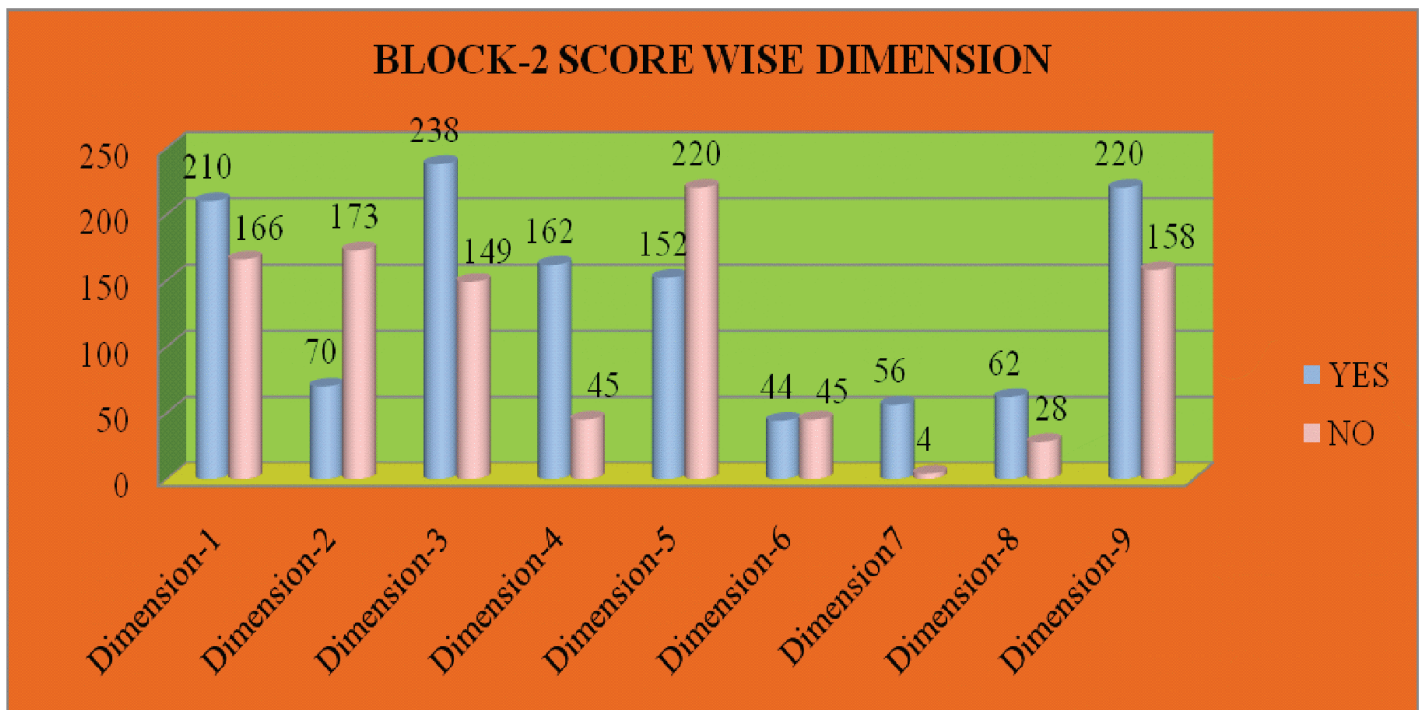
It is found that 62% of people are using technology in Hirbandh Block and less than 50% people are adopting modern devices. The majority of the houses of the Kora trib are electrified. In this segment State Govt. has employed so many projects to ensure the electrification of those interior places invaded by the Kora trib to develop their living condition. It is noteworthy that 67% of people have various sources of income and 77% of the tribes have family awareness. But, while dealing with health consciousness and communications, the result is not so much satisfactory. The house patterns seem to be good as the result (79%) indicates but for the cooking appliances, it is just 54% indicating not so much praiseworthy.

Table-2: Percentage of the respondent regarding various dimension of modernization in Chatna block

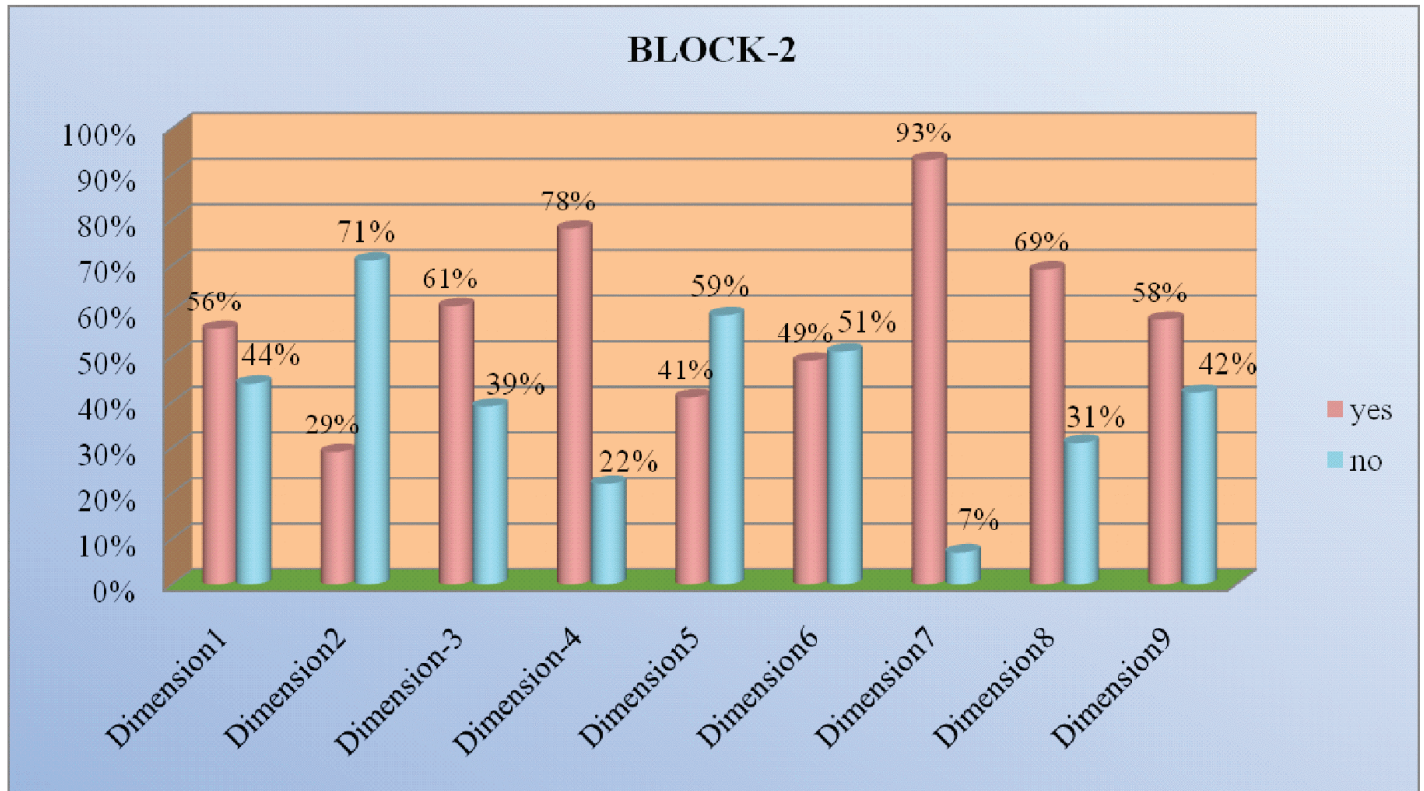
BLOCK-2

DIMENSION NO	YES	NO	DIMENSION NO	YES	NO
Dimension-1	210	166	Dimension-1	56%	44%
Dimension-2	70	173	Dimension-2	29%	71%
Dimension-3	238	149	Dimension-3	61%	39%
Dimension-4	162	45	Dimension-4	78%	22%
Dimension-5	152	220	Dimension-5	41%	59%
Dimension-6	44	45	Dimension-6	49%	51%
Dimension-7	56	4	Dimension-7	93%	7%
Dimension-8	62	28	Dimension-8	69%	31%
Dimension-9	220	158	Dimension-9	58%	42%

Source- Field Study

Figure-3

Source- Field Study

Figure-4

Source- Field Study

Interpretation

It is found that 56% of people of Chatna block are using technology but only 29% are adopting modern devices. 61% of people have various financial sources and 78% have family awareness. Health consciousness and communication are found to be less than 50% (41% & 49% respectively). The situation of electrification is praiseworthy and credit goes to the state government because 93% of houses of the tribal people are electrified. 69% of people have cemented houses and for the cooking appliances, 58% of people use modern cooking appliances.

Table-3

Percentage of the respondent regarding the various dimension of modernization in Pancha block

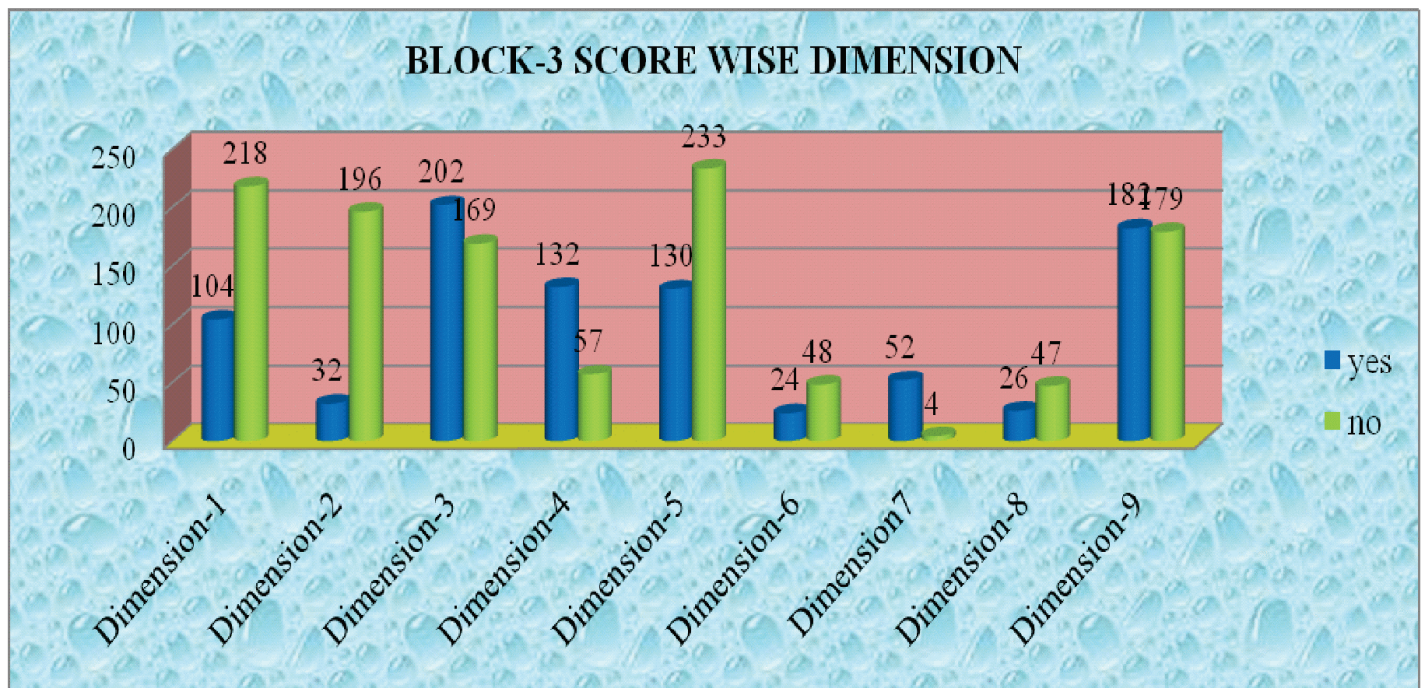
BLOCK-3

DIMENSION NO	YES	NO	DIMENSION NO	YES	NO
Dimension-1	104	218	Dimension-1	32%	68%
Dimension-2	32	196	Dimension-2	14%	86%

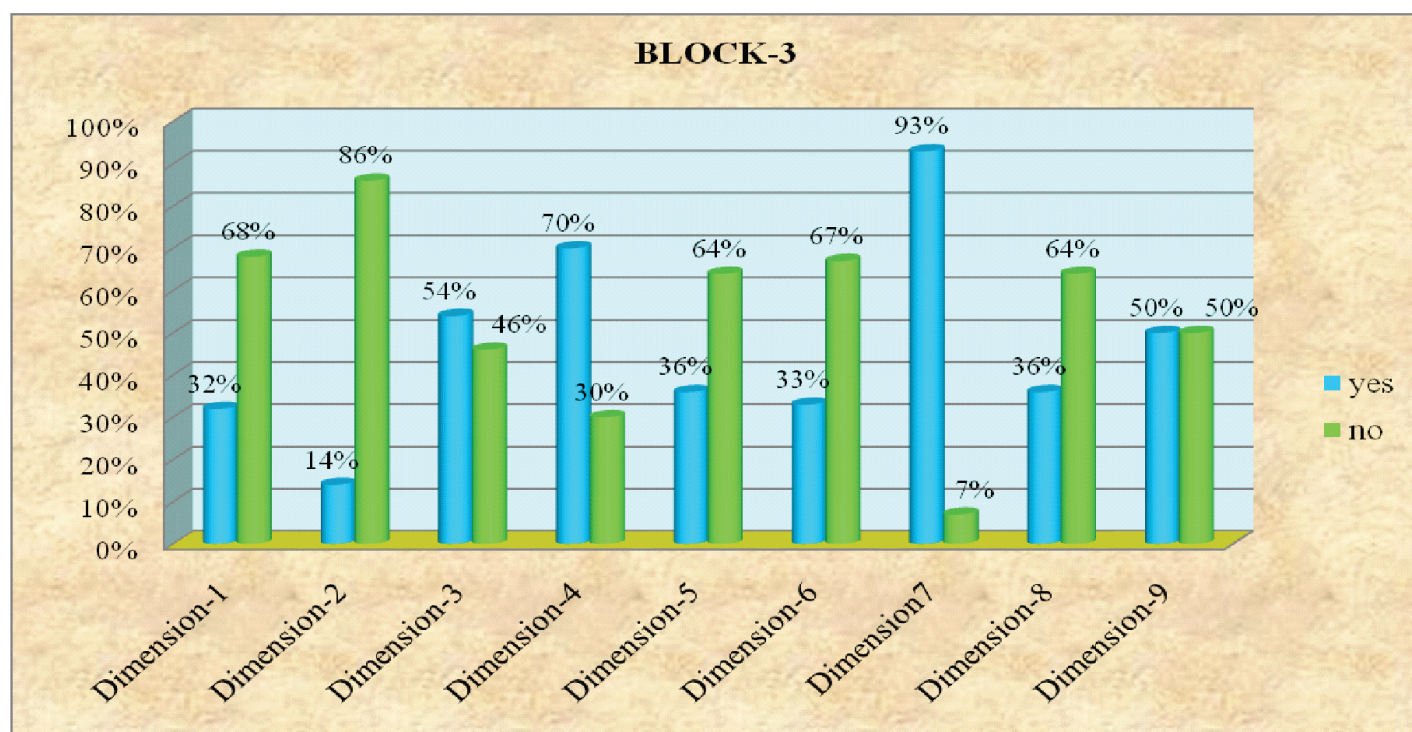
DIMENSION NO	YES	NO	DIMENSION NO	YES	NO
Dimension-3	202	169	Dimension-3	54%	46%
Dimension-4	132	57	Dimension-4	70%	30%
Dimension-5	130	233	Dimension-5	36%	64%
Dimension-6	24	48	Dimension-6	33%	67%
Dimension7	52	4	Dimension7	93%	7%
Dimension-8	26	47	Dimension-8	36%	64%
Dimension-9	182	179	Dimension-9	50%	50%

Source- Field Study

Figure-5



Source- Field Study

Figure-6

Source- Field Study

Interpretation

It is found that 32% of people in Puncha block are using technology and only 14% are adopting modern devices. 54% of people have various financial sources and 70% have family awareness. Health consciousness and communication are found to be pitiable-36% & 33% respectively. The situation of electrification is praiseworthy and credit goes to the state government because 93% of houses of the tribal people are electrified. 36% of people have cemented houses and for the cooking appliances 50% of people use modern cooking appliances.

Table 04

Percentage of the respondent regarding various dimension of modernization in Manbazar Block

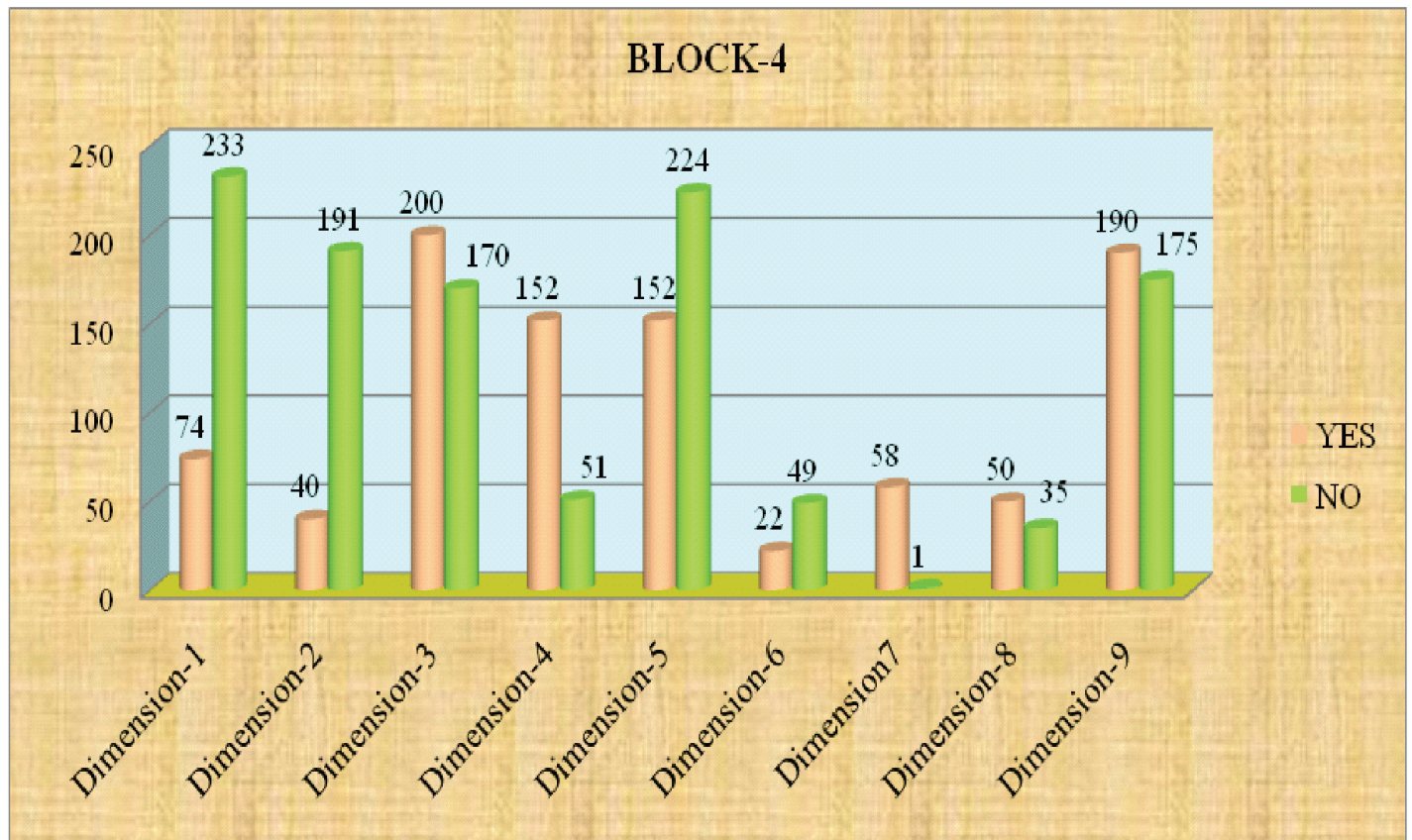
BLOCK-4

DIMENSION NO	YES	NO	DIMENSION NO	YES	NO
Dimension-1	74	233	Dimension-1	24%	76%
Dimension-2	40	191	Dimension-2	17%	83%
Dimension-3	200	170	Dimension-3	54%	46%

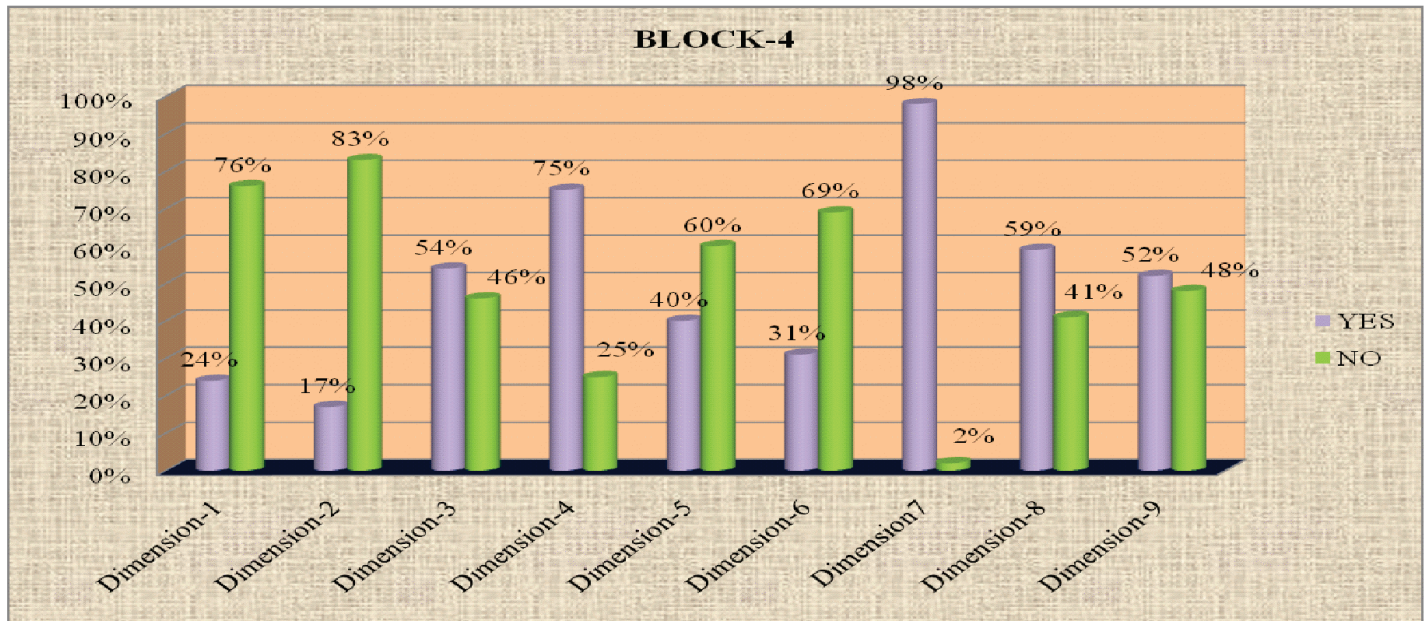
DIMENSION NO	YES	NO	DIMENSION NO	YES	NO
Dimension-4	152	51	Dimension-4	75%	25%
Dimension-5	152	224	Dimension-5	40%	60%
Dimension-6	22	49	Dimension-6	31%	69%
Dimension7	58	1	Dimension-7	98%	2%
Dimension-8	50	35	Dimension-8	59%	41%
Dimension-9	190	175	Dimension-9	52%	48%

Source- Field Study

Figure-7



Source- Field Study

Figure-8

Source- Field Study

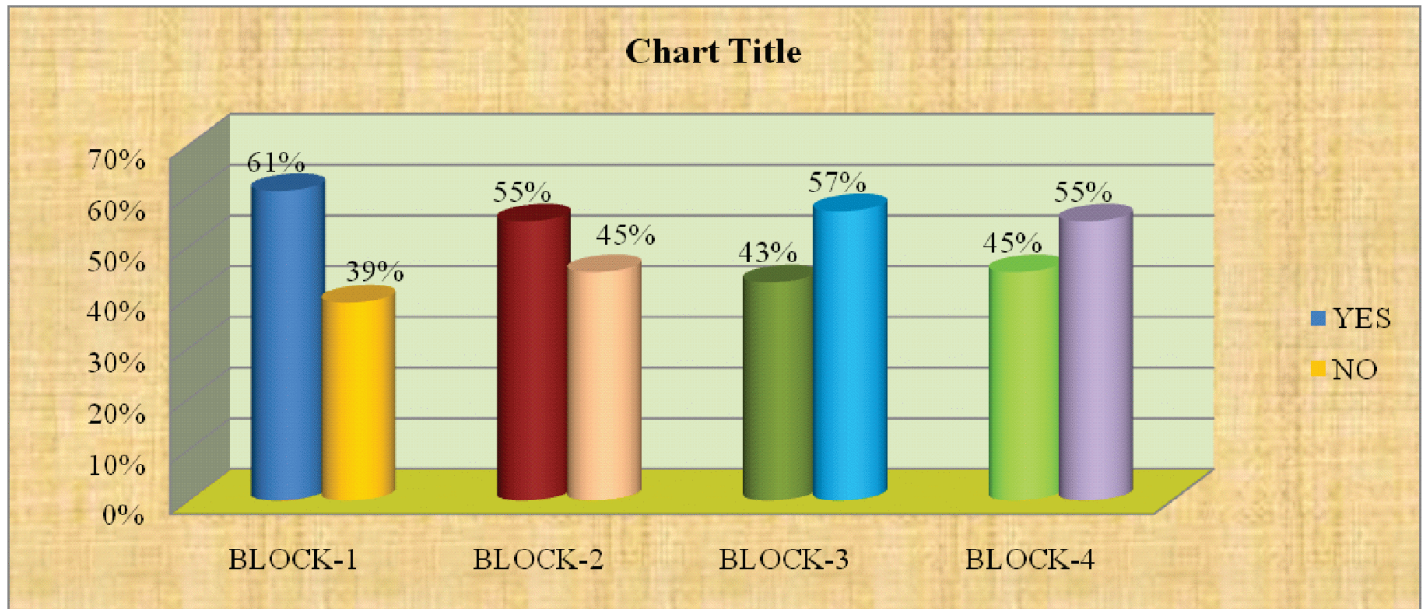
Interpretation

It is found that 24% of people of Manbazar block are using technology and only 17% are adopting modern devices. 54% of people have various financial sources and 75% have family awareness. Health consciousness and communication are found to be pitiable-40% & 31% respectively. The situation of electrification is praiseworthy and credit goes to the state government because 98% i.e., almost all the houses of the tribal people are electrified. 59% of people have cemented houses and for the cooking appliances 52% of people use modern cooking appliances.

Table-5: Percentage of respondent regarding modernization in four blocks

DISTRICT	BLOCK NO	SCORE	N	BLOCK NO	YES	NO
BANKURA	BLOCK-1	2257	30	BLOCK-1	61%	39%
	BLOCK-2	2202	30	BLOCK-2	55%	45%
PURULIA	BLOCK-3	2035	30	BLOCK-3	43%	57%
	BLOCK-4	2067	30	BLOCK-4	45%	55%

Source- Field Study

Figure-9

Source- Field Study

Table-6: Percentage of respondent in two districts regarding modernization

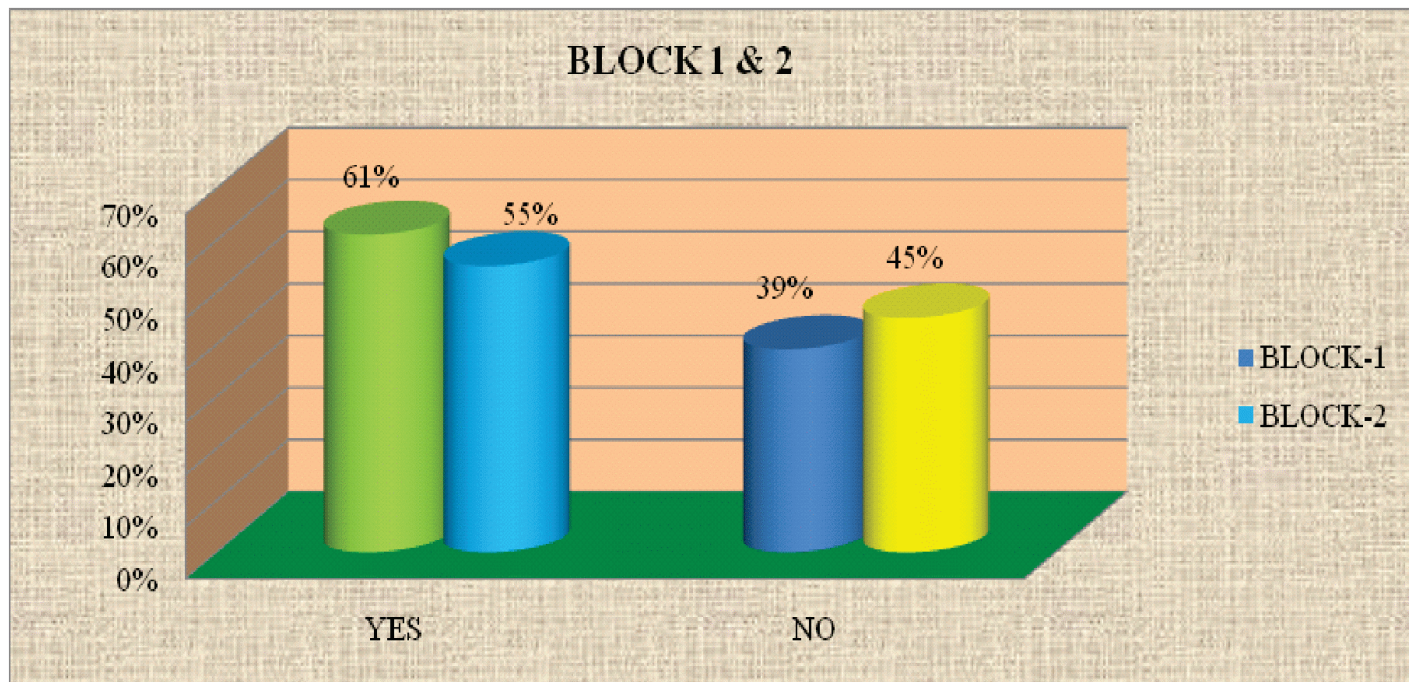
DISTRICT	BLOCK NO	YES	NO
BANKURA	BLOCK-1	61%	39%
	BLOCK-2	55%	45%
PURULIA	BLOCK-3	43%	57%
	BLOCK-4	45%	55%

Source- Field Study

Interpretation

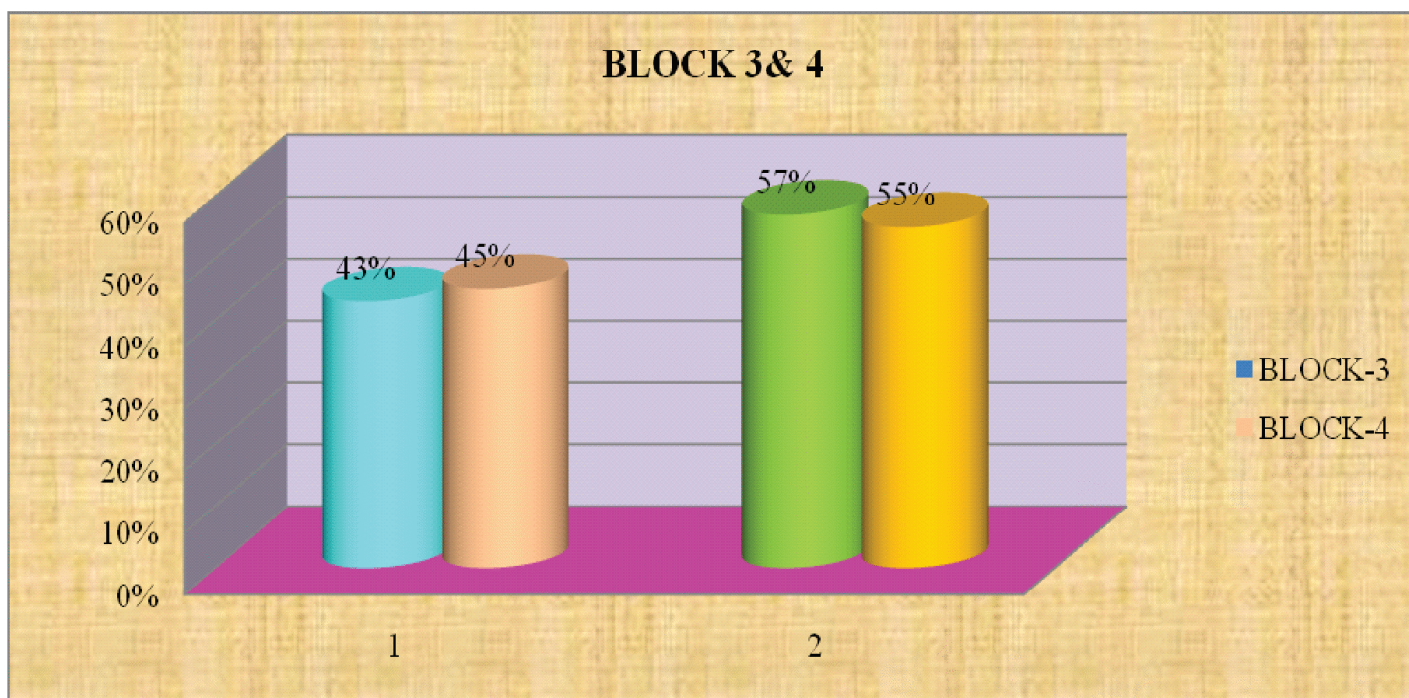
from the perspectives of modernization, it is found that the two blocks of the Bankura district Hirbandh and Chatna are more modernized (61% & 55%) than the two blocks of Purulia district Puncha and Manbazar (43% & 45%).

Figure-10



Source- Field Study

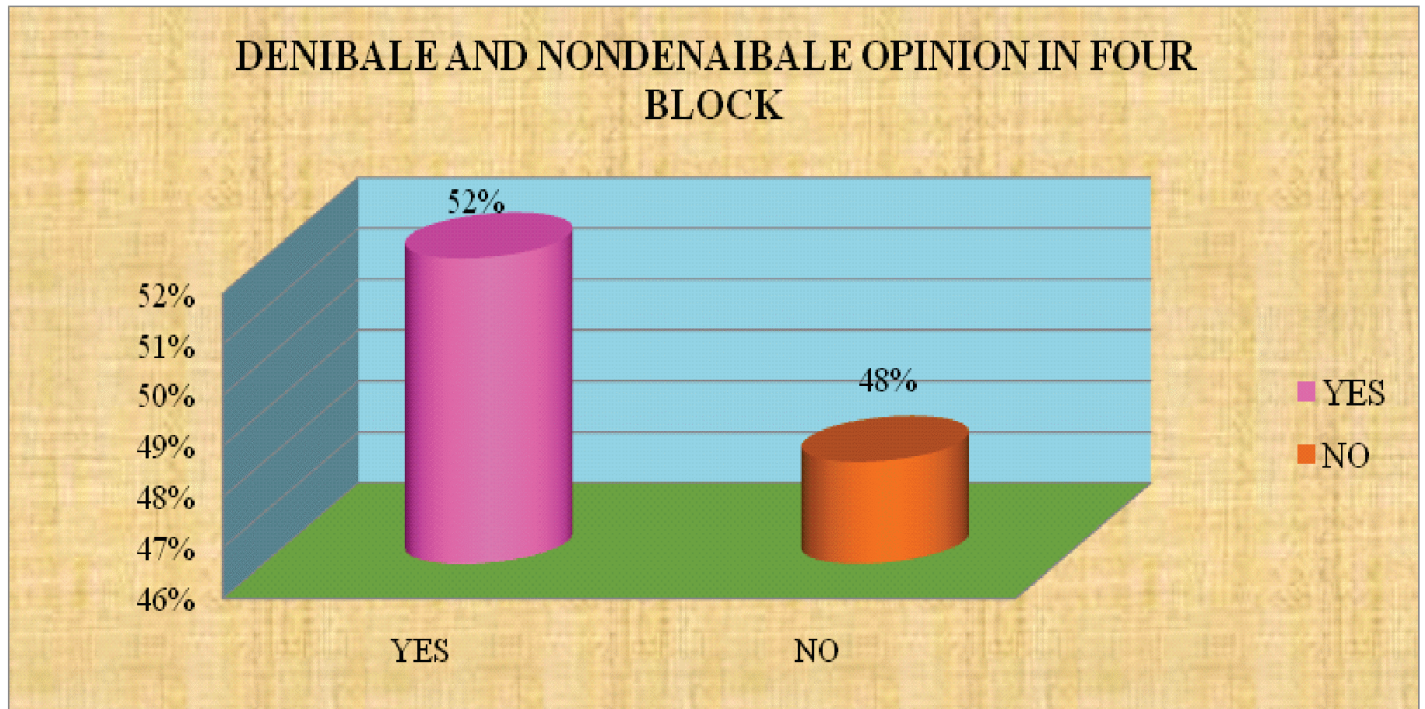
Figure-11



Source- Field Study

TOTAL BLOCK	YES	NO
	52%	48%

Figure-12



Source- Field Study

CONCLUSION

Thus from the above findings it has found that in Hirbandh block kora peoples are increasing their lifestyle according to modernization whereas in chatna block, Health consciousness and communication are less than 50% (41% & 49% respectively). But other dimensions indicate that increasing their lifestyle in a modern perspective. It is found that 32% of people of Pancha block are using technology and only 14% are adopting modern devices. 54% of people have various financial sources and 70% have family awareness. Health consciousness and communication are found to be pitiable-36% & 33% respectively among modern indicators. It is found that 24% of people of Manbazar block are using technology and only 17% are adopting modern devices. 54% of people have various financial sources and 75% have family awareness. Health consciousness and communication are found to be pitiable-40% & 31% respectively. But other indicators focus significant change in the Kora community. Kora people of Bankura district are more than advanced than the koras of Purulia District among modern perspectives. The Koras or Khayras of Manbhum and Bankura have well-marked totemistic sections of the same type as the Mundas, and the latter admit that some sort of affinity may at one time have

been recognized. In the matters of religion, Koras affect to be orthodox Hindus, worshipping the regular gods and calling themselves Saktas or Yaisnavas, according to as they incline to the cult of Kali, Durga, and Manesa, or to that of Radha and Krishna.

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