

## 2.0 Uttar Banga Krishi Viswavidyalaya

The State Agricultural University, Bidhan Chandra Krishi Viswavidyalaya (BCKV), the first of its kind in the State of West Bengal, came into existence in 1974 with prime objective to deal with the multifarious agricultural production constraints through generation of technologies and technical manpower resources. With the evolvement of HYV technology in mid-sixties agricultural production and productivity, particularly that of rice and wheat has started recording spectacular change in West Bengal from late sixties onward. This change in crop production scenario was, however, utterly absent in northern counterpart of the state. Agriculture in this part of the state is characterized by low productivity and almost at subsistence level with predominance of local crop varieties. Light textured soil with high rate of annual precipitation together with dearth of irrigation facilities and low use of fertilizer coupled with predominance of ethnology backward communities are identified as the principal constraints to bring about any production break through in rice-wheat cropping system as witnessed in the southern counterpart of the state. Generation of improved technologies befitting agro-climatic and socio-economic characteristics of this region came to the fore as an important policy issue. Keeping this perspective in view the State Government established a satellite campus, comprising of one agricultural College and Regional Research Station at Pundibari of Cooch Behar district under Bidhan Chandra Krishi Viswavidyalaya in 1979.

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research accredited the college of Agriculture at North Bengal Campus in 1986 (Vide No. 5-10/85-Edn-11 dt. 23.10.1986) and recommended to open new Departments of Plant Physiology, Bio-chemistry, Microbiology, Tea Science and Technology and Forestry. Consequent upon accreditation, the ICAR provided financial assistance to establish a Department of Forestry (vide No. F/No. 5(20)/85-Edn-II dt. 08.09.1987) and started to release grant from ICAR's Plan Development head since VIII Plan.



The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) strengthened infrastructure of Regional Research Station through NARP and also two AICRPs - one on wheat and other on spices at North Bengal Campus. Thereafter, Faculty of Horticulture was added with North

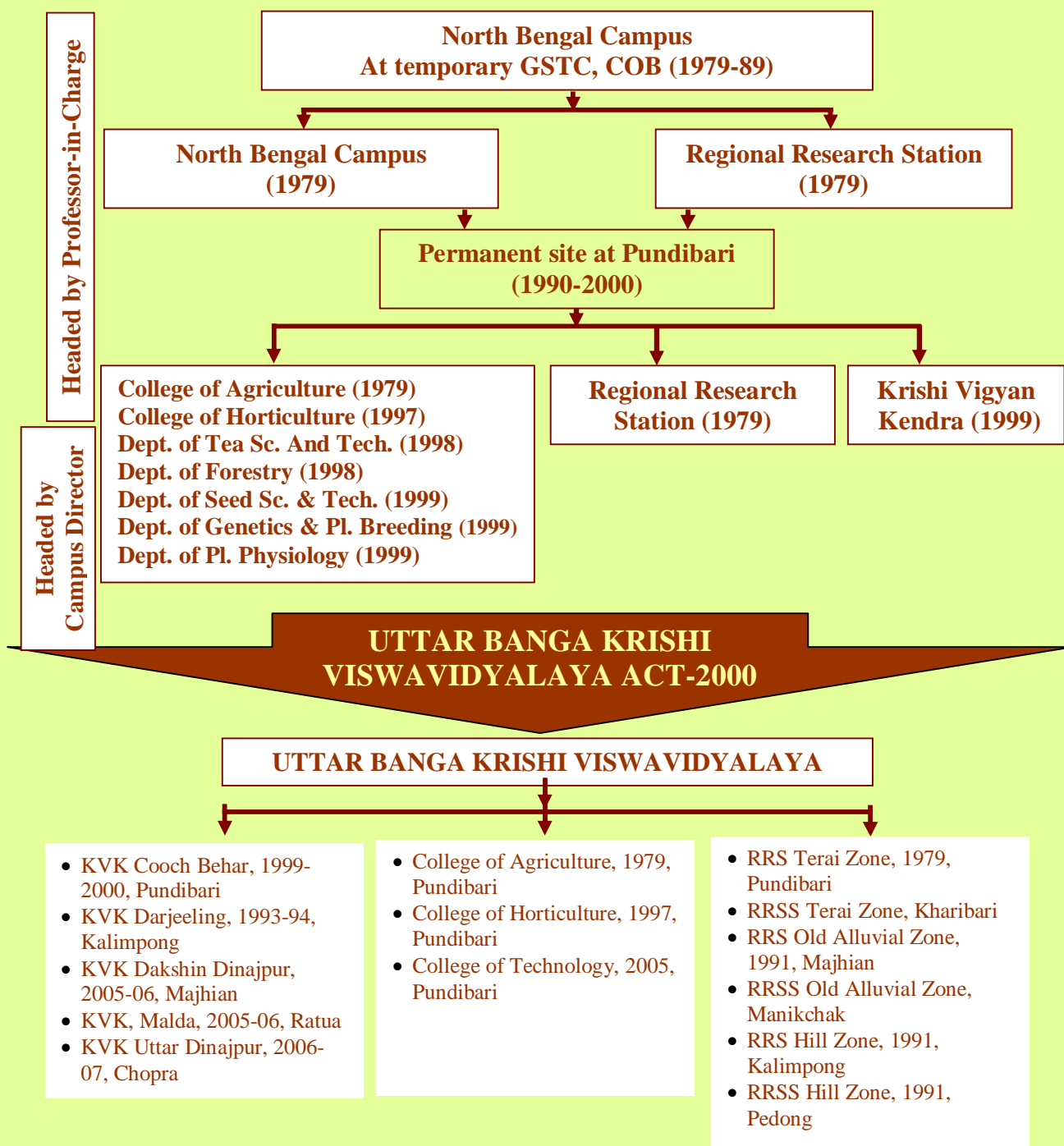
Bengal Campus through which the campus entered into new phase of development. Consequent upon establishment of the Faculty of Horticulture at Pundibari, sphere of activities of the Campus administration was also increased many fold and based upon felt need a few more administrative posts like Campus Director, Assistant Comptroller, Assistant Director of Farms etc. were sanctioned and campus became headed by Campus Director. In view to extent autonomy to the campus at a possible extent for betterment of academic and administrative activities, BCKV amended its Act and Statute to provide power to campus level authority 'Campus Management Committee' and ensured representation at 'Departmental Committee'.

The Subject Committee on Agriculture of West Bengal Legislative Assembly visited the Campus in 1997. The excerpt from the report of the committee is as followed: ***“The Committee recommends that attempts must be made to strengthen the teaching Faculties at Pundibari with the aim of converting into a full-fledged separate University. Post-Graduate teaching should be started at the campus preferably from this year. Adequate provision for contingency funds and periodicals should be made. A Krishi Vigyan Kendra should be started as early as possible”***.

The development of the Campus was further gained momentum with sanctioning of new teaching Departments namely, Departments of Forestry, Tea-Science & Technology and quadri-partitioning of the Department of Genetics and Plant Breeding, into Genetics, Plant Breeding, Plant Physiology and Seed Science & Technology during 1998 to 1999. In this process of development, the State Government sanctioned 331 posts of different categories at different phases of development of the campus. However, maximum number of posts, particularly of teachers was always remained vacant due to non-availability of prospective candidates due to unwillingness to attach in a locational disadvantageous place like Pundibari. Therefore, the Campus had to function with limited technical manpower resources despite of having sufficient number of sanctioned posts. The development of the Campus was also brought about qualitative changes in academic activities as well. Master's degree programme was introduced at North Bengal Campus from 1998-99 academic sessions in three Departments namely, Department of Agronomy, Plant Breeding and Agril.

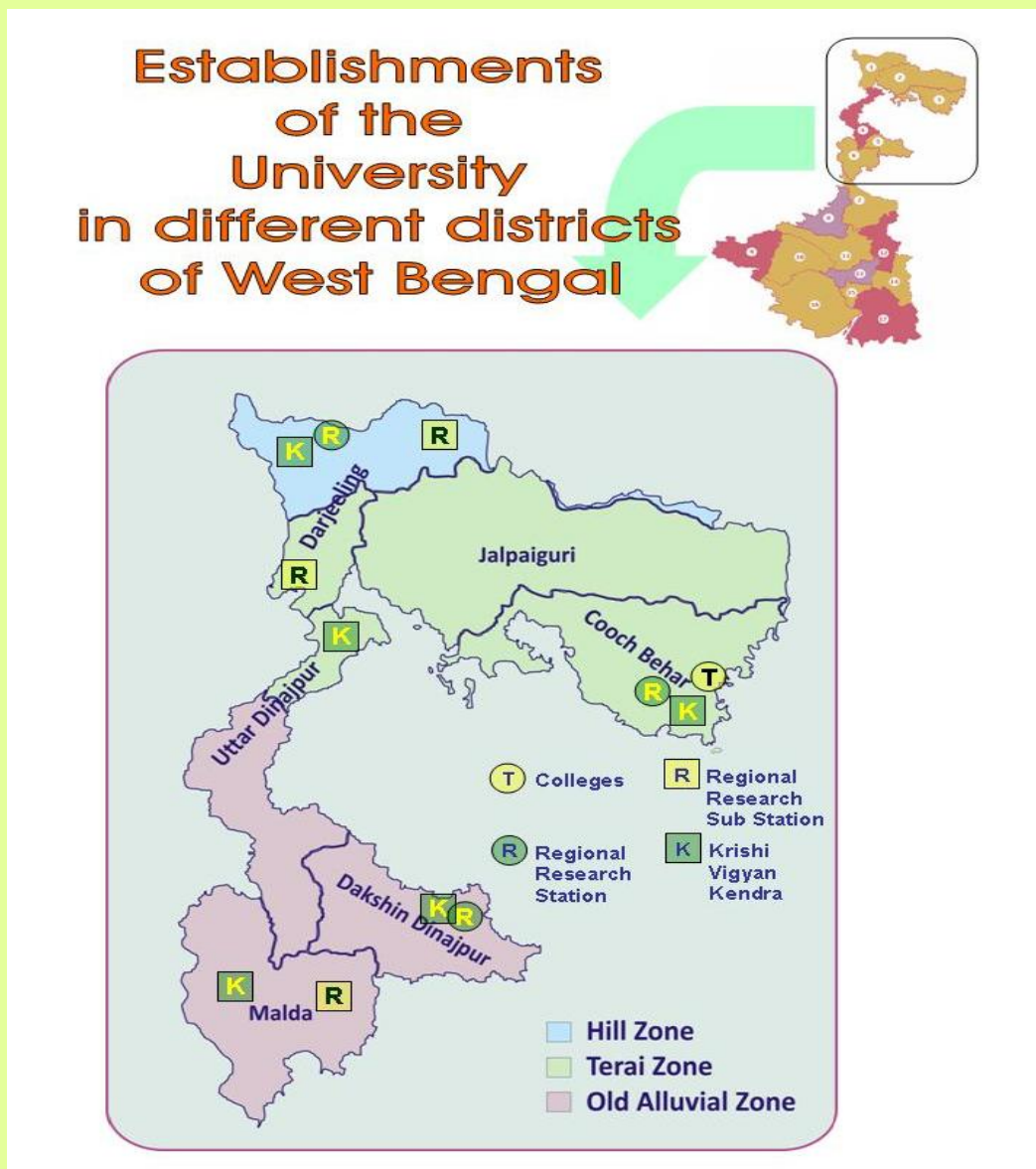


Entomology. Although, Ph.D. level course instruction in selected subjects was started since 1997. ICAR sanctioned a Remandated KVK at Pundibari for transfer of generated technologies in 1999.



**Historical development of the University over time**

During two decades of journey the college of Agriculture of erstwhile North Bengal Campus produced 540 Agriculture graduates and 21 Ph.D. in different discipline in Agriculture and Horticulture. Most of the students graduated from the Campus had already been gainfully employed in Government, Semi-Government and Private Organizations. The performance of the Students of erstwhile North Bengal Campus in all India Competitive Examinations namely JRF, SRF, NET was consistently remarkable. Twenty one awarded Ph.D. degree were already employed in better position.



The uninterrupted process of strengthening the Satellite Campus both in the sphere of teaching and research noted above had contributed to the generation of a good number of location specific improved technologies in the production of principal crops grown in North Bengal. A notable change in agricultural production, productivity and cropping pattern in North Bengal became persistable from late eighties. The teachers/scientists of the Campus

with limited facilities had extended their service to a considerable extent in the process of transfer of newly generated region specific technologies through organizing training for extension workers, farmers and NGO, which had been brought about observed changes in the dynamic agricultural production scenario to a greater extent in the area under consideration.

Considering continued backwardness in agricultural development of North Bengal and inspite of its immense potentiality remains untapped as also high correlation between agricultural education and research with extent progress in farming, the State Government had decided to upgrade the North Bengal Campus of



**BCKV to full-fledged Agricultural University entrusting the entire North Bengal constituting six districts namely Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajput and Malda as its jurisdiction area** comprising with three Regional Research Stations and their Sub-Stations in order to streamline the research and extension functions objectively to uplift the agricultural performance in this part of the state to the desired level through rational utilization of its latent vigour.

### **Growth:**

The Government of West Bengal for the purpose of establishment of a University for the development of Agriculture and for the furtherance of the advancement of learning and prosecution of research and extension in agriculture and allied sciences through West Bengal Act XX of 2000 with the jurisdiction area of six northern districts of West Bengal. The University started functioning from 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2001 only with its Headquarter at Pundibari 16 kms away from Cooch Behar district H.Q. It has been organized in “Agricultural University” model with two Faculties (colleges) - Agriculture and Horticulture, the Directorate of Research and Directorate of Extension Education. Under Directorate of Research, three numbers of Regional Research Stations, one at Terai Zone at Pundibari, Old Alluvial Zone at Majhian and Kalimpong for Hill Zone along with several research sub-stations are its other constituents. There were also two KVKs located at Kalimpong and Pundibari for Darjeeling and Cooch Behar districts respectively. Its administrative set up has been designed as per Agricultural University model.

The growth of the University for last ten years has been phenomenal. To begin with the University had two degree programmes covering Agriculture and Horticulture disciplines.

After four years of its establishment, University opened a new college, Faculty of Technology at its Headquarter, Pundibari and Post-graduate programmes have been started in almost all disciplines

under former colleges excepting a few.

Within the short spell, the University



amended its rules and regulations relating to U.G. & P.G. studies as well as syllabi to keep conformity with the recommendation of 4<sup>th</sup> Dean Committee. In the process of revision of syllabi emphasis was laid on vocationalization of agriculture education with an objective to make the education programme close up to farming community.

The programme of transfer of technology at the time of establishment of the University in 2001 was restricted only in

two districts through Cooch Behar and Darjeeling district KVK. However, the

University with its fullest effort and keen interest of ICAR has been set up another

three KVKs for the district Dakshin Dinajpur, Uttar Dinajpur and Malda

located at Majhian (attached with RRS,

Old Alluvial Zone), Chopra (easily accessible to RRSS, Kharibari, Terai Zone) and Ratua (easily accessible to RRSS, Manikchak, Old Alluvial Zone) respectively.



For ten years of travel as full-fledged Agricultural University, the University has been developing several infrastructural facilities like

Hostels, College Buildings for Faculty of Horticulture and Technology, Farmers' Training Hostel, Farm Infrastructure,

Agriculture Technology Information Centre, Central Instrumentation Centre etc. although several infrastructural and organizational

requirements are wanting as compared to all agricultural universities. However, the pace of development for research establishment is not satisfactorily during the period but efforts have

been initiated for developing of infrastructure relating to RRS laboratories and farms as well as through opening of instructional programmes at outreach research stations.

