

SURVEY REPORT

ON

POVERTY IN WEST BENGAL

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Introduction:

Defining poverty requires a way of distinguishing the poor from the non-poor. The usual method is to classify an individual as poor, if he or she does not meet a set of consumption norms. The poverty lines used are generally based on the cost of a fixed bundle of goods deemed necessary for subsistence mostly on nutritional grounds. *But here we shall use poverty index method to measure poverty level in various district of West Bengal. The concept of Human Poverty Index (HPI) is elaborated in this report.* The HPI combines basic dimensions of poverty and reveals interesting contrasts with income poverty (Fukuda-Parr, 2003). Computation of HPI for a state like West Bengal, normally lacking behind the national average of general human development indicators and per capita income in past few years, is relevant enough to understand the spatial pattern of poverty in district level. Understanding poverty in only income perspective normally do not show the overall situation related with all facets incorporated in it (Haq, 1995). A human development perspective of portraying poverty in the developing country like India is essential to examine the underlying situation related with poverty. So, an attempt has been made in this article to explore the district-wise poverty scenario of West Bengal in a human development perspective.

Literature Review:

CLAUDIO CECHI, LUCA MOLINAD AND FABIO SABITINI (July 2009) : In their report “Social Capital and Poverty Reduction Strategies : The case of Rural India” they discussed the role of social capital as a policy tool against poverty and inequity in the development strategies enhanced by international agencies in rural India. They first defined social capital and its link with development. Then they analyzed the available information on poverty and inequity, both in general terms and with reference to India and then they focused on few examples of development projects in rural India in which social capital is assigned a key role. They concluded showing that the introduction of social capital raises important problems that needed to be taken into account by development strategies and that often requires ex-ante choices.

Dr. SHARATH A. M (December 2020): In his report “Poverty in India -A Study of Rural Poverty” he briefly discussed about the poverty in rural India. His main objectives of this report were (1) to study the cause rural poverty anti-poverty program and (2) to examine why India is still a poor country. Therefore in his report at first he discussed about the cause rural poverty by analyzing the data published by Indian Government and various journals, books, periodicals etc and then author gave some anti-poverty program arranged by

The Government of India. And at last he has suggested few economic policies for solving those problems. According to this report a large portion of the destitute individuals in India are situated in provincial territories. Destitution stays a constant condition for right around 30% of India's provincial populace. The occurrence of rustic destitution has declined to some degree in the course of recent a very long time because of country to metropolitan movement however the circumstance actually keeps on staying troubling. Destitution is a financial state where individuals are encountering shortage or the absence of specific items that are required for the lives of people like cash and material things. In this way, neediness is a multifaceted idea comprehensive of social, financial and political components. India, if not totally however is practically inseparable from the word defilement. Various tricks in the ongoing years clarify the adventure of debasement. Practically all the administration divisions are influenced from it. Debasement is viewed as probably the most compelling motivation of neediness in India. India's development model for sure has profited the financial specialists yet bombed when we see that close around 213 million Indians go hungry consistently. Privileges of sorted out just as disorderly laborers are being abused. They are come up short on and not paid by the modern development and consistently rising swelling. With the goal that reason there is a need to contemplate the reasons for rustic destitution and hostile to neediness program and to inspect why India is as yet a helpless nation.

PRADEEP PANDA (December 2016): His report “Regional Disparity in Development of Odisha Economy: Assesment of Scheme, Issues and Challenges” is based on current scenario of regional disparity of Odisha. This report is all about assessment of current scenario of regional disparity along with issues and challenges, assessment of various Central Government and State Government scheme for addressing regional disparity. And his another objective was to make or found strategies to overcome these issues and bottlenecks. In this report data were collected from Odisha Economic Survey published by Planning and Coordination Department, Government of Odisha. General measures of central tendency and dispersion have been applied for data analysis. According to Dr. Pradeep Panda Removal of regional disparities has been one of the important development strategies of the State Government. However, due to several economic, social and institutional obstacles, all regions in Odisha have not shared the gains of development in an equitable manner. One of the criticisms of economic reforms and globalization is that they do not have ‘human face’. Although economic growth increased in Odisha, inclusive and balanced growth has to be improved. He has suggested few measures of enhancing and to overcome the issues in odisha.

ARNAB MUKHERJI (January 2008): Arnab Mukherji’s paper “Trends in Andhra Pradesh with a Focus on Poverty” looks at demographic, socio-economic, and poverty trends for the state of Andhra Pradesh during the 1990s.

Substantive changes in the demographic structure, composition of economic activity, and trends in poverty are noted. Additionally, it reviews the literature on poverty measurement issues for generic populations as well as for children. A major unresolved issue is a standard and widely accepted definition of childhood poverty although a number of indicators are commonly presented when discussing quality of life for children. Following this, this paper also presents trends in immunisation coverage, nutrition, and various educational indicators for children in Andhra Pradesh over the 1990s.

SILADITYA CHAUDHURI & NIVEDITA GUPTA (February 2009): In the report “Levels of Living and Poverty Patterns: A District-Wise Analysis for India” presents a profile of levels of living, poverty and inequality for all the districts of the 20 major states of India. An attempt has also been made to map poverty in the districts to examine their spatial disparity within and across the states. In this report all the decisions have been made on the basis of sample data collected by NSSO.

Objective of the Survey & Study:

The basic objectives of this study are to-

1. Understand the spatial pattern of poverty in West Bengal.
2. Rank the districts of West Bengal by various deprivation index and ultimately by Human Poverty Index.
3. Develop a strategy to address the problem of poverty at district level.

Database and Methodology:

For this study various secondary database were used from Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. Different reports like, Census reports of 2011 and District Level Household Survey report-4 also have been used to get the district level data for constructing the indices.

UNDP's human development reports advocated that constructing a developing country's HPI should differ from that of a developed country. Because “issue of poverty in the developing countries involve hunger, illiteracy, epidemics and the lack of health services or safe water- which may not be so central in the more developed countries” . The data sets used for constructing indices of HPI by UNDP are suitable in national level. The HPI concentrates on deprivation in three essential elements of human life reflected on HDI i.e. longevity, knowledge and a decent standard of living.

After examining the studies of Chelliah and Sudarshan (1999), Ghosh and Chatterjee (2003), Anand and Sen (2003), the technical appendix of Human Development Report- 2002 and also as per the availability of data, for constructing HPI for West Bengal in this study, three components of human deprivation have been selected, namely i) Knowledge deprivation, ii) Health services deprivation, iii) Provisioning deprivation. A similar study was done by the Government of West Bengal in District Human Development Report .

Knowledge Deprivation (P1) is the weighted average of total illiteracy rate and percentage of children not transmitted to upper primary level from primary, when the weights are 2/3 and 1/3 respectively. Health Service Deprivation (P2) is simply the proportion of non-institutional deliveries and Provisioning Deprivation (P3) is the arithmetic mean of (i) the proportion of households having no electricity connection, (ii) the proportion of households having no latrine facilities within the premises and (iii) the proportion of households having no access to safe drinking water.

After calculating the indices in percentage, three deprivations (P1, P2 and P3) have been made standardizing the percentage value as each deprivation (P) is not constructed by same number of indices. To standardize the index value the percentage values have been multiplied by 1/100.

Here HPI is defined as, $HPI = [(1/3) P1^\alpha + (1/3) P2^\alpha + (1/3) P3^\alpha]^{1/\alpha}$ (Where $\alpha = 3$)

In this measure of poverty the relative impact of the deprivation of each would increase as the level of deprivation becomes sharper. This property would be satisfied if α is greater than 1, because if α is equal to 1, HPI would be the simple average of three indicators of deprivation, P1, P2 and P3. Usually α is taken as 3 for all practical purposes to give additional but not overwhelming weight to areas of more acute deprivation.

Different statistical methods and cartographic techniques have been used.

Result and Discussion:

After analyzing the data in the prescribed methodology, a clear picture about the spatial pattern of human poverty can be observed. Human development is a key factor of this kind of spatial pattern.

➤ **Human poverty index of West Bengal**

Three deprivation indexes are constructed in three different tables.

Table 1: District-wise knowledge deprivation (P1)

| Sl. No. | District | Percentage of Total Illiteracy (2011) | Percentage of Children not Transmitted to Upper Primary Level from Primary (2011) | Index of Knowledge Deprivation | Rank |
|---------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|------|
| 1 | Darjiling | 20.08 | 21.10 | 0.204 | 8 |
| 2 | Jalpaiguri | 26.21 | 20.60 | 0.244 | 13 |
| 3 | Koch bihar | 24.51 | 23.80 | 0.243 | 12 |
| 4 | Uttar Dinajpur | 39.87 | 15.00 | 0.316 | 19 |
| 5 | Dakshin Dinajpur | 26.14 | 17.70 | 0.233 | 10 |
| 6 | Maldah | 37.29 | 18.40 | 0.310 | 18 |
| 7 | Murshidabad | 32.47 | 16.30 | 0.271 | 15 |
| 8 | Birbhum | 29.10 | 23.40 | 0.272 | 16 |
| 9 | Barddhaman | 22.85 | 19.10 | 0.216 | 9 |
| 10 | Bankura | 29.05 | 19.50 | 0.259 | 14 |
| 11 | Puruliya | 34.62 | 15.30 | 0.282 | 17 |
| 12 | Hugli | 17.45 | 18.00 | 0.176 | 5 |
| 13 | Haora | 16.15 | 18.60 | 0.170 | 3 |
| 14 | Paschim edinipur | 20.96 | 16.40 | 0.194 | 6 |
| 15 | Purba Medinipur | 12.34 | 10.30 | 0.117 | 1 |
| 16 | South 24 Parganas | 21.43 | 21.70 | 0.215 | 7 |
| 17 | North 24 Parganas | 15.05 | 19.30 | 0.175 | 4 |
| 18 | Kolkata | 12.86 | 14.20 | 0.133 | 2 |
| 19 | Nadia | 24.42 | 22.80 | 0.239 | 11 |
| 20 | West Bengal | 22.92 | 18.50 | 0.215 | - |

Source: Col.2- Census-2011, Col.3 – Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India

Table-1 reflects the district-wise status of index of knowledge deprivation where Purba Medinipur ranked first with an index value of 0.117 and Uttar Dinajpur ranked last with 0.316. In case of percentage of total illiteracy Kolkata, Purba Medinipur, North 24 Parganas are the districts much ahead with more literacy rate than Uttar Dinajpur, Madah, Puruliya and Murshidabad but in case of percentage of children not transmitted to upper primary level from primary level the difference among the districts are not as much as the illiteracy rate. Though Kochbihar, Birbhum, South 24 Parganas have a lower transmission rate than the other districts. These two indicators of knowledge deprivation can clearly depict the real scenario of development of education in the districts of West Bengal. Actually percentage of children not transmitted to upper primary level from primary is a proxy indicator of drop-out.

Table 2: District-wise health services deprivation (P2)

| Sl. No. | District | Percentage of Non-Institutional Deliveries (2012-13) | Index of Health Service Deprivation | Rank |
|---------|-------------------|--|-------------------------------------|------|
| 1 | Darjiling | 13.9 | 0.139 | 6 |
| 2 | Jalpaiguri | 24.8 | 0.248 | 12 |
| 3 | Koch Bihar | 20.5 | 0.204 | 9 |
| 4 | Uttar Dinajpur | 45.5 | 0.455 | 19 |
| 5 | Dakshin Dinajpur | 26.7 | 0.267 | 13 |
| 6 | Maldah | 28.0 | 0.280 | 15 |
| 7 | Murshidabad | 41.9 | 0.419 | 18 |
| 8 | Birbhum | 21.7 | 0.217 | 10 |
| 9 | Bardhaman | 28.4 | 0.284 | 16 |
| 10 | Bankura | 11.1 | 0.111 | 2 |
| 11 | Puruliya | 21.9 | 0.219 | 11 |
| 12 | Hugli | 11.2 | 0.112 | 3 |
| 13 | Haora | 12.6 | 0.126 | 5 |
| 14 | Paschim Medinipur | 16.5 | 0.165 | 7 |
| 15 | Purba Medinipur | 26.5 | 0.265 | 14 |
| 16 | South 24 Parganas | 32.3 | 0.323 | 17 |
| 17 | North 24 Parganas | 20.4 | 0.204 | 8 |
| 18 | Kolkata | 01.7 | 0.017 | 1 |
| 19 | Nadia | 12.0 | 0.120 | 4 |
| 20 | West Bengal | 25.4 | 0.254 | - |

Source: Col. 2 – DLHS-4:2012-13

Table-2 reflects the district-wise status of health services deprivation on the basis of percentage of non-institutional deliveries. Non institutional deliveries not only means there are lack of necessary health infrastructure especially for the pregnant, but also denote the overall poor condition of health services. Kolkata with a score of 0.017 ranked first in this index on the other hand Uttar Dinajpur is far behind with a score of 0.455. Percentage of non-institutional deliveries generally increases with the lack of health care infrastructure and poverty. Kolkata, Bankura, Hugli and Nadia are the districts where occurrences of non-institutional deliveries are much lower than Uttar Dinajpur, Murshidabad, South 24 Parganas and Bardhaman. There are serious relationship between knowledge deprivation and health service deprivation. Because non-institutional deliveries are also happen due to lack of awareness among the households.

Table 3: District-wise provisioning deprivation (P3)

| District | Percentage of House hold Having No Electricity (2011) | Percentage of Household Having No Latrine Facilities within the Premises (2011) | Percentage of Household Having No Access to Safe Drinking Water (2011) | Index of Provisioning Deprivation | Rank |
|-------------------|---|---|--|-----------------------------------|------|
| Darjiling | 18.99 | 27.70 | 27.69 | 0.248 | 3 |
| Jalpaiguri | 55.60 | 50.25 | 16.67 | 0.408 | 10 |
| Koch bihar | 72.37 | 40.76 | 06.40 | 0.398 | 9 |
| Uttar Dinajpur | 66.68 | 72.48 | 12.91 | 0.507 | 15 |
| Dakshin Dinajpur | 57.58 | 63.16 | 25.42 | 0.487 | 13 |
| Maldah | 64.51 | 68.26 | 27.52 | 0.531 | 16 |
| Murshidabad | 65.35 | 60.47 | 25.28 | 0.497 | 14 |
| Birbhum | 58.95 | 75.92 | 35.03 | 0.566 | 17 |
| Barddhaman | 38.44 | 44.32 | 25.88 | 0.362 | 8 |
| Bankura | 55.76 | 79.70 | 37.84 | 0.578 | 18 |
| Puruliya | 66.64 | 88.15 | 50.52 | 0.684 | 19 |
| Hugli | 23.96 | 28.79 | 24.91 | 0.259 | 4 |
| Haora | 22.56 | 25.31 | 30.14 | 0.260 | 5 |
| Paschim Medinipur | 47.41 | 53.86 | 34.83 | 0.454 | 12 |
| Purba Medinipur | 51.73 | 14.72 | 41.87 | 0.361 | 7 |
| South 24 Parganas | 52.67 | 37.41 | 42.24 | 0.441 | 11 |
| North 24 Parganas | 29.55 | 12.50 | 20.06 | 0.207 | 2 |
| Kolkata | 03.79 | 05.07 | 06.06 | 0.050 | 1 |
| Nadia | 49.37 | 22.41 | 11.69 | 0.278 | 6 |
| West Bengal | 45.51 | 41.15 | 26.64 | 0.378 | - |

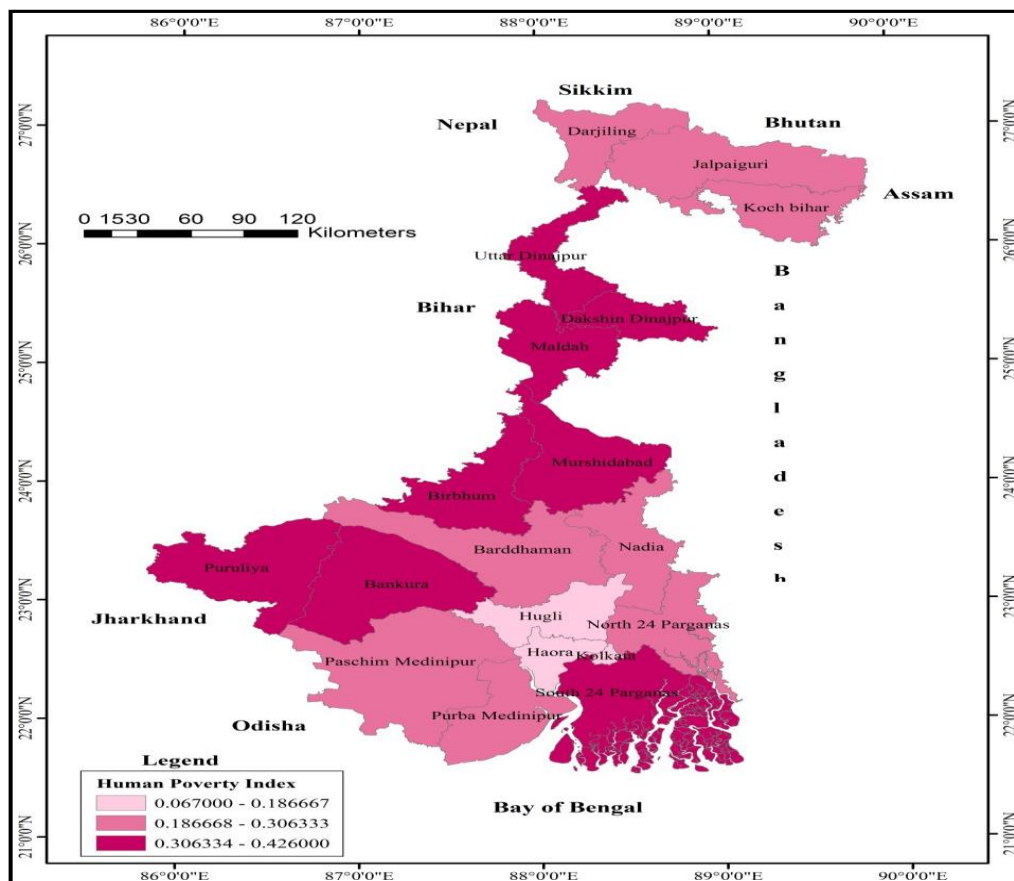
Source: Col. 2, 3, 4 – Census-2011

Table-3 shows us the district-wise provisioning deprivation, a direct indicator of poverty. (Anand and Sen 1994). In this study, three indicators i.e. electricity, latrine facility and access to safe drinking water have been taken. These facilities are necessary for a household to maintain a safe and hygienic life, but acute poverty plays a significant role constructing barriers for the people to access those services. In case of West Bengal, Kolkata being the capital ranked first scoring 0.050. Puruliya scored 0.684 clearly indicating the district level situation in terms of having electricity, latrine and safe drinking water. Besides Puruliya, Bankura, Birbhum and Maldah are in the same lacking position in provisioning deprivation. But North 24 Parganas, Darjiling, Hugli and Haora are in a good situation in terms of having the facilities. These provisioning deprivations are highly related with the income level and significantly play a role of human development.

These indicators of provisioning deprivation index are most basic needs of an individual to sustain a healthy life. Human development always related to education and health which is naturally dependent on essential sanitation and safe drinking water. So, a society with these basic amenities can play a vital role in developing the human development situation. In this study, it is evident that poverty always linked with human development and a society with educated and healthy population can act as a catalyst to break the vicious cycle of poverty especially from the developing countries.

Table 4: District-wise Human Poverty Index (HPI) of West Bengal, 2011-12

| District | Knowledge Deprivation Index (<i>P1</i>) | Health Services Deprivation Index (<i>P2</i>) | Provisioning Deprivation Index (<i>P3</i>) | Modified Human Poverty Index | Rank |
|-------------------|---|---|--|------------------------------|------|
| Darjiling | 0.204 | 0.139 | 0.248 | 0.197 | 5 |
| Jalpaiguri | 0.244 | 0.248 | 0.408 | 0.300 | 11 |
| Koch Bihar | 0.243 | 0.204 | 0.398 | 0.282 | 9 |
| Uttar Dinajpur | 0.316 | 0.455 | 0.507 | 0.426 | 19 |
| Dakshin Dinajpur | 0.233 | 0.267 | 0.487 | 0.329 | 14 |
| Maldah | 0.310 | 0.280 | 0.531 | 0.374 | 16 |
| Murshidabad | 0.271 | 0.419 | 0.497 | 0.396 | 18 |
| Birbhum | 0.272 | 0.217 | 0.566 | 0.352 | 15 |
| Bardhaman | 0.216 | 0.284 | 0.362 | 0.287 | 10 |
| Bankura | 0.259 | 0.111 | 0.578 | 0.316 | 12 |
| Puruliya | 0.282 | 0.219 | 0.684 | 0.395 | 17 |
| Hugli | 0.176 | 0.112 | 0.259 | 0.182 | 2 |
| Haora | 0.170 | 0.126 | 0.260 | 0.185 | 3 |
| Paschim Medinipur | 0.194 | 0.165 | 0.454 | 0.271 | 8 |
| Purba Medinipur | 0.117 | 0.265 | 0.361 | 0.248 | 7 |
| South 24 Parganas | 0.215 | 0.323 | 0.441 | 0.326 | 13 |
| North 24 Parganas | 0.175 | 0.204 | 0.207 | 0.195 | 4 |
| Kolkata | 0.133 | 0.017 | 0.050 | 0.067 | 1 |
| Nadia | 0.239 | 0.120 | 0.278 | 0.212 | 6 |
| West Bengal | 0.215 | 0.254 | 0.378 | 0.282 | - |



In the Table-4 the HPI is calculated with the help of three indexes. Kolkata ranked first in the HPI with a score of 0.067 clearly showing the reduced level of human poverty. Hugli, Haora, North 24 Parganas and Darjiling are also in a significantly good situation than the other districts. But, Uttar Dinajpur, Murshidabad, Puruliya and Maldah these four districts remain in the most deprived situation scoring higher index value indicating the situation of acute human poverty. It is evident that the surrounding districts of Kolkata are in a comparatively developed situation except South 24 Parganas, but the districts away from this developed centre are still in a condition of low level of human poverty. But the districts in the extreme north such as Jalpaiguri or Darjiling are in a comparatively good situation.

➤ Possible Strategy to Eradicate Human Poverty

The present situation of human poverty of West Bengal can overcome through developing the conditions responsible for poverty in the state. Human poverty does not depend on only economic criteria, others factors of human

development shall also be addressed to get rid of the situation. Here a five point strategic plan has made to eradicate human poverty.

□ Universal public education: Universal public education has some role in preparing youth for basic academic and technological skills. Education for women shall also be spread to create a balanced social system. Proper implementation of different government educational schemes like, 'Sarba Siksha Abhiyaan', 'Mid-day Meal' for the primary and upper primary students will surely reduced the level of illiteracy and drop out in the educationally backward districts.

□ Securing health as a basic right: A well planned health care infrastructure shall always have a trickledown effect on health condition of people of a state. A healthy person is able to create human wealth by which poverty can be erased from the society.

□ Proper sanitation and maintenance of public health: Proper sanitation always helps people to maintain their public health and it also reflects the capabilities of a household. Access to safe drinking water is a big challenge to the state to fulfill. Government schemes like 'Swachha Bharat' in national level and 'Nirmal Bangla' in the state level are aimed to create a properly sanitized society.

□ Women empowerment and gender equality: The empowerment of women has relatively recently becomes a significant area of discussion with respect to development of human poverty. Gender equality through empowerment of women is a qualitatively significant poverty reduction strategy.

□ Awareness and political participation: Awareness of rights and more political participation will make the government schemes of poverty eradication more relevant and accountable. And then the inter district inequality regarding human poverty will be eradicated successfully.

Conclusion:

Like many other concepts, human poverty is larger than any particular measure, including the HPI. As a concept human poverty includes many aspects that can't be measured or are not being measured. It is difficult to reflect them in a composite measure of human poverty (Anand and Sen, 1994). From this

study it is clear that poverty has a spatial pattern according to the index of deprivation around the state. Though, human poverty generally not matches with the pattern of income poverty but somehow they are linked with each other (Anand and Sen, 1997). Uttar Dianjpur, Murshidabad, Maldah and Puuliya the four districts in West Bengal are lagging behind the other districts because of lacking of the basic human development components. Government shall implement its schemes properly to uplift the status of human poverty in these districts and minimize the differences among others. Further work can explore how the HPI could be enriched and made more relevant in situations where a wider range of data on different aspects of poverty and human development are available.

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