Levels of development in Malda District of West Bengal: A block level study

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ABSTRACT

Regional disparity refers to imbalanced regional development which differs from region to region relying on socio culture, economic and demographic characteristics. Human development of Malda district of West Bengal belongs to the worst level. The present study's object is to demonstrate the levels of pattern of development and inter- block disparities in Malda district using fourteen indicators. The simple statistical technique of Deprivation Index has been used to calculate block level development by the help of the data collected from Primary Census Abstract-2001 of Malda district.

Key words: Levels of development, Malda district, Regional development, Regional disparity.

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INTRODUCTION

Concept development is a process driven by a set of customer needs and target product specifications, which are then converted into a set of conceptual designs and potential technological solutions. These solutions represent an approximate description of form, working principles, and product features. Often, these concepts are accompanied by industrial design models and experimental prototypes that help in making final selections. Development is a phenomenon of many dimensions comprising qualitative as well-as quantitative growth of society or a country. It is a process meant for the improvement of the quality of people's life. The unequal distribution of physical as well as human resource and socio-economic disparities led to intra and inter regional disparities and this is a great threat to both develop and developing country of the world. Government making endeavour to wash out this disparities for the sake of development. India has a large variety of disparity in terms of the levels of development. After independence Government of India planned various regional planning in order to bring about balance regional development by removing the disparities. But vary regretting fact is that those plannings has remained just only as written and declared in papers not, fulfilled to the satisfactory level.

The term 'development' refers to qualitative changes in an individual such as change in personality or other mental and emotional aspects. However, very often growth and development are used interchangeably. The process of development continues even after the individual has attained physical maturity (growth). The individual is continuously changing as he/she interacts with the environment. India is a developing country and uneven growth is found in different state. In the West Bengal level of development is differ from district to district.

ABOUT THE STUDY AREA

The study area Malda district located between latitudes 24 º40'20"N and 25 º32'8"N, and longitudes 87 º 45'50"E to 88 º28'10"E, the district is bounded to its due south by the district of Murshidabad across the river Ganga, by Bangladesh and Dakshin Dinajpur district to its east and northeast, by Uttar Dinajpur district to its direct north and by the states of Bihar to its direct west and Jharkhand across the Ganga to the southwest. Malda is spreading over an area of 3733 sq.km with a population of 32.91 lakh in 2001. According to Census of India-2001 the total literacy rate of the Malda district is 50.28 percent, among which male literacy is 58.80 percent and female is 41.25 percent.

Three broad subregions can be defined physiographically within Malda district they are Tal, Barind and Diara. Large part of the Diara, now the most intensely settled region of Malda, began to attract habitations from the early 20th century, after the alluvial 'Chars' (lands vacated by the river due to change in its course) exposed by the Ganga's west side migration were allowed for revenue settlement. The Barind had been sparsely habitated and covered substantially by forest during earlier times, since the relative scarcity of water made it unsuitable for intensive agriculture.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Thomas (2000, 2004) refers to this meaning of development as 'a process of historical change'. This view, of 'structural transformation' and 'long-term transformations of economies and societies', as Gore noted, is one that predominated in the 1950s and 1960s in particular. Today, one might argue that this defi nition of development is emphasized by the academic or research part of the development community but that there is less emphasis on this perspective in the practitioner part of the development community (as has already been broached in our Introduction).

Hickey and Mohan (2003) take the view that the pressure on international development research to be relevant has undermined this older established defi nition in favour of a more instrumental one (a fuller discussion of this issue appears in Chapter 2). A long-term, broad view may address the big picture but it may have a limited capacity to meaningfully guide development practice, such as policy-making, which typically focuses on a shorter time period such as a four-to-fi ve-year government term or a three-year cycle in the case of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).

The idea of development stands today like a ruin in the intellectual landscape. Its shadow obscures our vision… … Delusions and disappointment, failures and crimes have been steady companions of development and they tell a common story: it did not work… … But above all, the hopes and desires that made the ideas fl y, are now exhausted: development has grown obsolete. (Sachs, 1992: 1) Development is a label for plunder and violence, a mechanism of triage. (Alvares, 1992: 1) Poverty is a myth, a construct and the invention of a particular civilization. (Rahnema, 1997: 158)

Hickey and Mohan (2003: 4) argue that the failure of this approach to development theory is one reason why there has been a shift away from defi ning development as being coterminous with structural change.

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The long-term approach to development is more detached. One tries to comprehend why, in the long term, such great differences in development have occurred in the different parts of the world (Szirmai, 1993).

Recently, Amartya Sen (1999) has argued for an even broader concept of development focusing on the concept of freedom. He sees development as an integrated process of expansion of substantive freedoms. Economic growth, technological advance and political change are all to be judged in the light of their contributions to the expansion of human freedoms. Among the most important of these freedoms are freedom from famine and malnutrition, freedom from poverty, access to health care and freedom from premature mortality. In a telling empirical example, Sen shows that urban African Americans have lower life expectancies than the average Chinese person or inhabitants of the Indian state of Kerala, in spite of much higher average per capita incomes in the USA.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the study are:
1. To examine the spatial pattern of levels of development of Malda district.
2. To evaluate inter – block disparity according to level of development.
3. To identify various factors influencing the regional disparity.
4. To identify lower- developed areas and categories them into various level of development.

DATA BASE AND METHODOLOGY

The study mainly based on secondary data. The data sources are Primary Census Abstract (2001) of Malda district, District Statistical Handbook of Malda, published by Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, Government of West Bengal.

Levels of development in Malda district are calculated using followings fourteen indicators.

Table-1: Selected indicators for calculating levels of development in Malda district

Variables	Selected indicators
X1	Density of Population
X2	Percentage of Decadal Growth Rate
X3	Percentage of Worker to Total Population
X4	Percentage of Agricultural Labour to Total Worker
X5	Percentage of Workers in Household Industries
X6	Sex Ratio
X7	Percentage of Literate to Total Population
X8	Percentage of Urban Population to Total Population
X9	Percentage of Net Cultivated Area to Total Geographical Area
X10	Percentage of Gross Irrigated Area to Gross Cropped Area
X11	Cropping Intensity
X12	Number of Doctors Per Lakh of Population
X13	Number of Primary Schools Per Lakh of Population
X14	Number of Upper Primary Schools Per Lakh of Population

In this study Deprivation method or Development Index (DI) has been adopted. UNDP also adapts the same method to evaluate Human Development Index (HDI) of Countries of the world. Three steps have gone through to compute Deprivation method, Development Index (DI) in the said method. The initial step define the deprivation measures that a region suffers with respect to all the chosen variables and the total development vis-à-vis other region. The index of deprivation derived from the following mathematical equation:

$$I_{ji} = Max_i - X_{ij} / Max_i - Min_i$$

Where,

I_{ji} indicates the index of deprivation of ith variable at jth unit of study. Max_i and Min_i refers maximum and minimum values of ith variable in the study area respectively. X_{ij} represents actual value of ith variable at jth units of study.

The second step comprises defining an average deprivation index (I_j) by taking a simple average of all chosen indicators using the following equation:

$$I_j = \Sigma I_{ji} / n$$

Where,

I_j shows the average deprivation index of jth units of study.

In the long run, the Development Index (DI_j) is derived for each separate district as follows:

$$DI_j = (1 - I_j)$$

Where,

DI_j shows the Development Index at jth units of study.

According to development index for each block of Malda district has been categorized in five classes with a view to depict inter-block disparity of levels of development, viz. i) Very high, ii) High, iii) Medium, iv) Low and v) Very low levels of development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Malda district possesses very fertile and potential soil, well irrigation system and many other agriculture advantages and here mango production is important agricultural production. The mango produced in this district has worldwide fame through its taste and palatability. Inter block disparity is seen in diversified socio economic condition of people and for this district remained far behind from the other district of West Bengal and is consider as underdevelopment

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one. According to Human Development Index (H.D.I.) and Gender Development Index (G.D.I.) this district is in the deplorable condition. According to those said index the district stand on 17 ranks.

Spatial pattern of Levels of Development in Malda district:
Development is basically economic phenomena. Show per capita availability of gross product and its growth are the most common measures of development. In this district there is the absence of national accounting system and so the monetary value fails to present the details picture of a region. Hence the comparison of the different levels of development of different area wise disparities needs selection of a suitable indicator of development. In this study 14 indicators have been used from several sector of society. As the agriculture is the main economic activity, enough importance has been emphasised upon agricultural sector.

Block wise spatial pattern has been shown in Table 2 along with the respective Development Index of each block of Malda district. The blocks of the district have been divided into the five classes based upon the derived value of Development Index (DIj).

Table-2: Development Indexes (Deprivation Method) of selected indicators measuring levels of development in Malda district

Name of block	Iji														Ij	DIj
	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7	X8	X9	X10	X11	X12	X13	X14		
Harischandrapur 1	0.809	0.367	1	0	0.974	0.533	0.779	1	0.009	0.505	0.157	0.534	0.375	0.667	0.551	0.449
Harischandrapur 2	0.823	0.321	0.628	0.309	0.962	0.800	1	1	0.419	0	0.264	0.747	0.583	0.167	0.573	0.427
Chanchal 1	0.758	0.530	0.879	0.137	0.980	0.556	0	1	0.188	0.552	0	0	0.500	0.500	0.470	0.530
Chanchal 2	0.806	0.395	0.734	0.165	0.944	0.333	0.753	1	0.177	0.740	0.252	0.787	0.667	0.167	0.570	0.430
Ratua 1	0.811	0.363	0.921	0.288	0.935	1	0.721	1	0.263	0.671	0.459	0.691	0.583	0.333	0.640	0.354
Ratua 2	0.818	0.235	0.823	0.387	0.950	0.511	0.539	1	0.399	0.292	0.245	0.653	0.625	0	0.534	0.466
Gajol	0.960	0.306	0.640	0.195	0.970	0.356	0.331	1	0.087	0.792	0.843	0.472	0.333	0.167	0.532	0.468
Bamangola	0.942	0.682	0.659	0.137	1	0.600	0	1	0.106	0.731	0.799	0.363	0	0.667	0.547	0.453
Habibpur	1	1	0.429	0.160	0.917	0	0.513	0	0.015	0.665	1	0.618	0.104	1	0.530	0.470
Old Malda	0.945	0	0.701	0.427	0.952	0.778	0.545	1	0	0.872	0.811	1	0.146	1	0.653	0.347
Englishbazar	0.828	0.543	0.949	0.675	0.815	0.733	0.370	1	0.184	0.855	0.742	0.797	0.458	0.333	0.663	0.337
Manikchak	0.923	0.576	0.806	0.281	0.835	0.844	0.779	1	0.568	0.543	0.843	0.590	0.292	0.500	0.670	0.330
Kaliachak 1	0	0.253	0	1	0.123	0.733	0.117	1	0.382	0.404	0.642	0.894	1	0.833	0.527	0.473
Kaliachak 2	0.808	0.185	0.578	0.677	0.887	0.800	0.649	1	1	0.621	0.704	0.773	0.479	0.833	0.714	0.286
Kaliachak 3	0.750	0.026	0.441	0.905	0	0.933	0.929	1	0.278	1	0.308	0.869	0.854	1	0.664	0.336

Source- Computed by Authors

Table-3: Categorization of the blocks of Malda according to levels of development (DIj)

Development Index (DIj) range	Category	No. of blocks	Name of blocks
>0.500	Very High	1	Chanchal 1,
0.450-0.500	High	5	Ratua 2, Gajol, Bamangola, Habibpur, Kaliachak 1
0.400-0.450	Medium	3	Harischandrapur 1, Harischandrapur 2, Chanchal 2
0.350-0.400	Low	1	Ratua 1,
<0.350	Very Low	5	Kaliachak 2, Kaliachak 3, Old Malda, Englishbazar, Manikchak,

Very High Level of Development (DIj: >0.500)
Only one block is in very high level of development. It is Chanchal 1. Development Index (DI) of this block is 0.530. The fourteen indicators of development is better condition of this district. Literacy rate of this block is highest (56.1%). Chanchal 1 block is well accessibility by means of transportation and communication and socio-economic facilities, centers of business and commerce is very good. It is the cause of very high level overall development of this block.

High Level of Development (DIj: 0.450-0.500)
Blocks with index value between 0.450 – 0.500 are considered as 'High Level of Development' blocks. There are five blocks in this category. These are Ratua 2 (0.466), Gajol (0.468), Bamangola (0.453), Habibpur (0.470) and Kaliachak 1 (0.473). The cause of High Level of Development of Bamangola is literacy rate and number of primary schools per lakh population. The High Level of Development block Habibpur has the nine percent of living urban population and sex ratio of this block is highest.

Medium Level of Development (DIj: 0.400-0.450)
The medium level of development is observed in three blocks (Table-3). These are Harischandrapur 1 (0.449), Harischandrapur 2 (0.427), Chanchal 2 (0.430). Percentage of agriculture labour of Harischandrapur 1 block is highest position. Percentage of gross irrigated area to gross cropped area of Harischandrapur 2 block is better condition. Percentage of agriculture labour and number of upper primary schools per lakh of population of Chanchal 2 bolck is medium condition.

Low Level of Development (DIj: 0.350-0.400)

Only one block is in low level of development. It is Ratua 1. Development Index (DI) of this block is 0.354. Sex ratio of this block is lowest position. The reasons for such a low level development are mainly related to less of educational facilities, lack of undeveloped communication and transport facilities medical, less literacy rate and less workers population are the attributes of low level of overall development.

Very Low Level of Development (DIj: <0.350)

The very low level of development is observed in five blocks (Table-3), viz. Kaliachak 2 (0.286), Kaliachak 3 (0.336), Old Malda (0.347), Englishbazar (0.337) and Manikchak (0.330). Maximum indicators like educational institution, literacy rate, workers population, secondary economic activities and agricultural development of these blocks is very low position.

Figure 1
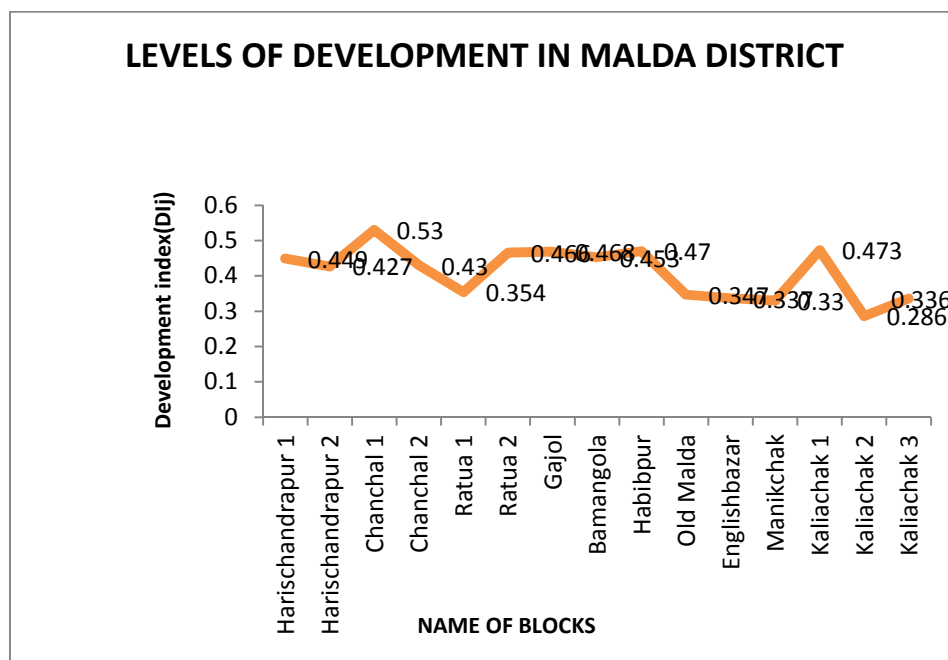
CONCLUSION

The development of a particular region depends not only one criteria but also on several socio-economic factors which comprise the levels of development. Malda district shows micro regional disparity of development levels. Some block like Chanchal 1, Ratua 2, Gajol, Bamangola, Habibpur and Kaliachak 1 Provide better way of living comparatively with so called remote block. The levels of development in these blocks are very high and high. The development of transportation system as well as the growing conciseness of the people about family planning provide these block a distinct position comparisons with other blocks. However it is a very challenging task to indicate all sorts of development strategy to take into account and to indicate micro level development of the region.

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