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## Social Development of West Bengal, India: a District Level Analysis

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### **Abstract:**

*The concept of social development is accustomed with the dimensions of demography, health, education, basic amenities, social and economic sphere of the human world. Rationale way of expression of human choices, thinking, decision making, adaptation behavior etc. are authenticated by the knowledge practices and circulation, the addition and alteration of human efforts, the technological inputs and Nature's laws. This paper is an endeavor to highlight on district level analysis of Social Development of West Bengal by using the particular methods on the basis of secondary data.*

**Keywords:** Social development, dimensions, knowledge practices, secondary data

### **1. Introduction**

Social development is the change or transformation of social relations within a society. The use of the term 'social development' reflected a more philosophical approach about the evolutionary patterns of social progress. During the 1990's, the concept of human development was promoted as a complement of existing income based approaches to interpret development (Desai and Dubey, 2010). More recently, there have been more detailed and somewhat different conceptions regarding social development as Morris (2010) defined social development as 'the bundle of technological, subsistence, organizational, and cultural accomplishments through which people feed, clothe, house, and reproduce themselves, explain the world around them, resolve disputes within their communities, extend their power at the expense of other communities, and defend themselves against others' attempts to extend power'. The primary aim of human or social development paradigm was to focus development thinking more upon the enhancement of people's freedom, capabilities and well-being (Deolalikar, 2005; Ravallion, 2012). The social development approach sought to achieve three goals: to make people the ends and not the means of development; to refocus attention on what people can be or do rather than what they can produce and to ensure that development policies are aimed at improving peoples' quality of life including their health, society and overall flourishing (Sen, 1997). While the Human Development Index (HDI) reduced to incorporating health and education indicators to per capita income, the basic aim was to recognize that social development implies the expansion of human capabilities, the achievement of universal access to basic needs, human security and dignity for the entire population (Haq, 1995), and subsequently, more broadly 'as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people can enjoy' (Sen 1999). In this context, this section analyses the social development using district level statistics of West Bengal. The level of social development calculated for each district will indicate the development disparity among the districts vis-à-vis the state as a whole. West Bengal is comprised of nineteen districts with a population of more than ten million currently having around 28 percent of population in the age group of 6 to 10 years.

India's record in ensuring better living standards has been very slow and social indicators are still abysmal (Dréze and Sen, 2011). An unconscionably large number of people are poor even by the most modest standards of living; universal literacy is yet to be realized; a high drop-out rate from schools and a very small proportion of the population go on to higher education. In fact, any composite index of health, education, and nutrition would place India very close to the bottom in a ranking of all countries outside Africa (ibid).

*Source: India: Social Development Report 2012. Minorities at the Margins, Council for Social Development. OXFORD.*

### **2. Objectives**

The major objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To identify the magnitude of district wise imbalances in social development in West Bengal;
2. To analyse the level of social development of each district using district level statistics for West Bengal;
3. To study various aspects of district level disparity in social development and its causes;
4. To assess the disparity in development of various indicators of social development in districts of West Bengal;

### 3. Data and Methods

The study has been entirely based on secondary data. In order to capture the essence of social progress as well as social backwardness, six broad dimensions based on twenty-two indicators taken from different aspects of social well-being have been considered for present study. The indicators of each dimension are tabulated as below (Table 1). The dimensions of SDI are: Demography, Health, Education, Basic Amenities, Social and Economic dimensions. The Social Development Index (SDI) has been derived for all the nineteen districts of West Bengal on an aggregate basis. Secondary Data, the prime data source of the present analysis include Social Development Report (2010 and 2012), Human Development Report of West Bengal (2013), Economic Survey (2012-13), NSS (66<sup>th</sup> Round, 2009-10), NFHS – 2009-10 and Census Report of India (2011). In order to measure how far each and every district is located far behind or ahead of the others, the formula  $X_{ij}/X_{max}$  has been used where  $X_{ij}$  is the district's value of any particular indicator and  $X_{max}$  is the value of the district possessing maximum score on that indicator. The checking of confidence interval as well as significance level has also been done. Keeping in mind the relation of the indicators to development, the negative ones have been transferred to positive by simply taking the inverse of the indicator itself. The UNDP Goalpost methodology has also been adapted to make the indicators scale free by employing the formula:  $Y_{ri} = (X_{rji} - X_{rjmin}) / (X_{rjmax} - X_{rjmin})$ , where 'i' is 1,2, 3, .....the number of districts, 'j' is the indicator and 'r' is the dimension. After that, to determine the weights of each indicator, the researcher has employed Principal Component Analysis (PCA), a method of Factor Analysis to have initial Eigen values which are more than 1. Comparing the calculated SDI the level of divergence of each district at each social dimension is assessed for an understanding of the developmental lag of the districts.

Demography		
1	Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR)	Proportion of Currently married women using any form of modern method of contraceptive
2	Population Density	Population/Area (Sq. km)
3	Sex Ratio	Number of Females/'000 males
Health		
4	Institutional Delivery	% of delivery taking place in a unit in the district
5	Children receiving an adequate diet	Total children age 6-23 months receiving an adequate diet
6	Mothers receiving post-natal care	Mothers who received postnatal care from a doctor/nurse/LHV/ANM/midwife/other health personnel within 2 days of delivery (%)
Basic Amenities		
7	Electrification	% of households with electricity connection in their houses
8	Drinking water	% of households with an improved drinking-water source
9	Sanitation	% of households using improved sanitation facility
10	Clean Fuel	% of households using clean fuel for cooking
11	Pucca house	% of households who live in pucca houses
Education		
12	Schooling of women	% of women with 10 or more years of schooling
13	NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
14	Pupil-Teacher-Ratio (PTR)	Ratio of Pupils to a teacher in schools
15	School Density	Number of schools per sq. km area
Social Dimension		
16	Child Sex Ratio	Sex ratio at birth for children born in the last five years (females per 1,000 males)
17	Marriage of Women	% of women age 20-24 years married before age 18 years
18	Female Literacy	% of Female literate to total female population
19	Urbanization	Level of Urbanization
Economic Dimension		
20	Female Work Participation Rate	% of total female workers to the total female population
21	APL Families	% of families living above poverty line to total families
22	Per Capita Income	Per Capita Income of each district as % off Kolkata

Table 1: Dimensions of Social Development Indices

### 4. Results and Discussions

The individual district (Fig. 1) is plotted on the basis of their aggregate SDI score in order to reveal the inter-district variation in SDI based on the calculation on the current database available for different indicators under six dimensions.

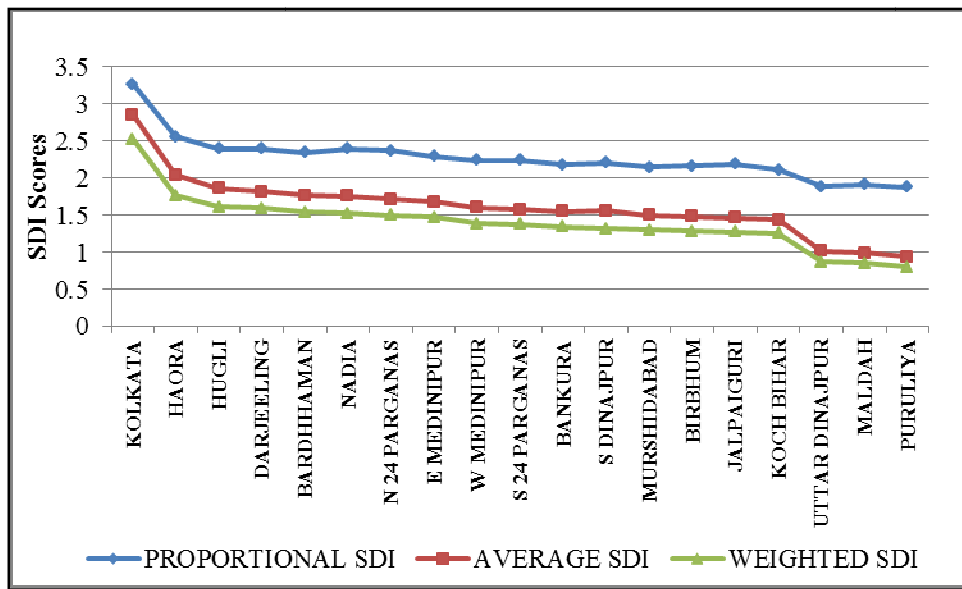
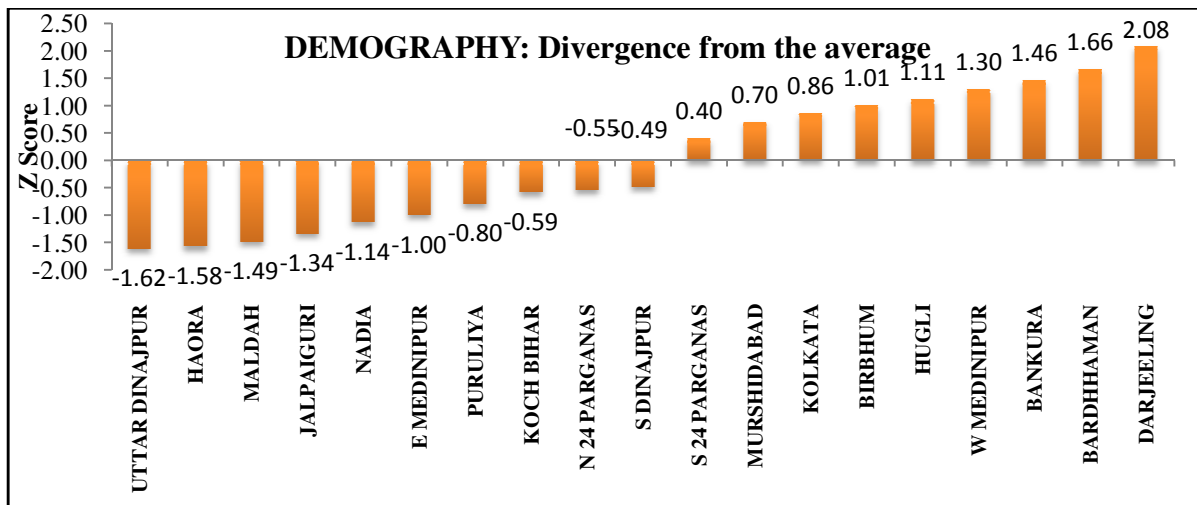
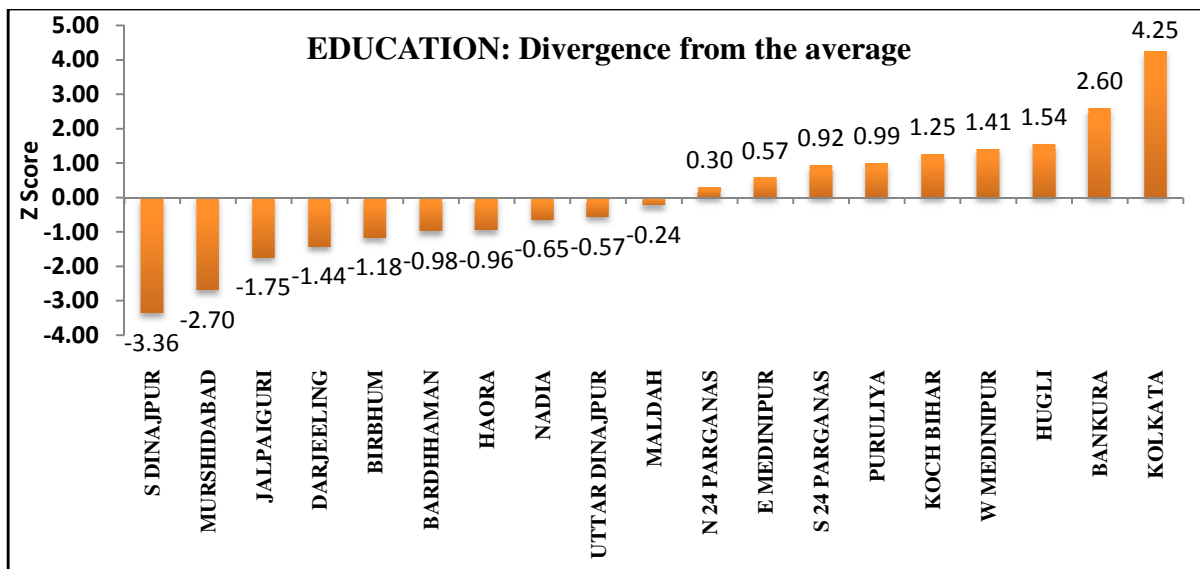
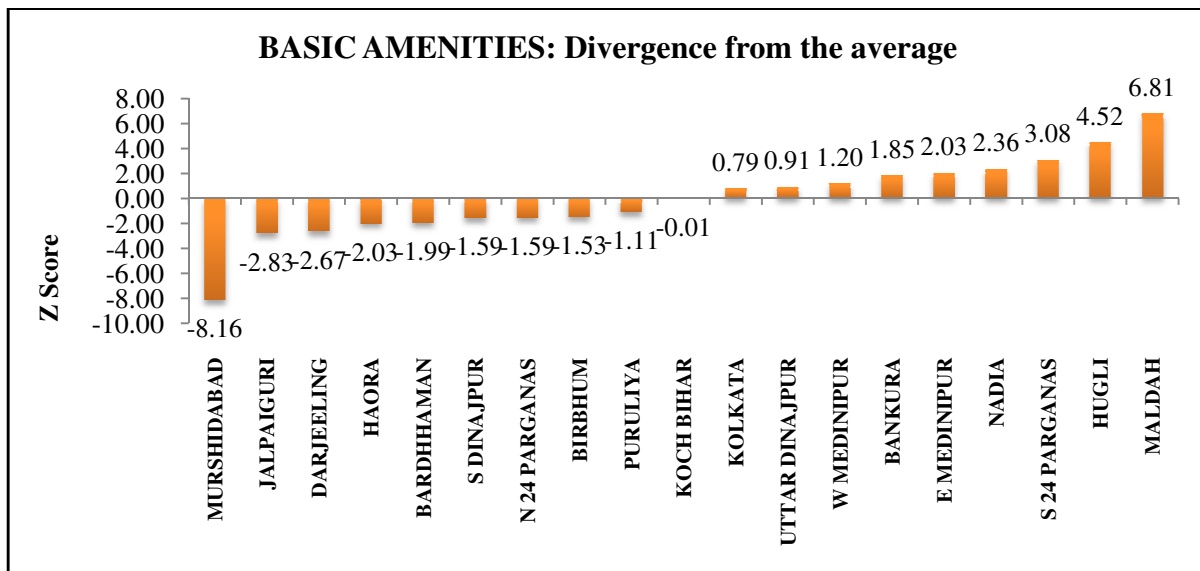
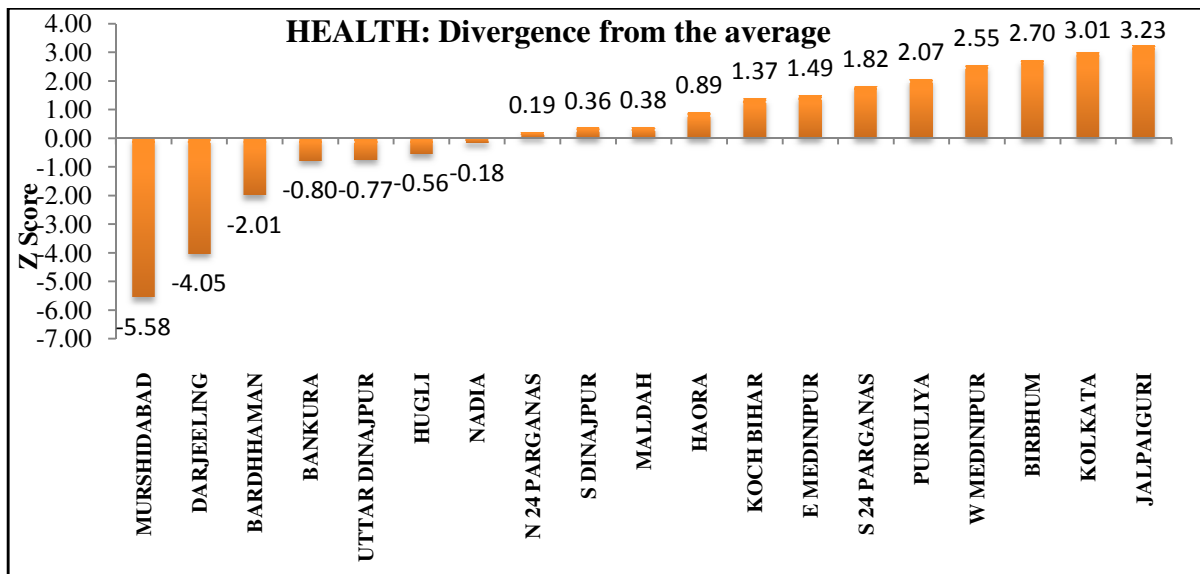


Figure 1: Inter-district variation in SDI Scores of West Bengal

When the districts are arranged as per their overall weighted SDI scores it reveals that the districts of Kolkata, Haora, Hugli, Darjeeling and Bardhaman belong to top most five ranks while Purulia, Uttar Dinajpur, Malda, Jalpaiguri and Koch Bihar occupy the five bottom-most position of the social development ladder of the state of West Bengal. The individual score in different dimensions vary widely for all the districts. Kolkata district gains a stable position in social development scoring first in four out of six indicators while other districts cannot. Darjeeling ranks in the top five positions except in the social and economic dimensions. Hugli scores better in all sectors except in health and economic sector. In the demographic dimension, the districts of Uttar Dinajpur, Haora, Malda, Jalpaiguri and Nadia occupy the last five positions. In terms of health, the least performing districts are Malda, Uttar Dinajpur, Murshidabad, S 24 Parganas and East Medinipur. As far as basic amenities are concerned, the districts of Purulia, Uttar Dinajpur, Bankura, Birbhum and Malda occupy the last five places. In terms of education, Darjeeling, Purulia, Bankura, Bardhaman and Hugli are the poor performing districts. The same districts repeat again in terms of Economic and Social dimensions. It is a fact found from the diagrams that the districts of Purulia, Uttar Dinajpur and Malda are always divergent negatively from average in respect of all dimensions. On an average West Bengal shows a dismal picture in social development.





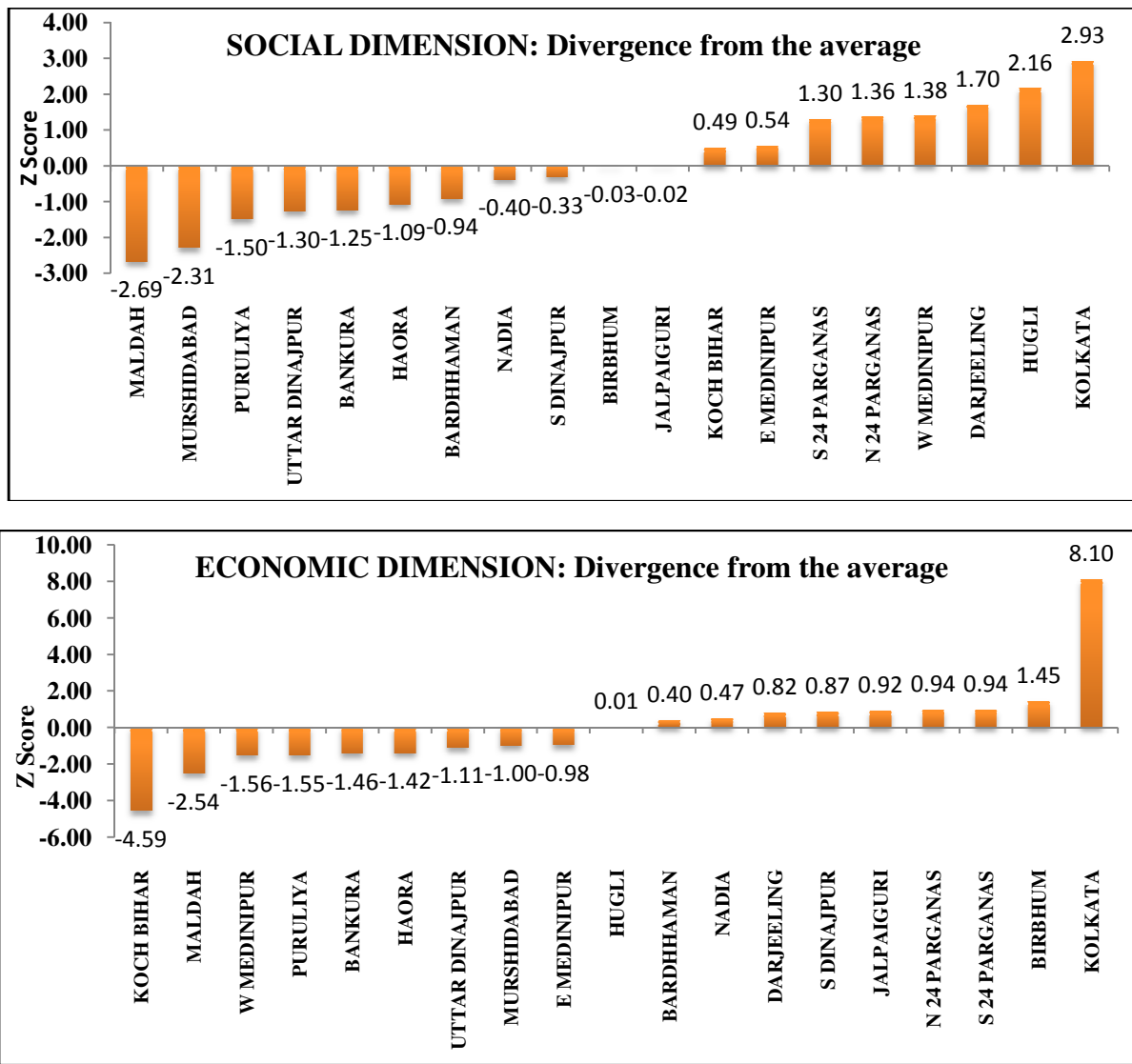


Figure 2: Indicators of Social Development and position of the districts of West Bengal

**5. Pattern of SDI**

Mainly three patterns have been explored from the above analysis:

- i. Set of districts, viz. Purulia, Uttar Dinajpur, Maldah and South Dinajpur are constantly lagging behind the SD; these districts are termed Backward.
- ii. Set of districts, viz. Kolkata, Hugli and Haora are better in position of SD;
- iii. Rest of the districts display non-uniformity.

	Demography	Health	Basic Amenities	Education	Social dimension	Economic Dimension
Demography	1					
Health	0.41712213	1				
Basic Amenities	0.217519257	0.364447	1			
Education	0.374214831	0.595295	0.409429741	1		
Social dimension	0.32964703	0.353693	0.731989821	0.277954404	1	
Economic Dimension	0.409076505	0.322446	0.60678211	0.050948644	0.754231015	1

Table 2: West Bengal: Inter-correlation Matrix

The inter-correlation matrix (Table 2) displays the interrelated nature of the inequalities in the state as a whole. There exists a positive correlation among all the variables that must be crucial to the planner for the all-round development of the state.

**6. Conclusion**

Nobody can ignore that the study of social development of any spatial unit is not explained by a particular method because it has no simple or unidirectional social theory. In respect of explanatory forms, the concept of social development is more ongoing process of

human efforts rather than the formal expression of social criteria. But, the acquisition and articulation of various criteria of this concept may be added continuously by scholars keeping with times. Thereafter, limitation of methods is to be minimized and proper assessment should be reached at satisfactory level. On the other hands, spatiality of scoring by using the data set of the different parameters is not static expression; it can be treated as open ended both the perspectives of critical analysis and orientation of the concept of social development.

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