



**AN ANALYSIS ON DISPARITY IN LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT AS WELL AS  
SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT AMONG THE BLOCKS OF MALDAH  
DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL**

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**Abstract**

*Development indicates the advancement of social and economic environment of any region. In fact, proper development occurs only when managing the balance between natural and human resources. It improves the livelihood quality of people. The present paper focuses on pattern of level of development and factors behind disparity regarding development in different blocks of Malda district where the backbone of economy is based on agriculture and it ranks as one of the most underdeveloped district in West Bengal. The population is mainly rural and blocks lag behind in terms of low level of literacy, work participation, medical facilities and other civic amenities. In this paper, index of development in respect of socio-economic status has been worked out after Kendall's method. As a result, an imbalanced development takes place in the blocks and creates inter-block disparities related to social and economic conditions.*

**Keywords:** *development, disparity, socio-economic status, factors*



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**Preamble:** Development is a qualitative process which indicates the overall improvement of a region in terms of quality of livelihood of local people, socio-economic environ such as educational status, working scenario, demographic profile, transport and communication, health status, banking facilities, availability of basic civic amenities etc. But uneven distribution and access of natural and human resources leads to an imbalanced development into different blocks of Malda district of West Bengal. This area is mainly a rural area and depends upon agrarian economy. Most of the blocks face the problem of river bank erosion, excessive migration from Bangladesh and Bihar, plenty of tribal population and political matters also. That is why, this area experiences less development as well as poor social and economic status. This paper depicts the pattern of level of development as well as the conditions of socio-economic status among blocks.

**Study Area:** Malda district is situated between latitudes 24 °40'20"N and 25 °32'8"N, and longitudes 87 ° 45'50"E to 88 °28'10"E. It is bounded to its due south by the district of Murshidabad across the river Ganga, by Bangladesh and Dakshin Dinajpur district to its east, Santal Parganas of Jharkhand state in the west and Uttar Dinajpur in the north. The district consists of 3,988,845 population with an geographical area of 3733 sq. km. Three broad physiographic divisions can be identified within Malda district viz. Tal, Barind and Diara. Besides this, this district has 15 blocks, 2 municipalities (Old Malda and Englishbazar) and 146 gram panchayats. A number of factors are responsible for inter-block disparities regarding development of Malda district.

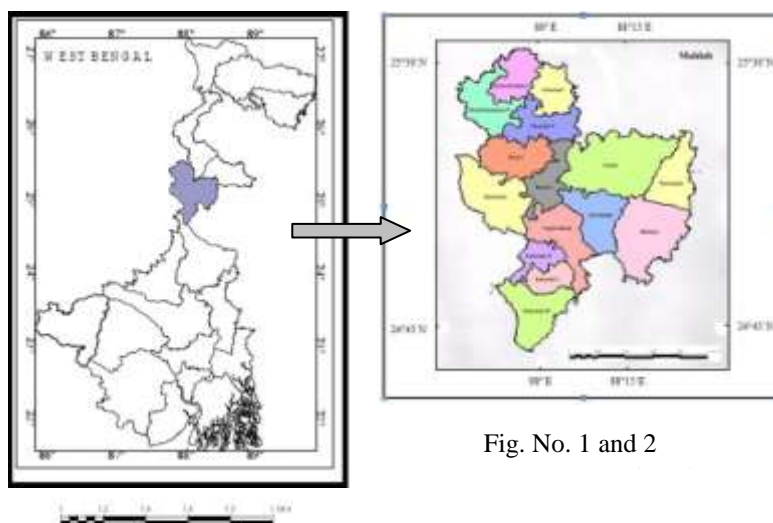


Fig. No. 1 and 2

**Objectives:**

- To analyze the disparity regarding development among the blocks.
- To observe socio-economic environment of the people.

**Database and Methodology:** The present work is based on a two phase study, viz. – database collection and analysis of data. This study is mainly based on secondary data sources and these data are collected from Block Office, Census 2001 and 2011, District Statistical Handbook of Malda and District Gazetteers of Malda. Thereafter, these data are analysed and interpreted through various statistical techniques. In this work the location map, and statistical analysis are prepared by GIS based software including Map Info, Arc GIS, TNT mips.

**Demographic Profile:** Demographic profile of a region is reflected mainly by its population density, population composition in the form of male and female and SC and ST population and it also includes sex ratio.

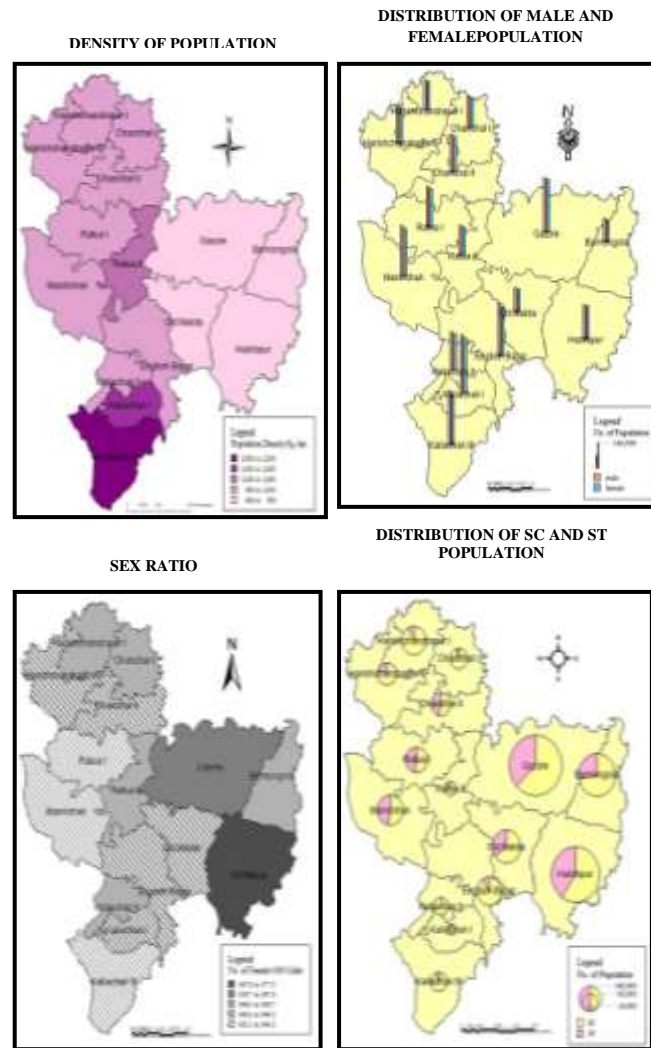


Fig. No. 3, 4, 5 and 6

	<b>High/Highest</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Low/Lowest</b>
<b>Population</b>	Kaliachak III,	Ratua II	Harishchandrapur I,
<b>Density</b>	Kaliachak I		Ratua I,
			Harishchandrapur II,
			Gazole, Chanchal I,
<b>Sex Ratio</b>	Habibpur,	Harishchandrapur	Harishchandrapur II,
	Gazole	I, Chanchal I,	Chanchal II, Ratua I,
		Ratua II,	Manikchak, Kaliachak I,

After independence, a large displaced population from Bangladesh had settled in bordering areas namely Bamangola, Habibpur, Kaliachak and Old Malda. It can be seen that male population is higher than female population in all the blocks. But disparity in the distribution can be identified in the blocks of Harishchandrapur II, Chanchal II, Ratua I, Manikchak, Kaliachak I, Kaliachak III, Old Malda, English Bazar. Among the SC population, there are 59 sub-communities of which Rajbanshi, Namasudre, Polia, Tiyer, Keet and Poundra are the main sub-castes. Among the tribal population there are 38 sub-communities of which Santala, Oraon, Mores, Mundas and Malpaharias are main sub-communities. About 88% of the tribal

population are concentrated in the "Barind" areas comprised in four blocks namely Gazole, Bamangola, Habibpur and Old Malda.

**Literacy Status:** Literacy is an important aspect to determine the socio-economic disparity of a region. It is well-known that the high level of literacy, the more will be the income level and the better standard of living. It is noticed that literate population is greater in the blocks of Chanchal I, Ratua I, Gazole, Bamangola, Old Malda, English Bazar, Habibpur, Kaliachak I and Kaliachak II. In the rest of the blocks, illiteracy is higher than literacy.

Number of educational institutions has been chosen as another factor influencing the socio-economic condition of the inhabitants. It is observed that number of primary schools is greater than secondary schools and higher secondary schools. Colleges are located only in four blocks.

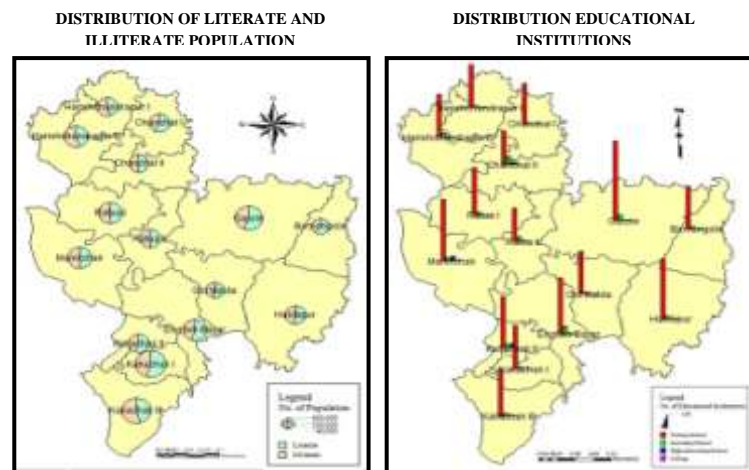


Fig. No. 7 and

**Occupational Status:** This area is mainly a rural area and mainly based on agrarian economy. The distribution of maximum workers is seen in the blocks of Kaliachak I, Gazole and Kaliachak III. It is observed that working population is less than nonworking population. Agricultural labour and cultivator is maximum in Gazole, Bamangola, Habibpur, Manikchak, Harishchandrapur I and II, Chanchal I and II, Ratua I and II whereas people in Kaliachak II, Kaliachak I, Old Malda and Englishbazar are engaged in Household industry and other sector. Though Old Malda and English Bazar have two municipalities, people are engaged in secondary and tertiary sectors. In Kaliachak I and Kaliachak II, the large amount of agricultural land is washed out by river bank erosion, so the inhabitants are engaged in household industry.

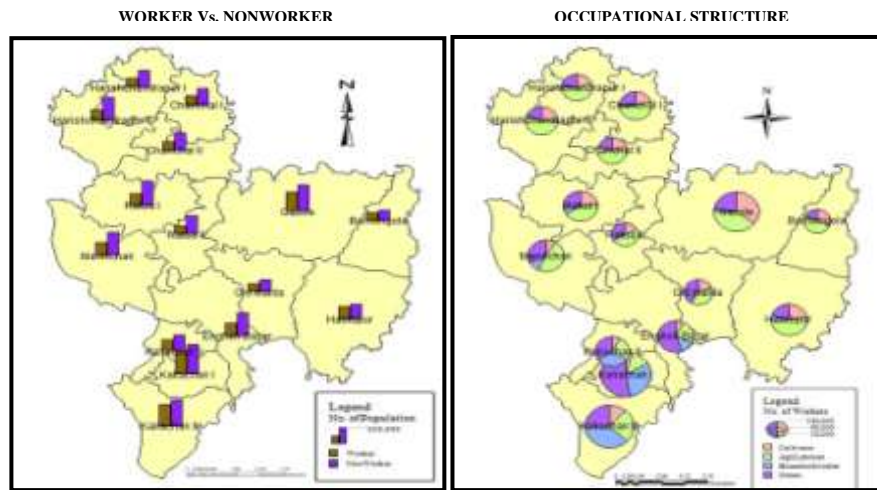


Fig. No. 9 and 10

**Health Status:** The status of health is an integral part of social development. The spatial variation in the distribution of health services is an indicator towards the unequal social development of a region. The highest number of health care centre is found in blocks of Chanchal II, Manikchak and Kaliachak II. Only Chanchal II has a handsome number of doctors. Rest of the blocks has less number of health care centre and number of doctors. This depicts a poor health status of the district and also the inhabitants. Number of beds is also very less in these blocks. So the patients have to migrate in other places for better treatment and medical facilities.

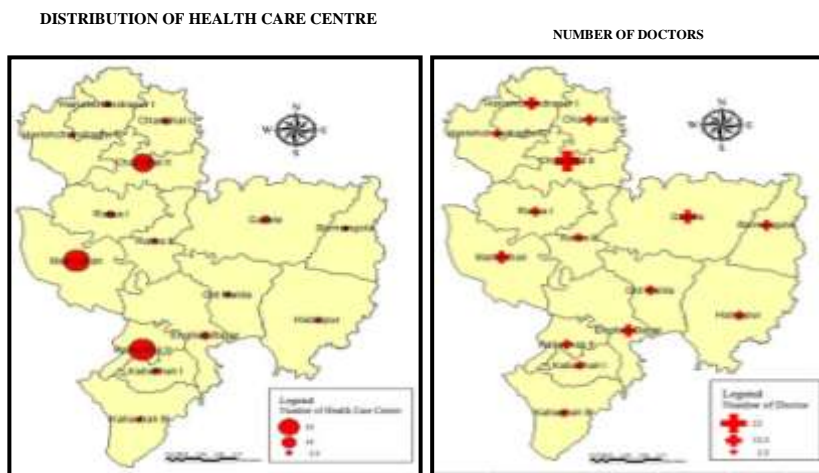


Fig. No. 11 and 12  
Source: [www.malda.gov.in](http://www.malda.gov.in)

**Road Networks:** The road density is an important indicator of development in means of transportation and communication. The density of road varies in the blocks. The highest road density is observed in Kaliachak I while the lowest road density is found in Chanchal I, Manikchak, English Bazar, Kaliachak III, Bamangola and Habibpur.

**BLOCKWISE ROAD DENSITY OF MALDA**

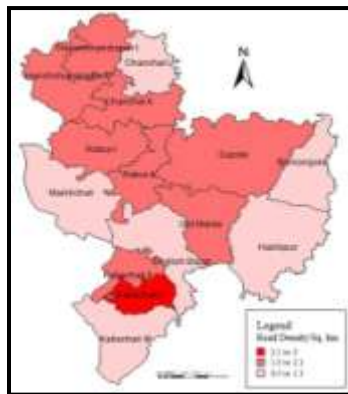


Fig. No. 13

**Banking Facilities:** Now-a-days, the banks have played a vital role in development. Increasing branches helps to get connecting with people in short period of time. Both private and national banks are now in great demand. Also the gramin banks are very popular in rural area. Gazole, English Bazar and Kaliachak I have a handsome number of banks whereas Harishchandrapur I, Chanchal II and Old Malda have less number of banks. It is also observed that in blocks like Kaliachak III and Old Malda, population served per bank office is quite high. On the other hand, less population per bank office is served in Chanchal I, Bamangola, Habibpur and English Bazar.

**DISTRIBUTION OF COMMERCIAL AND GRAMIN BANKS**

**POPULATION SERVED PER BANK OFFICE**

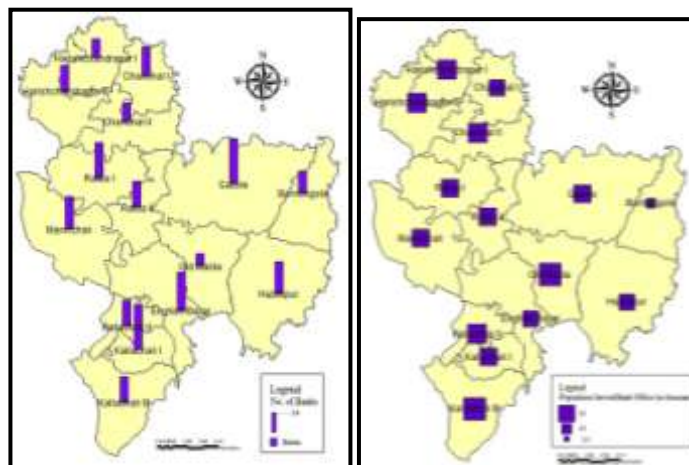


Fig. No. 14 and 15  
Source: District Statistical Handbook

**Composite Index of Disparity:** The disparity indices calculated by Z-score of each of the blocks of Malda district in respect of computed population density, Literacy Rate, Percentage of total worker to total population, No. of health care centre and road density/sq. km.

**Table No. 1 Composite Z-Score of 15 Blocks of Malda District**

<b>Name of Blocks</b>	<b>Composite z score</b>	<b>Name of Blocks</b>	<b>Compositiez score</b>
Harishchandrapur I	-1.5	Manikchak	-1.69
Harishchandrapur II	-1.07	Old Malda	-1.63
Chanchal I	-1	English Bazar	-2.36
Chanchal II	0.15	Habibpur	-2.77
Ratua I	-1.04	Kaliachak I	10.6
Ratua II	-0.67	Kaliachak II	1.81
Gazole	-0.11	Kaliachak III	1.86
Bamongola	-1.25		

*Source: Computed by Author*

Z-score gives the location of any observation from the mean in standard deviation unit. The blockwise indices have been summed up to get the composite z-scores. These values are then used to prepare the choropleth map showing the variation of total z-scores (composite scores) in the district. It can be presumed that higher composite scores indicate less disparity while low composite scores indicate greater disparity.

It is seen that in the blocks like Harishchandrapur I, Harishchandrapur II, Chanchal I, Ratua I, Ratua II, Gazole, Bamangola, Manikchak, Old Malda, English Bazar, Habibpur, the composite score is negative i.e. disparity is high whereas Chanchal II, Kaliachak I, Kaliachak II, Kaliachak III have positive composite values that indicates less disparity. High Literacy rate, percentage of total worker, population density, road density and no. of health centres are responsible behind the less disparity in these blocks. On contrary, blocks of smallest z-score are the blocks of least importance with respect to those factors.

**Pattern of Level of Development:**

Development is basically associated with economic phenomena. It is the process by which a nation improves the economic and social well-being of its people.

Levels of development of 15 CD blocks of Malda district are calculated using followings ten indicators:

**Table No. 2 Selected indicators for calculating levels of development in 15 C.D. Blocks of Malda District**

<b>Selected indicators</b>
Household Density
Density of population
Sex Ratio
Percentage of Literate to Total Population

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Percentage of Workers to Total Population  
 Percentage of Agricultural Labourer to total worker  
 Percentage of workers in household industry  
 Percentage of Net Cultivated area to Total area  
 No. of Manufacturing units  
 No. of Educational institutions per lakh of population  
 No. of Doctors per lakh of population  
 No. of Health Care Centres per lakh of population  
 Road Density/Sq. km  
 Population served per Bank office per thousand of population

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In this study, development index after Kendall has been adopted. According to development index for 15 CD blocks of Malda district has been categorized in three classes with a view to depict regional disparity of levels of development –1) High, 2)Moderate and 3)Low.

**Table No. 3 Development Index of selected indicators measuring levels of development of 15 Blocks of Malda District**

Name of Block	Total rank Value	Name of Block	Total rank Value	Name of Block	Total rank Value
Harishchandranur	95	Ratna II	108	English	139.5
Harishchandrapur	132	Gazole	105.5	Habibpur	118
Chanchal I	104	Bamangola	114.5	Kaliachak	82
Chanchal II	101	Manikchak	131.5	Kaliachak	98
Ratua I	134.5	Old Malda	110.5	Kaliachak	104

Source: Computed by Authors

**Table No.4 Categorization of CD Blocks of Malda District according to Levels of Development**

Development Index	Category	No. of Blo	Name of Blocks
128-140	Very	4	Harishchandrapur II, Ratua I, Habibpur
117-128	Low	1	
105-117	Mode	4	Ratua II, Gazole, Bamangola, Kaliachak III, Kaliachak I,
94-105	High	5	Harishchandranur I. Chanchal I.
82-94	Very	1	Kaliachak II

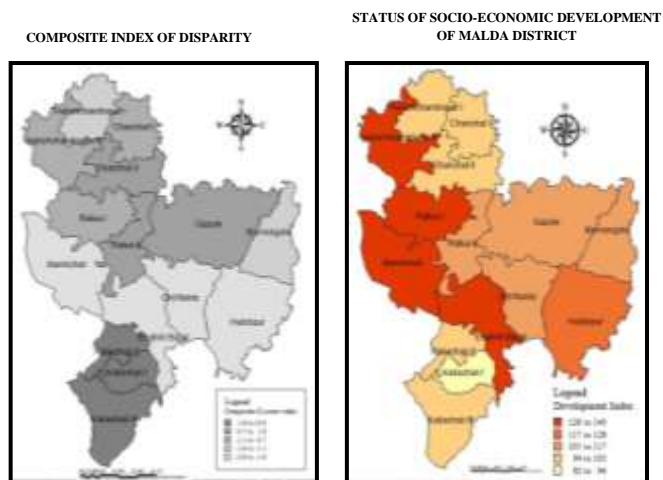


Fig. No. 16 and 17



The close examination of the map prepared by Kendall's method indicates the spatial variation in the status of development with respect to socio-economic condition in the district of Malda. Generally the lower the rank value, the higher is the development. The area covering the block of Kaliachak I, Kaliachak II, Kaliachak III, Harishchandrapur II, Chanchal I and Chanchal II show the sign of high level of development. On the other hand, the low level of development is found in the blocks of Harishchandrapur I, Manikchak, Ratua I, English Bazar and Habibpur. But in recent years, huge area of Kaliachak II, Kaliachak III is washed away by severe river bank erosion and it affects the livelihood of the inhabitants. That is why, these two blocks have begun to experience less development throughout the passage of time. Kaliachak I, Harishchandrapur I, Chanchal I, Chanchal II blocks show high development due to higher literacy rate, high work participation rate, high population density, better accessibility by means of transportation and other socio-economic facilities. On the other hand, due to lack of educational facilities, medical facilities, less workers population etc. Harishchandrapur II, Ratua I, Manikchak, English Bazar and Habibpur blocks show low level of development.

**Findings:**

- Since the tribal population of this district is quite high, it goes without saying that the development of the district depends on the development of the tribes. The scheduled tribes and scheduled castes people of this district are very much backward economically as well as educationally.
- It is prominent that the blocks along the riverside are in vulnerable condition and as a result, they are facing different types of problem like land loss, displacements etc. That is why, low development takes place in these blocks at present.
- There is an unequal distribution between Primary schools and Secondary schools, Higher Secondary schools. Number of primary schools is very high whereas number of secondary and higher secondary schools is quite low. Number of colleges is insignificant.
- Number of health care centre and number of doctors are very low. So they do not get better medical treatment and medical facilities at their own place.
- Huge people are migrated from Bihar and Bangladesh and create more pressure on land which hinders growth and development.
- This district is situated at border area and faces some problems, trafficking, illegal migration, crime, insecurity, smuggling etc. are responsible factors which obstruct the social and economic development.

- Above all, the micro level disparity exists in the blocks of Malda regarding, demographic profile, literacy status, Employment scenario, health status, road network, banking facilities and all other aspects.

**Conclusion:** The district depicts a poor condition regarding level of development. It is seen that there exist a disparity in the level of development as well as socio-economic conditions among the blocks. It affects their livelihood and lowering the quality of life. Development does not depend on not only one criterion but also several factors. To minimize this disparity, balance growth in each and every sphere is required though it is very difficult to identify all sorts of developmental strategies to take into account. To conclude, it is desired to achieve overall development of the district and it is possible only when each and every aspect of every block is equally developed.

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