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Block Level Status Of Educational Attainment In Uttar Dinajpur District

Palash Kumar Mondal Assistant Professor, Dept. of Geography, Deshabandhu Mahavidyalaya, Chittaranjan, Paschim Bardhaman. Email Id: palashgeography@gmail.com

Abstract:
This paper is attempting to assess the role of education as a development indicator particularly to evaluate the level of educational attainment for the blocks of Uttar Dinajpur District for the year 2010-2011. This is done based on the methodology had been used by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its Human Development Report (1995). Two reliable and available indicators i.e., gross enrollment ratio (GER) and adult literacy ratio (ALR) have been used to calculate the EI (Education Index) for the blocks of Uttar Dinajpur District. The highest EI is found in the block Kaliaganj (0.7220) followed by Raiganj, Hemtabad, Karandighi, Itahar, Chopra and Islampur blocks while the lowest EI is found in the block Goalpokhar-I (0.4524). Based on computed EI, all the blocks are categorized into three groups i.e., developed, developing and under-develop. Two blocks namely, Kaliaganj and Raiganj are experiencing high EI; five blocks namely, Hemtabad, Karandighi, Hemtabad, Itahar, Chopra and Islampur are experiencing moderate EI; and two blocks namely, Goalpokhar-I and Goalpokhar-II are experiencing low EI.

Keywords: Education; Gross Enrollment Index; Adult Literacy Index; Education Index.

1. Introduction:

Education is one of the important indicators of Human Development Index (HDI) and backbone of the society. It is used to increase economic efficiency and social consistency of a region or a country (Burchi, 2006; Ozturk, 2001). Education measures the social development directly and economic development indirectly at both micro-level and macro-level. It imparts multi-facet role to improving the socio-economic conditions of a region or a nation. For example, education accelerates the agricultural output by increasing agricultural efficiency (Behrman, 1990), helps to reduce income inequality by increasing the per capita income of the people (Dabla-Norris et al., 2015; Sicular et al., 2008), increases health awareness among the people in the society (Michael & Chuen, 2012; Samuel et al., 2020) and so many. In the contemporary perspective, education is perhaps the single most important means by which individuals develop their own skills, abilities and overcome various limitations and, above all, improve their quality of life.

The district Uttar Dinajpur is very important in the educational scenario as there is diversity in educational status in the blocks. In this paper, an attempt has been made to find out the expected EI to get an idea of the socio-economic condition of the blocks of Uttar Dinajpur district during 2010-2011.Two reliable and available indicators i.e., gross enrollment ratio (GER) and adult literacy ratio (ALR) have been used to calculate the EI for the blocks of the District. A number of studies have been made by the researchers to find out the EI at both macro-level and micro-level. Roy (2013) finds out the EI by the formula that assigned by the Government of West Bengal, 2004 for the blocks of Birbhum district to show the status of human development of the blocks in the district. Mondal and Roy (2014) also studied the district Birbhum to show the educational status of blocks and find out their possible causes. Pattanayek et al. (2018) using the Iterative Average Correlation Method measured the EI for the blocks of Paschim Medinipur district.

2. Study Area:

The district Uttar Dinajpur is one of the important districts of West Bengal and came into existence on1st April, 1992 after the division of the erstwhile West Dinajpur District. The district extends roughly between latitude 25°14'15'' N to 26°30' N and longitude 87°48'35'' E to 90°31'15'' E and comprises an area of 3142 sq. Km, 3.54 per cent of the total State, is enclosed by Malda District on the South, Bihar on the West, Darjeeling & Jalpaiguri District on the North, and Bangladesh on the East. The eastern part of the district is the part of Rajmahal Hill. The older alluvium of the district is believed to be of the Pleistocene age which very fertile and favourable for agricultural production.

According to the Census of India, 2011 the District consists of 9 C.D. Blocks covering 1,577 villages, 3 statutory towns and 5 Census towns with accommodation of 30, 07,134 inhabitants and an average population density of 956 persons per sq. km (Home | Government of India, n.d.). In the district, the overall literacy rate is 59.07 per cent, whereas it is 80.26 per cent and 56 per cent in urban areas and rural areas respectively.

3. Data Sources & the Methodologies Applied:

This paper has been made using secondary data and the data have been collected from two reliable sources i.e., District Statistical Handbook of Uttar Dinajpur District for the year 2010-2011, (Publications, n.d.) which is published by Department of Planning and Statistics, Government of West Bengal; and the Census report for the district for the year 2011 from Census of India (Home | Government of India, n.d.) which is published by the Director General of Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

To evaluate the level of educational attainment of different countries since 1990, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in its Human Development Reports

(HDRs), has introduced the concept of Education Index (EI). In its first report (1990), educational attainments of different countries were measured by the adult literacy rate (ALR) only. In 1991, second indicator the mean years of schooling (MYS) of the children from 6-14 years was added and EI was constructed as a weighted average of one-third MYS weights and two-third ALR weights. During 1995 to 2009, the MYS was replaced by the gross enrollment ratio (GER) of primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of formal education and EI was computed as a weighted average of GER and ALR with respective weights of (1/3) and (2/3). Since 2010, the ALR was replaced by MYS and GER by expected years of schooling (EYS). During 2010 to 2013, the UNDP used Geometric Mean (GM) as the aggregation method in EI computation. However, since 2014, though GM is used as the aggregation method in HDI, a simple arithmetic mean (AM) of MYS and EYS is also used in the construction of EI.

The Government of India in its Human Development Report of 2001 has given (2/3) weight to average general literacy rate (7 years and above) and (1/3) weight to the intensity of formal education; whereas in 2011 it has given (2/3) weight to average general literacy rate (7 years and above) and (1/3) weight to the adjusted mean years of schooling, for calculating EI. In another observation, it was found that, the Government of West Bengal (2004) has assigned (2/3) weight to general literacy rate and (1/3) weight to school enrolment ratio of the children for the age group 6 to 14 years.

In this paper, for the computation of EI, two reliable indicators have been used i.e., GER and ALR. Indeed, there is a lack of proper data set to calculate GER and ALR in both the District Statistical Handbook of Uttar Dinajpur (2010-2011) and the Census of India. To counter the problem of data inadequacy, in this paper I have very well tried to calculate estimated GER and ALR using available data set. GER is calculated as the ratio between the total numbers of estimated enrolled students in the age group of 6-14 years from the District Statistical Handbook and estimated population of corresponding age group from Census data. Estimated enrolled students in the age group of 6-14 are all students enrolled in primary, middle and secondary school, and the number of students below 15 years of age in higher secondary school. 75 percent (6/8) of the total students of higher secondary school are considered to be below 15 years of age. For the total population in the age group of 6-14, firstly all the population in the age group 5 to 14 is taken and then the number of children is subtracted from it. To find out the estimated population of each block in the age group of 6 to 14 years, the total illiterate population of the district of the same age group is distributed among the blocks on the basis of the total literacy and illiteracy ratio of the respective blocks. ALR is calculated as the ratio between the number of adult literates and the number population in the age group of 15 years and above. To arrive at the estimated number of adult literates, the number of enrolled populations in the age group of 6 to 14 years is subtracted from the total literate population and to get the number of populations

in the age group of 15 years and above, estimated population of 6 to 14 years age group is subtracted from the total population in the age group 6 and above. These two rates are combined to make an index and this index can be used to arrive at the Education Index (EI).

To construct gross enrollment index (GEI) and adult literacy index (ALI), normative goalpost method has been used, whereas 0 is taken as minimum and 100 as the highest possible percentage for both indicators of HDI. Therefore,

$$\text{GEI} = \frac{\text{Actual Percentage}}{100}$$
$$\text{ALI} = \frac{\text{Actual Percentage}}{100}$$
$$\text{EI} = \frac{1}{3}(\text{GEI}) + \frac{2}{3}(\text{ALI})$$

4. Result and Discussion:

The computed data in Table 1 reveals that during 2010-2011, the highest Gross Enrollment Ratio (89.52%) is found in the Kaliaganj block while it is lowest (73.69%) in the block Goalpokhar-I. Table 1 is also showing the similar results in the case of the Adult Literacy Ratio.

Based on computed EI, all the blocks are categorized into three groups i.e., developed, developing and under-develop (F ig. 1).

Developed Blocks: Blocks with an EI value above 0.70 are treated as 'Developed Blocks'. There are two blocks in this category namely, Kaliaganj and Raiganj blocks. In these two blocks, a high EI value is observed because of two important Municipalities i.e., Raiganj Municipality and Kaliaganj Municipality are included in the block Raiganj and Kaliaganj respectively. GEI and ALI are also significant in these two blocks.

Table 1: Computation of Education Index for the Blocks of Uttar Dinajpur District for 2010-11

Blocks	Gross Enrollment Index (GEI)	Adult Literacy Index (ALI)	Education Index (EI)
Chopra	0.8511	0.4798	0.6036
Islampur	0.8340	0.4837	0.6005
Goalpokhar-I	0.7369	0.3101	0.4524
Goalpokhar-II	0.7658	0.3516	0.4897
Karandighi	0.8831	0.5992	0.6938
Raiganj	0.8821	0.6420	0.7220
Hemtabad	0.8900	0.6005	0.6970
Kaliaganj	0.8952	0.6426	0.7268
Itahar	0.8460	0.4999	0.6153

Source: Computed by Author

Developing Blocks: Blocks with EI values between 0.50 to 0.70 are considered as 'Developing Blocks'. In this category, there are five blocks in the Uttar Dinajpur district. These are Karandighi, Hemtabad, Itahar, Chopra and Islampur. Hemtabad and Karandighi, these two blocks are experiencing high education indexes that are very close to the aforesaid developed blocks. Not only that these two blocks are also having a significant GEI and ALIOn the other hand, in the remaining three blocks of this category EI values are not also insignificant.

Less Developed Blocks: Blocks with EI values below 0.50 considered are 'Less Developed Blocks'. This category includes two blocks of the said district namely, Goalpokhar-I and Goalpokhar-II. These two blocks are more backward in educational attainments compared to the other blocks of the district. Low GEI is the significant factor in lowering the EI values of these two blocks.

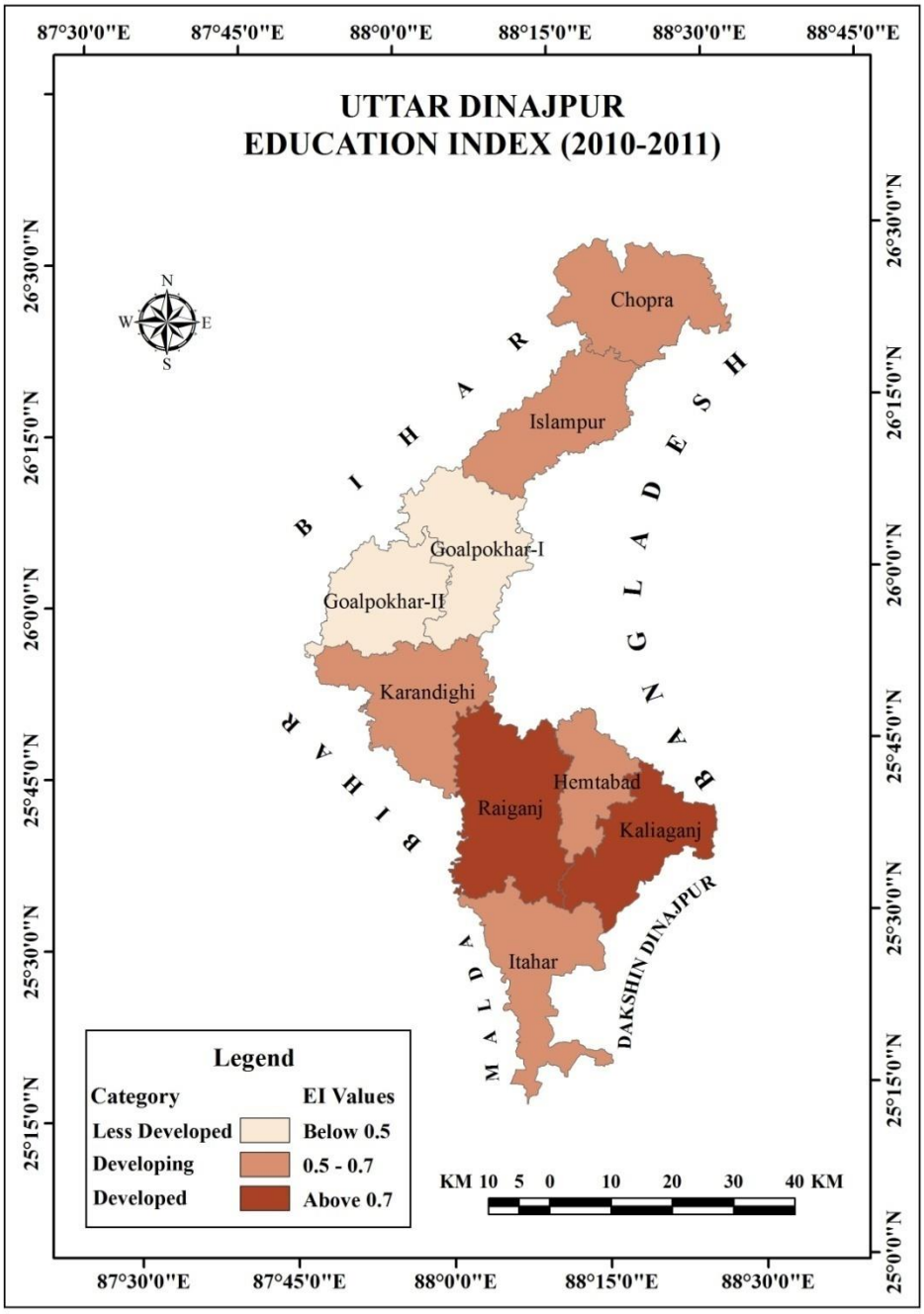

Fig. 1: Block-wise EI in the district Uttar Dinajpur (2010-2011)

5. Conclusion:

In this paper, I have tried to evaluate the level of educational attainment of all the blocks of the Uttar Dinajpur district during 2010-2011. Among all the blocks Kaliaganj, Raiganj, Karandighi and Hemtabad are the top performers compared to the other blocks in the district whereas Goalpokhar-I and Goalpokhar-II blocks are the bottom-level performers in the attainment of education. Lack of educational facilities, transport problems, caste composition, etc., are the main causes of low attainment of education in the blocks of

Goalpokar-I and Goalpokhar-II. Contrary, well distribution of educational institutions, more or less developed transport system, modern thinking of people, urbanization, etc., are the positive indicators of attainment of education in the blocks of Raiganj and Kaliaganj.

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