

# **Minority Concentration District Project**

**South 24 Parganas, West Bengal**

## **Executive Summary**

**Sponsored by the Ministry of Minority Affairs  
Government of India**

**Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta**

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The MCD project aims to provide a baseline survey on the state of minorities in the districts identified by the Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India. The minorities are defined on the basis of National Commission of Minorities Act, 1992 and includes Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists and Zoroastrians (Parsis). South 24 Parganas is classified as 'A' category district of this project for which the sets of religion specific socio-economic and basic amenities indicators are 36.6 and 21.2. Muslims with a share of 33.24% (as per Census 2001) in total population constitute the minority population of the district.

The purpose of this sample survey is to help the district administration draw action plan for socio-economic and infrastructure development of the district for improving the quality of life of the people and reducing the imbalances during the 11 th. Five Year Plan. However, it may be noted that the benefits will accrue to all sections of people in the district where intervention is executed and not only the minorities.

The survey was conducted in 29 (with one repetition) villages in South 24 Parganas spread across 21 Blocks during May - June, 2008. Findings of the survey are categorized under the broad headings of **Basic Amenities; Education; Health; Infrastructure; Occupational conditions; Existence and Efficacy of Government Schemes and any other issue.** We have provided two sets of tables, one for the data across villages to capture the locational variation followed by the district averages computed over all the households surveyed in all the sample villages chosen in the district. In general the findings clearly show that the district performs quite poor in terms of the performance indicators. However, it is not necessarily the case that the Muslims fall behind the non-Muslim population. The findings for the district as a whole can be summarized in the table below. The table also provides deviation of the major indicators from their national averages. This gives an idea of the area which needs intervention on a priority basis. In addition to the indicators on the basis of which the MCD districts were chosen, we have also listed some of the indicators, which in our opinion are extremely important for the development of the district. Detailed and disaggregated analysis can be found in the main report. Some of these are more disaggregated estimates for a particular indicator. For example, we have gone into a detailed account of status of education, at different levels as we thought that only literacy is inadequate. We also provided the status

of training in vocational trades and the demand for such training. This is important, in our opinion, as we tried to relate the same with job market situation for the general populace.

**Table E1: Priority Ranking of Facilities Based on Deficits of District Averages from National Averages**

Sl. No.	Indicator	District Average	National Average	Deficit	Priority Rank
<b>I. Socio-economic Indicators</b>					
1	Literacy (%)	73.09	67.3	-5.79	6
2	Female Literacy (%)	68.01	57.1	-10.91	8
3	Work Participation (%)	31.68	38	6.32	4
4	Female Work Participation (%)	7.94	21.5	13.56	2
<b>II. Basic Amenities Indicators</b>					
5	Houses with Pucca Walls (%)	46.51	59.4	12.89	3
6	Safe Drinking Water (%)	98.77	87.9	-10.87	7
7	Electricity in Houses (%)	36.83	67.9	31.07	1
8	W/C Toilet (%)	39.52	39.2	-0.32	5
<b>III. Health Indicators</b>					
9	Full Vaccination of Children (%)	69.91	43.5	-26.41	-
10	Institutional Delivery (%)	30.91	38.7	7.79	-

**Note:** District averages are estimated on the basis of sample data on rural areas only, and national averages for Sl. No. (5) to (8) are based on NFHS-3 and the rest are based on NSSO, 2005.

Since the approach of the Multi-sector Development Plan funded by the Ministry of Minority Affairs is supplementary in nature and does not intend to change the very nature of plan process, it is suggested that the district administration may start working on priority basis with the additional fund in the areas where the deficit can very easily be identified at the district level or at the village or in the pockets of the district. Hence we provide the deficit of the district for the two types of indicators and the basic amenities indicators where deficits have been calculated as the deviation of the survey estimates from the corresponding estimates based on NSSO, 2005 for socio-economic indicators and NFHS-3 for the basic amenities indicators in Table E1 above.

It is clear from the above table that the district averages perform worst for

electrified houses followed by houses with *pucca* walls and female work participation. In all other cases district averages are higher than the corresponding national averages. Accordingly the district administration is expected to draw up their development plan funded by the Ministry of Minority Affairs based on the priority ranking of the facilities as listed above. However, coverage of IAY for BPL families being only 1.17%, the district authority should pay adequate attention in the provision of *pucca* houses for the BPL families. However, it may also be noted that the district averages and the deficits are not uniform across the district, there are large variations across the villages. A comparison may be made consulting the relevant tables for the village level averages. In this way one can find out the priority ranking for the villages separately. Given the representative nature of the sample one can treat those villages or the blocks where they are situated as the pockets of relative backwardness in terms of the above indicators. We draw the attention of the district administration to be cautious when drawing plan for the district.

In addition to the above priority ranking of facilities we also like to point out that there are some findings that the study team of the CSSSC thinks very important from the standpoint of the development of the district. This is specially so where district averages are higher than the corresponding national averages. In such cases it makes better sense to concentrate the efforts of the district administration areas other than the above ten indicators as suggested by the Ministry. These are given below.

- The percentage of families with *pucca* walled houses is 46.51% which is lower than the national average, while percentage of families with *pucca* houses is abysmally low at 15.09%.

- Percentage of families with inside toilet, W/C or non W/C, is 50.17%.
- The number of primary schools per village is estimated to be 1.53 which seems good. But the district average of the number of primary teachers per school (2.80 per school) is in fact marginally lower than the national average (2.84 per school based on Census 2001), though the national average itself is very poor. It means that on an average all the four classes in a primary school cannot be held. So it is recommended that the district administration should pay attention to this.
- So far secondary schools are concerned, the performance of the district is very poor – 0.24 secondary and higher secondary schools per village. This also needs intervention.
- Apparently the district performs very poor in terms of health related infrastructure. So looking at only vaccination or institutional delivery is inadequate. A mere 11.11% of villages have government hospitals in its vicinity, 37.30 % of villages have primary health centers or sub-centres situated within the village, average distance of primary health center or sub-centres is 2.16 Km., average distance of government hospital is 8.02 Km., average distance of private hospital or nursing home is 7.15 Km. A large percentage of families – 34.29% Muslims and 16.55% non-Muslims go to quacks for treatment though some of them also go to government hospitals or private practitioners. For taking pregnant women to hospitals for delivery the major means is rented cars, there is hardly any ambulance available for this purpose in the villages. This is an important area where the policy makers should think of providing at least one ambulance per village.

- Performance of the facilities related to ICDS centers is, however, not very impressive compared to state scenario. A very high percentage of 56.67% are housed in government building while 30.0% have good quality building and average number of visits of ICDS employees is, however, only 6.21 days in a year.
- In addition to the above specific developmental gap of the district it may be noted that intra district variation of the development indicators is very high. The blocks far off from the district head quarter or sub-divisional towns are extremely backward, the fruits of development have benefited mainly the areas that are close to urban conglomerates. Care should be given to intra district variation of backwardness when drawing up multi sector development plan.