

Employment and Socio-Economic Status of Scheduled Caste Population in West Bengal

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Abstract: *Employment determines the social and economic conditions of livelihood. It provides information about the human resources and the nature and extent of their utilization. Development may be imply an improvement in the material and cultural wellbeing of the people. The socio-economic development of any region is mainly based on the level of education, degree of employment and structure of employment. The present paper is an attempt to analyze employment opportunities for scheduled castes (SC) population, the extent in the levels of socio-economic development and the relationship between employment and level of development in West Bengal. The entire work is based upon the secondary sources of data and to reach standardization, the raw data computed into standard scores (Z-score). This way it is a linear transformation of the original data. The study finds that the low grades of socio-economic development are generally observed in the northern part of the state. It is generally observed that the level of socio-economic development varies considerably across the districts of the state and such disparities are caused by a range of social and economic factors like, literacy rate, educational facilities, health facilities, urbanization, agricultural development, industrial development and other infrastructural facilities. Finally, the paper concludes with some suggestive remarks to minimize the gap between employment rate and the level of socio-economic development among the districts of the state.*

Keywords: Scheduled Caste, Employment, Economy and Development

1. Introduction

Employment is that portion of population which is economically active and catalytic to socio-economic development. It is one of the most important segments of a population of a country or region. It has multilateral involvements in the economic production, provides information about the human resources and the nature and extent of their utilization. Employment having a great subjective importance in the fields of sociology, demography and economics and gaining increasing subjective significance with the growing emphasis on the regional planning and regional approach to the population policy and utilization of human resources. It is an important indicator of the economic composition of a region. The degree of employment or unemployment exerts its influence as one of the determinants of socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the population. The quantity and quality of employment in a given region is of the utmost significant because it is the employment of a region that is responsible for the quantity and quality of the production of a region. It is the employment of the country that converts its natural resources into commodities of men's use. It is the link between the physical world of raw materials and the economic world of vendible commodities. Employment is the key input in the economic and social growth. There is a close association between employment and socio-economic development of a region. If the employment rate increases the level of socio-economic development may also increase and vice versa. However, the level of employment and structure of employment in any area depend upon a variety of physical, economic, demographic, social, cultural and political factors.

Socio-economic development is carried about by the efficient and adequate utilization of physical and human resources of a country or a region. It may also be said that socio-economic development is the status of change from a

given condition of a region to become better one within a given period of time. Socio-economic development of an area can be measured with the increase of employment opportunities, sectoral transformation of economy, increase per capita income, raise educational level and literacy rate, availability of infrastructural amenities, facilities and services, uniform distribution and effective as well as rational use of human, agricultural and mineral resources, increase production and consumption of goods and services, increase investment and purchasing power and so on. Development of socio-economic infrastructure facilities may be considered as the foundation of an economy as these represent those services without which primary, secondary and tertiary economic activities cannot function. For substantial development of a region although both economic infrastructure facilities like irrigation, power, transport and communication, banking and finance and social infrastructure facilities such as health, education etc. are important. But the development of economic infrastructure facilities is basic as it not only provides the base of an economy but also facilitates the development of social infrastructure facilities. The quantity of employment available in the region, its quality, its distribution, its relation to the requirements of labour in the region, its outlook, mobility etc. have all are bearing on the development of socioeconomic infrastructure facilities of that region. Therefore, development of socio-economic infrastructure facilities are essential for the developing states like West Bengal, where, nearly 72 per cent of the total population dwell in countryside and they are still directly or indirectly dependent upon the primary sector of economy. Employment and socio-economic development are interrelated and interdependent.

Hence, the expansion of employment opportunities has been an important objective of development planning in India and its states. There has been a significant growth in employment over the years. However, a relatively tremendous growth of population has led to an increase in

the volume of unemployment and poverty from one period to another. Planners and researchers aim at bringing employment into a sharper focus in a medium term perspective with the goal of reducing unemployment and poverty to negligible level within specific period of time. Such an approach is now considered necessary also because it is realized that larger and efficient use of available human resources is the most effective way of poverty alleviation, reduction in inequalities and sustenance of a reasonably high pace of socio-economic growth. In this regard an attempt has been made to analyze the structure of employment of scheduled castes population and levels of socio-economic development in West Bengal.

Aims and Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

- To investigate the regional patterns of employment rate in the state of West Bengal (2011).
- To examine the geographical variations in the levels of socio-economic development in the state (2011).
- To find out the relationship between employment rate and levels of socioeconomic development in the state: of West Bengal (2011).

2. Study Area

West Bengal is a relatively more developed and prosperous region of the Eastern states of India. It occupies the fertile plain of the Lower Ganga Plain, and is well endowed with water resources and good climatic conditions. These conditions have favored agricultural development in the state. The state has been divided into 3 sub-divisions and 18 districts. It lies between 85° 50' E and 89° 50' E longitudes. The latitudinal extent of the state is from 21° 10' N to 27° 38' N. The state has a total area of 88,752 sq. Km (34,267 mi²). With Bangladesh, which lies on its eastern border, the state forms the ethno-linguistic region of Bengal. To its northeast lie the states of Assam and Sikkim and the country Bhutan, while its southwest there is the state of Orissa. To the west it borders the state of Jharkhand and Bihar, and to the northwest, Nepal. The capital of the state is Kolkata, the third-largest urban agglomeration and the third-largest city in India. The state inhabits a total population of 80,176,197 persons comprising 41,465,985 males and 38,710,212 females (Fig.1).

Database and Methodology

The entire work is based upon the secondary sources of data. A wide range of data has been collected from several secondary sources. Apart from the data pertaining to population studies e.g. literacy, education, working population, urbanization etc. available from census volumes (2011); other data have been obtained from the Statistical Abstract of West Bengal (2008-09), Economic Review, West Bengal (2008-09), A Statistical Hand Book of India etc. The selection of these data was based mainly on their availability and comparability from different districts of West Bengal. I have taken only forty three socio-economic variables to measure the levels of socio-economic development in the study area. Among them, twenty one variables have been taken from social sector and twenty two from economic sector.

For the analysis of data various statistical methods have been used. In order to reach standardization, the raw data for each variable has been computed into standard scores. It is commonly known as Z-score. The scores measure the departure of individual observation from the arithmetic mean of all observations, expressed in a comparable form. This means it become a linear transformation of the original data. This method was first used by Smith in 1968 in his study on inequality in Peru followed by D. Smith (1973) and D. Slater (1975). The formula involved is:

$$Z_i = \frac{X_i - \mu}{\sigma}$$

Where, Z_i is the standard score for the i^{th} observation
 X_i is the original or individual values for observation i ,
 μ is the mean of the population;
 σ is the standard deviation of the population.

In the previous step district wise z-score of each indicator has been calculated. The values so obtained are added district wise and average is taken to calculate the composite z-score as the index of development, by the formula;

$$CS = \frac{\sum Z_{ij}}{N}$$

Where, CS refers to composite z-score; Z_{ij} stands for the sum of z-scores of variable j in observation i ; and N symbolizes the number of variables. With the help of above mentioned statistical methods, models of regional employment rate as well as socio-economic development and their regional disparities have been worked out. These methods have been used to provide deeper insights into the factors influencing regional variation of employment rate and socio-economic development.



Figure 1

3. Employment Rate of Scheduled Caste Population

The employment rate or the percentage of workers to total population, having immense subjective importance in the field of demography, sociology and economics, is gaining objective significance with the growing emphasis on the regional planning and regional approach to the population policy and utilization of 'human resources'. The study of work participation is generally conceived of as that portion of population which furnishes labour supply for the production of economic goods and services (Franklin, 1958).

General Distribution, 2011

The employment rate has increased from 38.77 per cent to 44.71 per cent in 2011 (which shows the increase of 5.94 per cent points). The employment rate is shown with remarkable variations in its distribution among the districts of the state. The percentage of employment varies from 36.06 per cent in Darjeeling to 59.19 per cent in Bankura district with the state average of 44.71 per cent (Table 1). These ranges of variations may statistically be grouped into three grades as shown in Fig. 2.

Figure 2 shows that high employment rate (above 50.64 per cent) is found only in Bankura (59.19 per cent) district of the state. About 78 per cent districts of the state come under the category of medium level of employment rate. The medium grade of employment rate (39.52 to 50.64 per cent) is found in the three distinct regions. The first region occurs in the extreme northern part of the state including the districts of Koch Bihar (48.99 per cent) and Jalpaiguri (45.55 per cent). The second region covered the whole part of the north Bengal plain including the districts of Dakshin Dinajpur (48.58 per cent), Uttar Dinajpur (48.29 per cent) and Malda (47.56 per cent). The another large region lies in the south-central and southern part of the state comprising the districts of Birbhum (50.17 per cent), Puruliya (48.93 per cent), Medinipur (46.23 per cent), Hugli (46.16 per cent), Bardhaman (45.23 per cent), Kolkata (42.81 per cent), South Twenty Four Parganas (39.73 per cent), Murshidabad (39.71 per cent) and Haora (39.69 per cent). Three districts of the state have low level (below 35.12 per cent) of employment rate and two of them form an identifiable region in the south-eastern margin of the state. These districts against their employment rates are North Twenty Four Parganas (39.32 per cent), Nadia (39.30 per cent) and the remaining one district i.e. Darjeeling (36.06 per cent) located in the extreme northern part of the state.

Rural and Urban Distribution

The rural and urban employment rate of the state has gained 6.33 per cent points and 4.11 per cent points respectively during the decade 2001-2011. The pattern of rural and urban distribution of employment rate is different. The state average for the rural employment rate is 46.01 per cent, whereas, for the urban employment rate it accounts 38.01 per cent. The range of variations of rural employment rate is wider than that of the urban employment rate (Table 1). These figures vary from 36.54 per cent in Darjeeling district to 59.90 per cent in Bankura district in rural areas and 31.52 per cent in Purulia district to 44.06 per cent in Bankura

district in urban areas. The entire range of variations may be categorized into three grades of below 31.19 per cent (Low), 31.19 to 55.97 per cent (Medium) and above 55.97 per cent (High) and below 34.03 per cent (Low), 34.03 to 41.49 per cent (Medium) and above 41.49 per cent (High) for the rural and urban employment rates respectively.

Table 1: District wise Distribution of Scheduled Caste Employment Rate in West Bengal, 2011

Districts	Total	Rural	Urban
Darjeeling	36.06	36.54	33.93
Jalpaiguri	45.55	46.48	36.32
Koch Bihar	48.99	49.57	35.78
Uttar Dinajpur	48.29	49.43	35.96
Dakshin Dinajpur	48.58	49.81	35.82
Malda	47.56	48.57	34.26
Murshidabad	39.71	39.41	41.68
Birbhum	50.17	50.75	41.68
Bardhaman	45.23	49.23	34.28
Nadia	39.30	38.56	42.90
North Twenty Parganas	39.32	40.26	37.74
Hugli	46.16	47.33	40.75
Bankura	59.19	59.90	44.06
Puruliya	48.93	51.58	31.52
Medinipur	46.23	47.20	34.20
Haora	39.69	39.97	39.02
Kolkata	42.81	-	42.81
South Twenty Parganas	39.73	40.00	37.03
West Bengal	44.71	46.01	38.01

Source: *Census of India 2011*

The regional distribution of rural employment rate is very similar to that of the general employment rate of 2011. Figure 2 depicts that the high rural employment rate (above 55.97 per cent) is found in only one district of the state namely, Bankura (59.90 per cent). The remaining districts fall under the medium category (31.19 to 55.97 per cent) rural employment rate and covered all the region of the state. These districts against their employment rate are Puruliya (51.58 per cent), Birbhum (50.75 per cent), Dakshin Dinajpur (49.81 per cent), Koch Bihar (49.57 per cent), Uttar Dinajpur (49.43 per cent), Bardhaman (49.23 per cent), Malda (48.57 per cent), Hugli (47.33 per cent), Medinipur (47.20 per cent), Jalpaiguri (46.48 per cent), North Twenty Four Parganas (40.26 per cent), South Twenty Four Parganas (40.00 per cent), Haora (39.97 per cent), Murshidabad (39.41 per cent), Nadia (38.56 per cent) and Darjeeling (36.54 per cent). No districts are found in the category of low level (below 31.19 per cent) of rural employment rate.

The pattern of regional distribution of urban employment rate is quite different from that of general and rural employment rates. High percentage of urban employment rate in the range of above 41.49 per cent is observed in five districts of the state. 60 per cent of them form a single dominant region in the central part of the state comprising the districts of Nadia (42.90 per cent), Murshidabad (41.68 per cent) and Birbhum (41.68 per cent) and the rest of the 40 per cent do not form any region in the state. There are three distinct regions of medium category (34.03 to 41.49 per cent) of urban employment rate in the state, which cover about 62 per cent districts of the state. The first region is observed in the northern part of the state including the

districts of Jalpaguri (36.32 per cent), Koch Bihar (35.78 per cent). The second region lies in the north Bengal plain which composed of Uttar Dinajpur (35.96 per cent), Dakshin Dinajpur (35.82 per cent) and Malda (34.26 per cent). The third region is located in the south and south-eastern part of the state covering the districts of Hugli (40.75 per cent), Haora (39.02 per cent), North Twenty Four Parganas (37.74

per cent) and South Twenty Four Parganas (37.03 per cent), Bardhaman (34.28 per cent) and Medinipur (34.20 per cent). Two districts come under the low grade (below 34.03 per cent) of urban employment. They are Darjeeling (33.93 per cent) and Puruliya (31.52 per cent) located in northern and southern part of the state respectively.

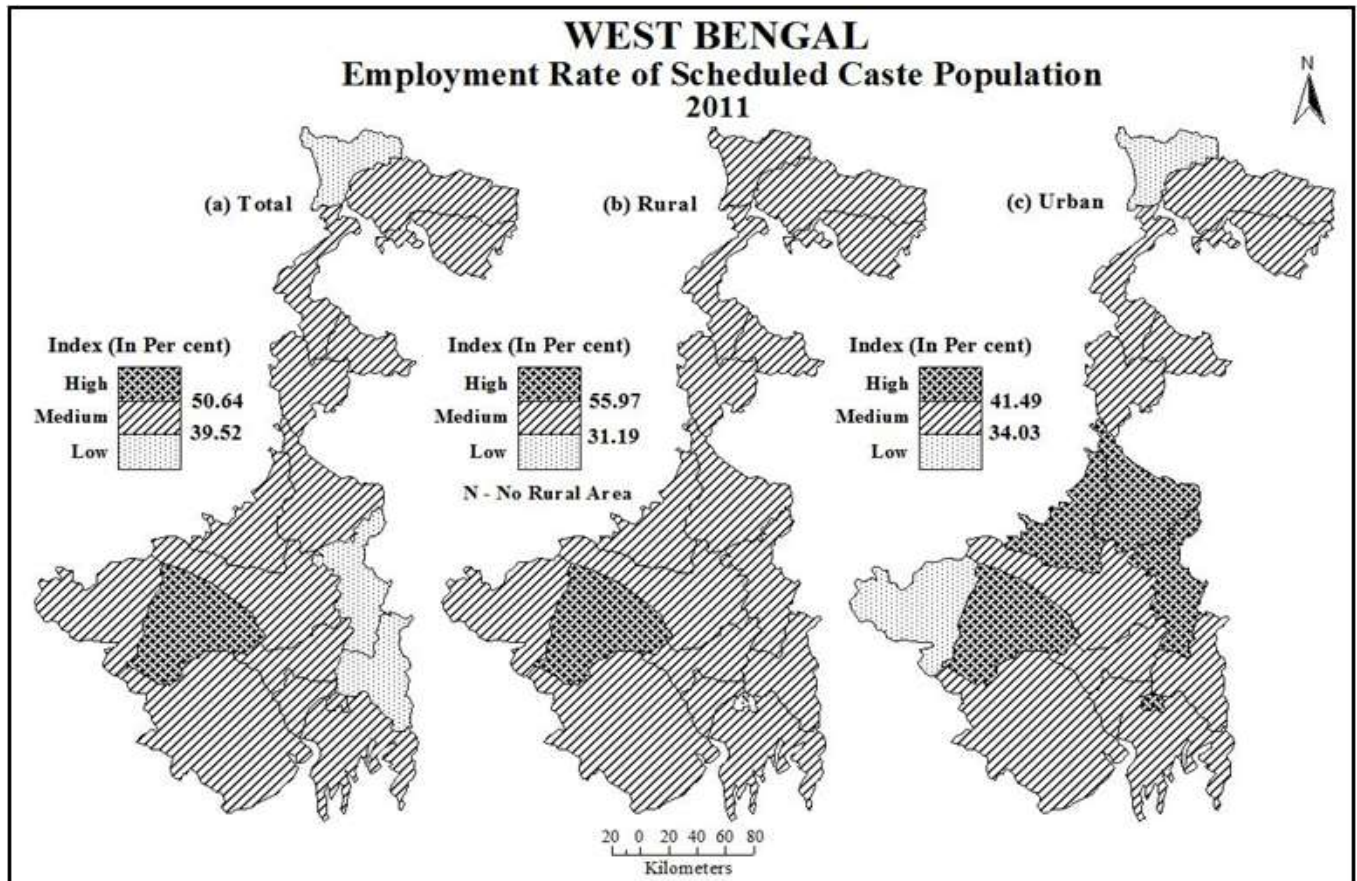


Figure 2

Scheduled Caste Employment and Socio-Economic Development

In the present study the main concerns to chalk out the extent in the levels of socio-economic development and the relationship between employment rates (total, rural and urban) and socio-economic development of the state of West Bengal. Hence, it becomes inevitable to define the term development. Primarily development can be perceived as reflection of personal values conditioned by society framework in which one lives (Stohr and Taylor, 1981). In the other words development implies progressive change in socio-economic structure of a country (Chand and Puri, 1990). The development is an outcome of the efforts made for the eradication of poverty and unemployment and removal of inequalities of regions (Seer, 1969). It may also be expressed that development is the state of change from a given situation of a region to become better one within a given period of time (Sharma, 1989).

The concept of development may be taken to imply an improvement in the material and cultural well being of the people in a region. The development of a region can be identified with the increase in the employment opportunities,

availability of infrastructural facilities, amenities and services, proper distribution of resources, increase production, investment and consumption and so on. Thus the development refers to an improvement of all the sectors of economic, and social and cultural pursuits (Verma, 1993).

On the whole it may be said that development is a progressive change in norms, values, belief and standard of living of the people in between two points of time to get better one (Sharma, 1989).

For the analysis of socio-economic development, I have selected forty three (43) variables from different parameters. On the basis of parameters the entire forty three variables may be grouped into ten sectors namely, demographic characteristics (DC), level of urbanization (LU), level of literary (LL), level of educational facilities (EF), agriculture development (AD), industrial development (ID), health facilities (HF), transport and communication facilities (TCF), per capita income (PCI) and banking facilities (BF). Levels of socio-economic development are calculated on the basis of composite z-score technique.

Socio-Economic Development

Socio-economic development of an area can be measured with the increase of employment opportunities, sectoral transformation of economy, increase per capita income, raise educational level and literacy rate, availability of infrastructural amenities, facilities and services, uniform distribution and effective as well as rational use of human, agricultural and mineral resources, increase production and consumption of goods and services, increase investment and purchasing power and so on.

Table 2: Employment and Socio-Economic Development in West Bengal, 2011

Districts	Z-Score of Employment			Composite Mean Z-Score of Socio-Economic Development
	Total	Rural	Urban	
Darjiling	-1.17	-0.90	-0.64	0.42
Jalpaiguri	0.25	0.04	-0.07	-0.18
Koch Bihar	0.37	0.27	-0.26	0.15
Uttar Dinajpur	0.66	0.72	-0.30	-0.45
Dakshin Dinajpur	1.01	1.09	-1.09	0.08
Maldah	1.05	1.08	-0.91	-0.46
Murshidabad	-1.08	-1.01	1.40	-0.5
Birbhum	0.76	0.70	0.63	-0.09
Bardhaman	-1.01	0.49	-1.40	-0.14
Nadia	-1.09	-1.24	1.29	-0.10
North 24 Parganas	-1.17	-1.14	0.27	-0.04
Hugli	0.20	0.23	0.75	0.11
Bankura	1.55	1.39	0.86	0.24
Puruliya	1.07	1.10	-1.08	-0.41
Medinipur	0.13	0.11	-1.06	0.43
Haora	-1.24	-1.26	0.39	-0.08
Kolkata	-0.19	-	1.71	1.04
South 24 Parganas	-1.20	-1.37	-0.51	-0.43

Source: Statistical Abstract, Govt. of West Bengal, 2008-2009.

It is worth noting fact that the process of development is gradually taking place in the world. In fact, it is law of nature that each and every phenomenon of development cannot be equalized with one another, therefore, the rate and state of development varies from region to region, society to society, sector to sector etc. Thus, the foregoing discussions of social development and economic development also follow the law of nature and clearly indicate that there is a wide regional variation in the level of development of different sectors among the districts of West Bengal. Since, some districts are developed socially but backward economically, whereas, some other are developed economically but backward socially on the other hand some districts are developed both socially and economically and some are backward both socially and economically. To measure the overall level of socio-economic development z-scores of all forty three variables have been calculated and they are added district-wise to find out the composite index of socio-economic development in the state (Table 2). The graded distribution of levels of socioeconomic development among the districts of the state is shown in Fig. 3. The general picture that emerges from the geographical distribution of these variables is that the overwhelming majority of the northern districts of the state show backwardness in the light of all variables. Whereas, the southern districts give an impression of being in a more favourable position.

The level of socio-economic development, in fact, as the aggregate output of the attainment of the district with respect to various selected socio-economic indicators which recorded disuniform spatial pattern of socio-economic development. Out of eighteen districts, only three districts fall under the high level (above 0.35 score) of socio-economic development and all are scattered over the state. These districts are Kolkata, Medinipur and Darjeeling. The districts of medium grade (-0.40 to 0.35 score) of socio-economic development cover about 55 per cent districts of the state and 90 per cent of these districts constitute two distinct regions in the state (Fig. 3). One region which is relatively large in size and lies in the south central part of the state including the districts of Bankura, Hugli, North Twenty Four Parganas, Haora, Birbhum, Nadia and Bardhaman. The other region locates in the northern part of the state comprising the districts of Koch Bihar and Jalpaiguri. The region of low level (below -0.40 score) of socio-economic development covers five districts of the state and three of them make a big linear belt in the northern plain, these districts are Uttar Dinajpur, Malda and Murshidabad. Remaining two districts of the same grade are located in the southern and western parts of the state (Fig. 3). The present analysis thus established the existence of regional disparities in the levels of socio-economic development among the districts of West Bengal. Levels of socio-economic development varies substantially across the districts of the state and such a variation is caused by the variation of social and economic factors like, literacy rate, educational facilities, health facilities, urbanization, agricultural development, industrial development and other infrastructural facilities etc. Although, the present exercise could not cover all the variables associated with the socio-economic development. To reduce the regional variation of socio-economic development, first we should to minimize the regional disparities of infrastructural facilities associated to socio-economic development.

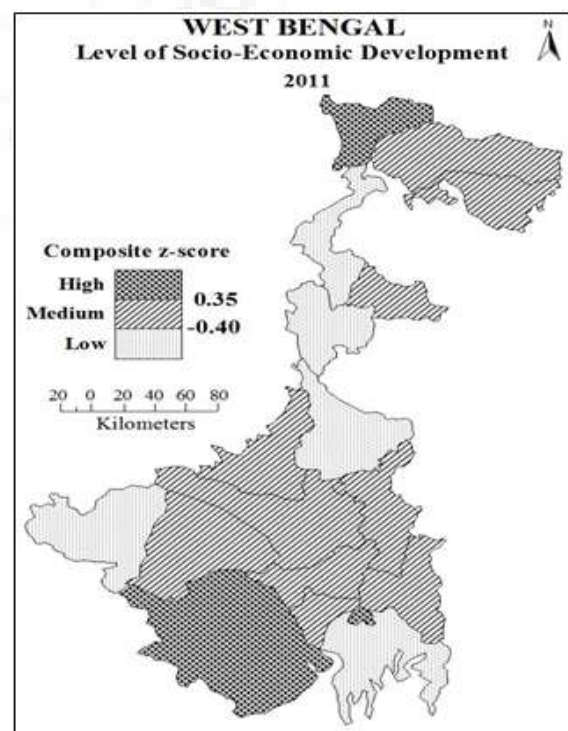


Figure 3

Scheduled Caste Employment Rate vis-à-vis Socio-Economic Development

The relationship between employment rate and level of socio-economic development is shown in Fig. 4. The districts with reference to composite mean z-scores may be arranged into three categories of high (above 0.35 score), medium (-0.40 to 0.35 score) and low (below -0.40 score) levels of socio-economic development, whereas, the z-scores of employment rate of the districts are graded into three groups i.e. high (above 0.87 score), medium (-0.99 to 0.87 score) and low (-0.99 score).

Fig. 4 reveals that seven districts of the state lie under the low grade of general employment rate, of which two districts have low level of socio-economic development, four medium and one high score of socio-economic development. A dominant region of low grade of general employment rate with medium level of socio-economic development is identified in the south-eastern part of the state. There are seven districts in the medium grade of employment rate, majority of them (four districts) show medium level of socio-economic development, and two of them constitute a region in the northern part of the state. Out of remaining three districts of medium level of employment rate, two have high level of socio-economic development and one has low grade of socio-economic development. Dakshin Dinajpur, Bankura, Malda and Puruliya districts recorded high level of employment rate and first two districts have medium grade and last two have low grade of socio-economic development. No district has high level of employment rate with high level of socio-economic development.

The index of rural employment rate vis-a-vis socio-economic development has been worked out with a view to find out more meaningful comparison and to know the nature and pattern of them in the state of West Bengal. The grade of high level of rural employment rate incorporates four districts out of eighteen districts of the state. Two districts each have medium and low levels of socio-economic development and they are scatteredly distributed and fail to make any identifiable region in the state. Figure 4 depicts that eight districts of the state report medium grade of rural employment rate, five of them exhibit medium level of socio-economic development and they constitute two distinct regions in the state. One which is large in size locates in the central part of the state comprising the districts of Birbhum, Bardhaman and Hugli, and the second region lies in the northern part of the state including the districts of Koch Bihar and Jalpaiguri. Two districts fall in high and one in low levels of socio-economic development versus medium level of urban employment rate. There are five districts in the low grade of rural employment rate, of which three districts have medium grade of socio-economic development and all of them form a region in the south-eastern margin of the state. Remaining two district of this slab lies under low level of socio-economic development (Fig. 4). Not a single district of the state come under the categories of high level of rural employment rate with high level of socio-economic development and low grade of rural employment rate versus high grade of socio-economic development.

Urban employment rate vis-a-vis socio-economic development clearly reveals that high level of urban employment rate is observed only in three districts of the state namely, Kolkata, Nadia and Murshidabad and they have high, medium and low levels of socio-economic development respectively. Fig. 4 shows that there is the highest concentration of socio-economic development versus medium level of employment rate in the urban population, it accounts for eleven districts out of eighteen. Its maximum number (seven districts) is related with medium level of urban employment rate (-0.95 to 0.94 z-scores) and socio-economic development (-0.40 to 0.35 scores), and nearly 86 per cent districts of them form two distinct regions in the state. The first region which is relatively big in size is found in the south-central part of the state including the districts of Bankura, Hugli, Haora and North Twenty Four Parganas. The second region occurs in the northern part of the state which composed of Jalpaiguri and Koch Bihar districts. The category of low level of urban employment rate incorporates four districts, two belongs to medium and one each to high and low levels of socio-economic development (Fig. 4). It is observed from the Figure 4 that all the categories of urban employment rate vis-a-vis socio-economic development are found in the state of West Bengal.

4. Conclusion

The present research work reveals some outstanding characteristics on the basis of which certain conclusion can be pinched. In the state, scheduled caste employment rate varies from 36.06 per cent in Darjeeling district to 59.19 per cent in Bankura district in 2011 census. Not a single region of high employment rate is observed in the state. Bankura the only district has high level of scheduled caste employment rate. Whereas, an incessant region of low rate of general employment rate is found in the south-eastern part of the state. These regional disparities are caused by increase of literacy rate, educational facilities, female employment rate, percentage of workers in cultivation, public awareness, government policies etc. The areal distribution of rural employment rate is much similar to that of the general employment rate of 2011. Though, the range of variations of rural employment rate is significantly wider and varies from 36.54 per cent in Darjeeling district to 59.90 per cent in Bankura district. High rural employment rates are found in only one district (Bankura) and located in the south-western part of the state. Except Bankura all the districts of the state have medium level of rural employment. No districts are found in the category of low level of rural employment rate. The regional inconsistency of rural employment rates are appreciably caused by density of population, sex-ratio, literacy rate, educational facilities, health facilities, industrialization, electricity, urbanization and transport and communication facilities. In case of urban areas, the high employment rate region is depicted in the central part of the state and the low grade of urban employment rates are found in two districts and they are scattered in the study area. Levels of educational facilities, population density, cropping intensity, density of surfaced road are the main determinants which have substantial importance on the distribution of total employment rate of urban population in the study area.

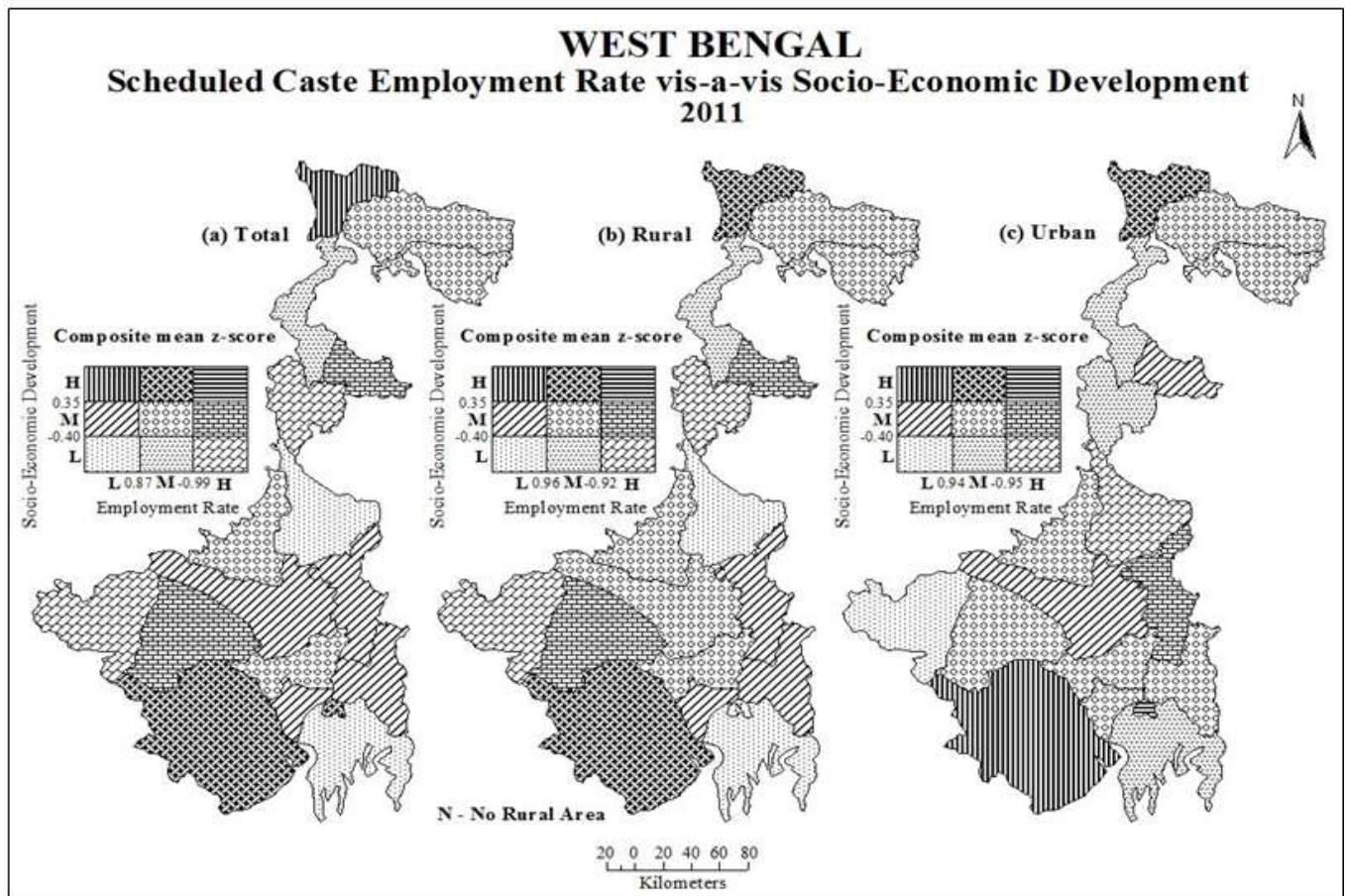


Figure 4

The high level of socio-economic development districts are scattered over the state, and the areas of low grade of socio-economic development are generally observed in the north Bengal plain of the study area. It is generally observed that the level of socio-economic development varies considerably across the districts of the state and such disparities are caused by a range of social and economic factors like, literacy rate, educational facilities, health facilities, urbanization, agricultural development, industrial development and other infrastructural facilities etc.

Four districts of the state recorded high level of scheduled caste employment rate, of which, two districts have medium grade and two have low grade of socio-economic development, they are scattered over the state. No district has high level of employment rate with high level of socio-economic development. The areas of medium grade of employment rate vis-a-vis medium level of socio-economic development are found in the extremely northern and southern parts of the state of West Bengal. There are seven districts in the state that lie under the low grade of general employment rate, of which, two districts have low level of socio-economic development, four medium and one high score of socio-economic development. A dominant region of low grade of general employment rate with medium level of socio-economic development is identified in the south-eastern part of the state.

High category of scheduled caste rural employment rate with medium as well as low levels of socio-economic development is depicted in the southern part of the north

Bengal plain and south-western part of the study area. The districts of medium grade of rural employment rate versus medium category of socio-economic development are observed in the south-central and northern parts of the state. The area of low level of rural employment rate with medium level of socio-economic development is found in the south-eastern part of the state.

Scheduled caste urban employment rate vis-a-vis socio-economic development clearly reveals that the maximum number of districts of the study area cover medium grade of urban employment rate with medium level of socio-economic development and they are located in the extremely northern and southern parts of the state. The districts of medium category of urban employment rate versus low grade of socio-economic development are mainly concentrated in the North Bengal plain of the state.

5. Suggestions

These are the some remedial measures to minimize the gap between employment rate and level of socio-economic development among the districts of the state. Those who are poor, deprived, unemployed, under-employed, and harshly under-employed will have to be given top priority in jobs by organizing for them, the productive works, cottage and small-scale industries, sericulture, horticulture, *khadi* and village industries, agro and mineral based industries and other feasible projects of construction in the rural and semi-urban areas.

The main focus of the development programmes has to be to generate maximum employment for massive rural scheduled caste population with special attention to the poor, impoverished and needy people.

It is observed in the framework of developmental programmes in rural West Bengal that informal skill development procedures like on-the-job training and in-service training compose the best strategies.

Employment prospects have to be expanded for scheduled caste women in both rural and urban areas through enhancement in the training facilities for self-employment.

The study reveals that the scheduled caste population continues to be socially and economically backward section of our society, despite of liberal constitutional provision. So the efforts should be made for the progress of this less developed segment of population. The improvement in their living conditions and educational status will be helpful in minimizing the regional imbalances.

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