

Political Participation of Women in West Bengal Assembly Elections (2001-2016): A Study in Electoral Geography

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Abstract : *The paper addresses itself with the political participation of women in the successive four assembly elections in West Bengal that took place over the period of 2001-2016. The paper has been prepared to study the spatial and temporal pattern of women's participation in West Bengal assembly elections during 2001-2016. The paper also measures the level of spatial and temporal variation in women's participation in electoral politics during the aforesaid period. The paper is based on secondary information, as being obtained from the statistical report of General Election of West Bengal published by the Election Commission of India. The study reveals lack of coherence or continuity in the spatial pattern of women's electoral participation in West Bengal assembly elections during the period of 2001-2016. It also shows that there is no consistent temporal pattern of women's participation in electoral politics, rather there is continual variation from election to election in terms of participation.*

Key Words: *political participation of women, electoral participation, spatial and temporal patterns*

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Slum Dynamics of West Bengal, India

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Abstract : *During the last century, lots of research have been done on urban development in developing countries like India focusing on the nexus between rapid urbanisation and economic development, but little light has been shed on slum growth. Thus, it is necessary to understand how slum population is growing with increasing concentration of people in the urban areas and its periphery. The study attempts to investigate the nature of slum growth corresponding to the overall urban growth in the state of West Bengal using census data of 2001 and 2011. Results reveal that at the district level, the growth of slum population was mainly concentrated in the low urbanised districts while the high urbanised districts, where most of the large and medium cities are located, have experienced a sharp decline in the slum population. On one hand, most of the districts have exhibited high urban growth which was mainly attributed to the growth of slum population, on the other hand, districts like Howrah, Darjeeling, and Kolkata have experienced low urban growth with the negative growth of slum population. Moreover, one third of the total towns, most of them are large cities, have shown negative growth of slum population. It was also found that most of the large cities (class I) are becoming slum free over the years, whilst an increasing concentration of slum population was observed in the medium sized towns (class II). In some cases entire town (small/medium) is found to be consisting of slum population only indicating a dismal condition of civic amenities and basic services.*

Key Words: urbanisation, urban growth, slums growth, West Bengal

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Spatial Distribution of Ageing Population in West Bengal

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Abstract : *The state of West Bengal in Eastern India, representing the nation's fourth-most populous state, with around 91.27 million inhabitants (2011) has witnessed rapid growth of its aged population because of declining fertility and mortality rate and increasing life expectancy due to improvement in health and medical facilities. However, this growth has not been uniform in all the districts of the state. Hence, the present work aims at the study of the spatial distribution and variation over time of the aged population of all the districts with respect to population density, growth rate, change in the mean centre of aged population from 1991 to 2001 and finally 2011. Analysis has been done based on census data for the years 1991, 2001 and 2011. Findings show that Kolkata records extremely high population density of the aged in all the three census years, however in terms of distribution of aged population, North 24 Parganas ranks first in 2001 and 2011 while Medinipur in 1991. Growth has been positive in all the districts of West Bengal, however the rate of growth has been more in the southern districts of West Bengal due to rapid development and urbanisation in these districts. Due to this a gradual shift in the mean centre of aged population has been found from north-west to south east. Findings of the study will enable planners to frame policies and provisions for health and medical facilities etc based on the spatial distribution of ageing population.*

Key Words: *spatial variation, ageing, spatial distribution, population density, mean center*

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Problems of the Handloom Industry of Nadia District

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Abstract : *Handloom weaving is one of the ancient industries of India. Presently, the industry uses mill yarn for the production of different types of fabrics. The handloom sector plays an important role in the economy of India. It is one of the major economic activities providing direct employment to over 65 lakh persons who are engaged in weaving and allied activities and contributing over 23per cent to the country's total cloth production. In a poor country like India, the handloom industry is quite favourable because it requires nominal capital investment, cheap equipment and easy maintenance.*

Nadia district of West Bengal occupies a very important place in the field of handloom industry of West Bengal. Although the agricultural sector acts as the backbone of the district's economy, handloom industry also plays an important role in this regard. It contributes significantly in favour of employment generation by providing direct and indirect employment to about 2 lakh people of the district.

The handloom sector in Nadia operates within the larger textile industry. Today, however, power looms dominate textile production and have encroached upon the handloom sector's traditional market. The steep rise in the yarn prices, diversion of raw materials to the powerloom sector, improper marketing techniques, negative impact of globalization etc. have led to even suspension of production in some areas, destroying the livelihoods of weavers and laying off handloom wage workers. The study attempts to analyse the nature and causes of the contemporary crises of the handloom industry and its associated population.

Key Words: *handloom, crisis, deterioration, globalization*

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Role of Kanyashree Project to Combat Gender Inequalities and Marginality in West Bengal

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Abstract : *Geography of gender mainly focuses on the description of the effects on gender inequalities, liberal feminism and their welfare; it also focuses on discrimination between men and women evolved from inequality and the relationship between capitalism and patriarchy. The objective of this paper is to analyze the life of women who are affected in the process of marginalization and how the Kanyashree- a social development project of the Government of West Bengal, has been acting as a helping tool for women, to combat against child marriage, maternal health, school drop-outs and girl child trafficking.*

The work is based on various reports of the Government of India and the State Government of West Bengal, and on interaction with some local people of the selected study areas. It is found that Murshidabad, Maldah, Birbhum, Purulia, Bankura, Dakshin Dinajpur, South 24 Parganas, Nadia and Coochbehar districts are the most vulnerable districts in terms of child marriage and school drop-out amongst the others in the state. According to the (DLHS-3), published in 2007-08 the percentage of child brides were 54.7, which was reduced to 32.1 in the year 2012-13 mainly due to the implementation of the Kanyashree Project. The school drop-out rate has also reduced significantly in these districts.

Key Words: development and marginalization, kanyashree Project, child marriage, girl child trafficking, gender inequality

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Tourism in Diamond Harbour, South 24 Parganas, West Bengal : Status and Possibilities

Atanu Mandal*

Abstract : *Tourism, a worldwide flourishing industry gains a substantial impetus now-a-days. Day by day increasing career competition, tremendous work load by government and corporate house have forced human beings to get relief from their daily pain and strain. Moreover; high pollution level in air, water and high noise level have pushed the middle and higher income group to the areas of din and bustle free zone. This kind of outing helps to intake oxygen in all respect. Temporary detachment from daily toil is also helpful to achieve more working abilities. Diamond Harbour, located on the left bank of the River Bhagirathi-Hugli, has the potentialities to become a perfect weekend holiday destination. To develop the spirit of tourism industry and to provide better facilities for the tourists, government should take proper initiatives. It is a ray of hope, that the riverbank of the Bhagirathi-Hugli in Diamond Harbour have been adorned with concrete embankments in many locations. Many more possibilities will be there as recent news stated. So, few effective measures may be highly helpful for Diamond Harbour to be decorated with better facilities for weekend tourist destination.*

Key Words: *tourism, pollution, toil, bustle free zone, working abilities*

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