



HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS AT THE GRASSROOTS: INSIGHTS FROM RADHAKRISHNAPUR AND KHALIFABAJ VILLAGE.

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ABSTRACT:

This study examines human development indicators at the grassroots level in the villages of Radhakrishnapur and Khalifabaj within the Lalgola block of West Bengal. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the research assesses key dimensions of human development such as education, healthcare, income levels, and gender equality. The analysis reveals substantial disparities between the two villages, attributed to differences in local governance, infrastructure, and community engagement. The findings highlight the critical role of tailored, context-specific strategies in addressing rural development challenges. By offering a detailed evaluation of human development at the village level, this study provides valuable insights for policymakers, development practitioners, and researchers focused on promoting equitable and sustainable growth in rural settings. The research underscores the necessity for inclusive policies that reflect the diverse needs of rural communities in West Bengal.



KEYWORDS: Human Development.

INTRODUCTION

Human development aims to increase people's alternatives and freedoms. This perspective has influenced policymakers and administrators since the 1990 UNDP Human Development Report (HDR). Their perspectives on development are informed by this worldview. This study examines Radhakrishnapur and Khalifabaj villages in West Bengal's Lalgola Block using the Human Development Index (HDI) methodology. A complete picture of these areas' human development is provided by the Human Development Index (HDI). Because of its inadequate agroclimatic conditions, the Lalgola Block struggles to grow agricultural goods. Poor irrigation systems limit agricultural productivity in most Lalgola blocks. Healthcare facilities and infrastructure are poor in the area. Because of these severe conditions, many young Lalgolans are relocating to other districts or states for better jobs. The movement continues. Migration also hinders economic growth by reducing the number of workers in the area. The HDI of Radhakrishnapur and Khalifabaj is analyzed in this article to suggest development opportunities. The Human Development Index (HDI), which includes life expectancy, education, and per capita income, may measure these communities' human development. This research intends to help us understand regional inequities and the need for focused development in the Lalgola Block. The human development perspective emphasizes expanding individual alternatives and freedoms as the main objective of development. Poor agro-climatic conditions, limited irrigation and healthcare services, and insufficient infrastructure development in Lalgola Block highlight the need for concerted HDI-raising

activities. These issues must be addressed to boost human development and ensure Lalgola Block's progress.

Lalgola CD block is enclosed by the Padma in the north, Bhagawangola II CD block in the east, Bhagawangola I CD block in the south, and Raghunathganj I and Raghunathganj II CD blocks in the west. It is also bordered by Chapai Nawabganj Sadar Upazila in Chapai Nawabganj District and Godagari Upazila in Rajshahi District of Bangladesh.

Lalgola CD block is situated in the Jalangi-Bhagirathi Interfluve physiographic region of Murshidabad district. The district is divided into two natural physiographic regions by the Bhagirathi River: Rarh to the west and Bagri to the east. The Padma River divides Murshidabad district from Malda district, as well as Chapai Nawabganj and Rajshahi districts of Bangladesh in the north. It is a low-lying region with an alluvial soil pattern. The location of Lalgola is 24°25'N 88°15'E. The Lalgola CD block is 184.37 km² in size. There are 84 inhabited villages, 205 gram sansads (village councils), 1 panchayat samity, 12 gram panchayats, and 94 mouzas. This block's police station is Lalgola. This CD block's headquarters are located at Lalgola. River bank erosion and arsenic pollution in drinking water are both major problems in Lalgola block.

1. Methodology

The study is based on data from Primary and secondary sources. Census of India (2011), Human Development Report (India and westbengal) 2022 and Districts Statistical Handbook of Murshidabad (2014) provide most of the data required for the study. 10 families each from Radhakrishnapur and KhalifaBaj Village were randomly selected for the survey.

The technical notes are following:

$$\text{Dimension Index} = \frac{\text{actual value} - \text{minimum value}}{\text{maximum value} - \text{minimum value}}$$

$$\text{Health Index} = \frac{\text{actual value} - 20}{85 - 20}$$

$$\text{Educational Index} = \frac{\text{m} + \text{e}}{2}$$

$$\text{Income Index} = \frac{\ln(\text{actual value}) - \ln(100)}{\ln(75,000) - \ln(100)}$$

* PPP conversion factor is 22.882 (2022).

$$\text{HDI} = (\text{I health} * \text{I education} * \text{I income})^{1/3}$$

Goalposts considered to Prepare the Human Development Index

Dimension	Indicator	MaximumValue	MinimumValue
Health	Life ExpectancyatBirth(Years)	85	20
Education	LiteracyRate(7 Yrs+ Population)	100	0
Income	GrossPerCapitaIncome(PPP\$)	\$75000	\$100

HDI Cut-off Points

Sr.No.	HDI Category	HDI Value
1	<i>Low Human Development (LHD)</i>	<0.550
2	<i>Medium Human Development (MHD)</i>	0.550 to 0.699
3	<i>High Human Development (HHD)</i>	0.700 to 0.799
4	<i>Very High Human Development (VHHD)</i>	0.800 to 1.000

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS OF RADHAKRISHNAPUR AND KHALIFABAJ VILLAGE:

Radhakrishnapur has 3,800 residents in 721 houses. Demographic and employment statistics reveal the village's socioeconomic position. The town has 654 children under 6, 17.2% of the population. This high number of young children suggests we need strong child health and education programs to encourage early development. Of the entire population, 1,364 work, or 35.9%. Employment is mostly male, with 940 males and 424 women, demonstrating a gender gap. This gap may represent socio-cultural or economic constraints that hinder female labor involvement. Main workers (727, 53.3% of the workforce) and marginal workers (637, 46.7%) make up the workforce. Main workers work most of the year, whereas marginal workers work less. Main and peripheral workers are about equal, suggesting seasonal or irregular employment patterns owing to the village's agricultural economy. 138 people—10.1% of the workforce—work in agriculture. This low ratio of agricultural workers implies that although agriculture is part of the village's economy, employment may diversify. The dependence on marginal jobs suggests employment uncertainty due to agricultural cycles or seasonal work.

IMPACTS ON DEVELOPMENT

The community of Khalifabaj has 2,305 residents in 419 homes. Demographic and employment statistics reveal the village's socioeconomic position and development requirements. The town has 472 children aged 0–6, 20.5% of the total population. This large number of young children requires proper childcare, health services, and early education facilities to support their development. Employment is 31.6% of the population, with 728 people working. Gender inequality is evident in the workforce, with 545 males and 183 women. This difference reflects socio-cultural or economic constraints restricting female employment participation, stressing the need for gender-inclusive economic policy.

The workforce is split into major workers (608, 83.5%) and minor workers (120, 16.5%). The large share of primary workers shows greater stability than seasonal or part-time jobs. Marginal workers still show job insecurity.

Farmworkers make up 44 people, 6.0% of the workforce. This low proportion shows that agriculture is not the village's main industry. Since the community has few agricultural personnel, it may have expanded into non-agricultural industries or services.

Radhakrishna Pur (62.59%) and Khalifabaj (61.21%) have poor literacy rates, requiring more education facilities. Both settlements lack educational facilities, which may explain their low literacy rates. The lack of medical facilities also shows development issues in these places. To promote sustainable community development, education and healthcare initiatives must address these weaknesses to improve literacy and well-being.

Village	Population	Household	Age 0-6 child	Main worker	Marginal worker	Agricultural labour	Total Worker	
Radhakrishnanapur	3,800	721	654	727	637	138	1,364	940(M) 424(F)
Khalifabaj	2,305	419	472	608	120	44	728	545(M) 183(F)

Source:2011 census

Village	Pre-primary school	Primary school	Middle school	Secondary school	Senior secondary school	General degree college	Engineering college
Radhakrishnanapur	3	3	2	a	a	c	c
Khalifabaj	1	1	a	a	a	b	c

Note the Number of Educational Amenities available. (If not available within the village, the distance range code viz; a for < 5 Kms, b for 5-10 Kms, and c for 10+ km of nearest place where the facility is available is given).

Village	Primary health center	Primary health sub-center	Community health center	MCW	FCW
Radhakrishnanapur	A	B	B	B	b
Khalifabaj	1	1	A	B	b

the Number of Medical Amenities available. (If not available within the village, the distance range code viz; a for < 5 Kms, b for 5-10 Kms, and c for 10+ km of nearest place where the facility is available is given).

Village	Literacy	Male	Female	Population
Radhakrishnanapur	62.59 %	64.39 %	60.64 %	3,800
Khalifabaj	61.21 %	63.73 %	58.60 %	2,305

Source:2011 census

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT OF RADHAKRISHNAPUR AND KHALIFABAJ :

The Human Development Index (HDI) components of the villages of Radhakrishnanapur and Khalifabaj are significantly different from one another. The health index for Radhakrishnanapur is 0.751, which is higher than the health index for Khalifabaj, which is 0.711; this indicates that Radhakrishnanapur has better access to healthcare and overall health conditions. In addition, the educational index of Radhakrishnanapur (0.565) is higher than that of Khalifabaj (0.529), which indicates that the educational results in both villages are substantially better, despite the fact that both villages are experiencing major difficulties with their educational infrastructure. Nevertheless, both villages have low income indices, with Radhakrishnanapur having a score of 0.413 and Khalifabaj having a score of 0.395, which highlights the economic difficulties that are present in both regions.

The Human Development Index (HDI) for Radhakrishnanapur is 0.559, which places it in the medium human development category as a whole. Khalifabaj, with an HDI of 0.529, falls into the category of inadequate human development. This suggests that Radhakrishnanapur is in a slightly better position in terms of human development measures than other Indian cities.

In terms of comparison, India's Human Development Index (HDI) in 2022 is roughly 0.644, whereas West Bengal's HDI is approximately 0.622. Both of these communities are well below these averages, which drives home the need for implementing specific developmental measures. These villages' lower Human Development Index scores necessitate improvements in areas such as education,

healthcare, and income generation to bridge the gap between rural areas and broader regional and national development levels.

Health Index of Radhakrishnapur

Sr. No.	Sample HH in Radhakrishnapur	Life Expectancy at Birth (Years)	Health Index ¹
1	HH	70.5	
2	HH	69.6	
3	HH	62.3	
4	HH	71.6	
5	HH	72.6	
6	HH	64.3	
7	HH	67.6	
8	HH	71.3	
9	HH	65	
10	HH	73.6	
11	Radhakrishnapur village	68.84	0.751

Calculated by author

Health index of Khalifabaj:

Sr. No.	Sample HH in Khalifabaj	Life Expectancy at Birth (Years)	Health Index ¹
1	HH	63.6	
2	HH	69.1	
3	HH	74.3	
4	HH	67.2	
5	HH	59.6	
6	HH	62.7	
7	HH	67.6	
8	HH	68	
9	HH	57	
10	HH	73.3	
11	Khalifabaj village	66.24	0.711

Calculated by author

Education Index: Radhakrishnapur

Sr. No.	HH in Radhakrishnapur	EDUCATIONAL DIMENSIONS		Educational Index
		MYS	EYS	
1	HH	0.572	0.608	
2	HH	0.543	0.721	
3	HH	0.449	0.678	
4	HH	0.467	0.70	
5	HH	0.486	0.608	
6	HH	0.495	0.683	
7	HH	0.490	0.651	
8	HH	0.453	0.677	
9	HH	0.413	0.645	
10	HH	0.397	0.575	
11	Radhakrishnapur	0.476	0.654	0.565

Calculated by author

Education Index: Khalifabaj

Sr. No.	HH in Khalifabaj	EDUCATIONAL DIMENSIONS		Educational Index
		MYS	EYS	
1	HH	0.431	0.675	
2	HH	0.475	0.509	
3	HH	0.379	0.502	
4	HH	0.580	0.704	
5	HH	0.486	0.625	
6	HH	0.368	0.586	
7	HH	0.473	0.651	
8	HH	0.470	0.679	
9	HH	0.428	0.648	
10	HH	0.397	0.521	
11	Khalifabaj	0.448	0.61	0.529

Calculated by author

Income Index : Radhakrishnapur

Sr. No.	HH in Radhakrishnapur	Per Capita Income Rs.	GPCI (PPP\$)	Income Index
1	HH	25,890		
2	HH	33,400		
3	HH	33,500		
4	HH	32,750		
5	HH	32,478		
6	HH	48,050		
7	HH	40,060		
8	HH	33653		

9	HH	47,800		
10	HH	28,000		
11	Radhakrishnapur	35,558	1553.97	0.413

Calculated by author

Income Index : Khalifabaj

Sr. No.	HH in Khalifabaj	Per Capita Income Rs.	GPCI (PPP\$) ¹	Income Index
1	HH	33904		
2	HH	28000		
3	HH	47750		
4	HH	19250		
5	HH	37600		
6	HH	19250		
7	HH	36500		
8	HH	21500		
9	HH	26500		
10	HH	44800		
11	Khalifabaj	31505	1376.86	0.395

Calculated by author

Human Development Index

Sr. No.	Village	Health Index	Education Index	Income Index	Human Development Index
1	Radhakrishnapur	0.751	0.565	0.413	0.559
2	Khalifabaj	0.711	0.529	0.395	0.529

Calculated by author .

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The first step is to improve the educational infrastructure by investing in the construction and renovation of schools with improved amenities.
- Recruit or train a greater number of competent educators.
- The implementation of initiatives that boost school attendance and minimize the percentage of dropouts, particularly among females, is a priority.
- The second step is to enhance healthcare services by establishing more healthcare facilities that provide needed medical interventions.
- Regularly conduct health camps and awareness activities, with a focus on areas such as cleanliness and preventative healthcare.
- Make sure that there is a sufficient supply of vital medications and skilled medical staff accessible. We should promote vocational training and skill development programs to increase employability. This is the third step in economic development initiatives.
- Foster a culture of entrepreneurship in the community by offering microloans and other forms of financial assistance to small enterprises.

- Create products and services that assist farmers in boosting their production and revenue.
- Infrastructure Development: To improve the quality of life, it is important to improve the fundamental infrastructure, which includes things like roads, power, and water supply.
- Make investments in digital infrastructure to enable access to the internet, which may be beneficial to educational endeavors, medical care, and commercial endeavors.
- Engaging community leaders and local groups in the design and execution of development projects is the fifth step in the community engagement and awareness process.
- We should educate the public about the importance of education, healthcare, and environmentally responsible business practices.
- To drive and maintain development efforts, it is important to cultivate a culture of cooperation and self-help among the people.

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