



## ASSESSMENT OF REGIONAL DISPARITY IN THE LEVEL OF LIVING CONDITION IN DAKSHIN DINAJPUR DISTRICT OF WEST BENGAL, INDIA

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### Abstract

The study tries to assess the living condition of households and associated regional disparities in terms of basic necessities like housing, essential amenities etc. in Dakshin Dinajpur district of West Bengal. A composite index was developed to measure the level of living condition which is a combination of three different indices- Housing Index, Physical Capital Index and Asset Index. All the blocks have been categorised and ranked according to the score of composite indices. Result of the study shows that there are wide inter-block disparities in terms of living condition of the households. Transportation facility in terms of road and railway connectivity is positively related with living condition of the household as the blocks with proper transportation facility shows better condition in terms of availing basic services and amenities. The study suggests that there is an urgent need of improvement in the existing transportation and infrastructural facilities especially in the backward blocks as well as balanced distribution of basic facilities for the enhancement of the condition of living of the households. Apart from this the planners and policy makers need to take proper measure for the upgradation of living condition.

**Key words:** Regional disparity, Level of living, Housing Index, Physical Capital Index, Asset Index

### 1. Introduction

Approach related to well-being is multidimensional in nature which is largely influenced by a variety of factors like- living condition of household, income, health etc. In recent times a number of studies have tried to measure the well-being of people on the basis of Gross Domestic Production (GDP) but later it was seen that measuring well-being with the help of GDP is not sufficient as it does not provide the accurate picture of the living condition of household. Here, socio-economic measures play an important role to get the complete picture of well-being along with GDP (Das et al. 2019). There are two approaches to measure quality of living-1. Subjective approach 2. Objective approach. Before assessment it is necessary to make a distinction between the two approaches. Subjective approach mainly focuses on physical and mental health, happiness, satisfaction which are mainly psychological in nature. On the other hand, objective well-being is related to material like housing condition, income, education etc. (Huppert et al. 2005, 2010). In the earlier studies different methods have been used to measure the living condition of people both through subjective and objective approach like physical quality of life index (Dasgupta and Weale 1992), the index of economic well-being (Osberg and Sharpe 2000) respectively. In this study objective approach has been used to measure the well-being of the people through different indicators related to basic amenities, condition of house, availability of basic services (Das et al. 2020)

The nation has achieved significant advancements in the fields of health and education during the past 20 years. The economy has become much more diversified, and the employment and income shares of the service sector have increased. While there is general agreement that the economy and quality of life have improved generally throughout the time under discussion, opinions relating to the distributional effects of these gains are vastly different (Kurian 2000) Since independence, the main drivers behind