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**Saga of Rural Development: A Village Level Study of Chhatna Block in
Bankura District, West Bengal**

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Abstract

The concept of rural development holds different development issues in rural area which include economic progress, social security, and people's enablement, facility of basic needs as well as political and cultural freedom. Rural development is not only a matter of social well-being but its conceptual background found in a geographical philosophy termed as environmental determinism. It is revealed that rural developments are not equally well-adjusted due to different types of development elements. Some of the communities are underprivileged more than others, even some of the improvement plans working in an area are unable to reduce the inequalities in rural development on the other area. Bankura district situated on the transitional region between Chhatonagpur plateau and Rurh plain area of west Bengal which is basically less developed in the field of rural development. The community development block Chhatna is located on the western plateau area of the district. The present papers is a humble attempt to find out the degree of inequality in the rural development of the area under study and also try to analyse the causes behind these inequalities.

Introduction

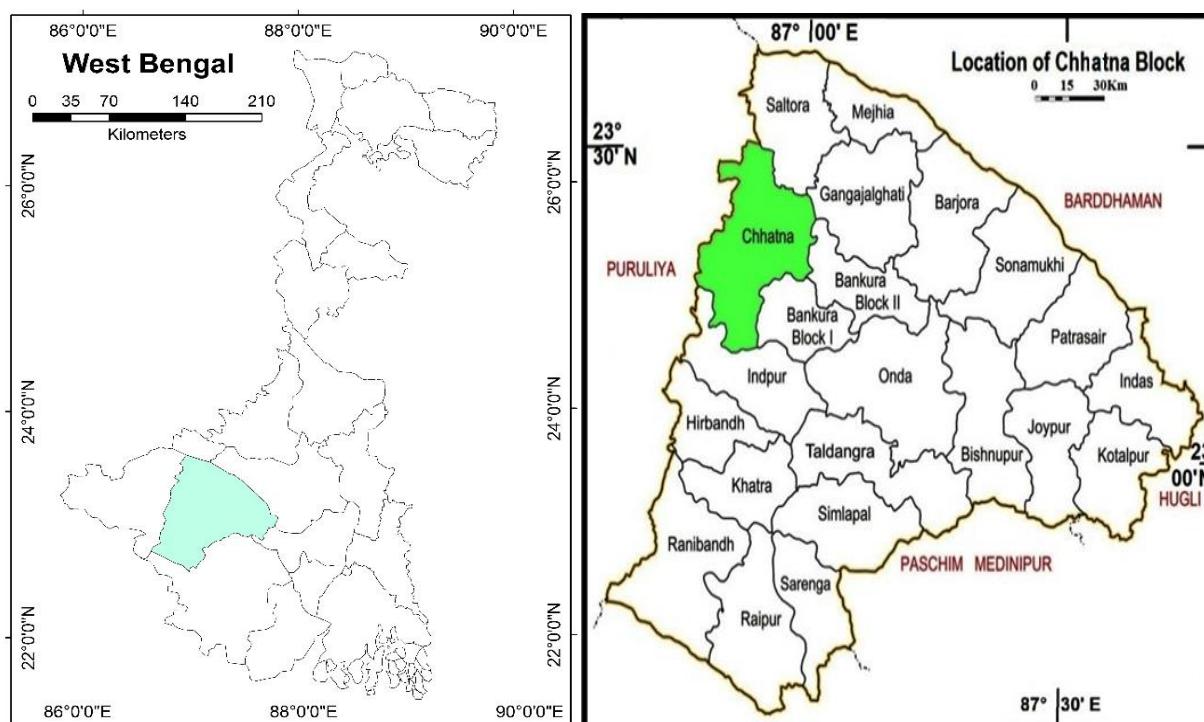
The method of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of individuals, specifically living in village areas are known as rural development. The basic objective of rural development is to develop the quality of life of people living in the rural area. It is a subject that focuses on the arrangements taken for the development of rural areas to progress the village economy and standard of living of the villagers.

Conventionally, rural development was focussed on the mismanagement of land-intensive natural resources such as agriculture, fishing and forestry. But the concept now has been changed

due to rapid changes in global economic system. The complete development of a nation truly depends on rural development of that country. Rural development is an important thing for the countries which is situated in the Indian sub-continent where almost two-third of the people of the country living in the rural area and are reliant on on agriculture for their livelihood. The degree of inequality in rural development are found in some pockets of backward regions in India. According to OECD (2002-2003) inequality means “the conditioned or fact of being unequal, as in age, rank or degree, differences between economic performance and welfare between countries or region or defined areas”. It is also true that balanced rural development is not possible all over the country due to unequal availability of all the resources bases in the different part of our country. Different government initiative for the development of rural area and increase the standard of living of the villagers are not always well balanced over a region therefore some part remain in shadow of development which is nothing but a saga of deprivation.

Area under Study

Chhatna is one of the western most CD Blocks of the Bankura district. The Block is located at $23^{\circ}12'58''$ north to $23^{\circ}30'45''$ north and $86^{\circ}46'35''$ East to $87^{\circ}12'24''$ East. It covers a total area of 447.47 km^2 . Being situated in the western part of the district, the Block is under the western plateau fringe area whose the surface topography is more plateauic than the rolling plain in the eastern part. The land is rugged with noticeable outcrops of hard rocks, narrow small valleys and intermittent forests. The soil is mainly composed by red lateritic soil and are mainly covered with scrab jungal. A very pictureous hill Susuniya is situated in this Block, which attains a height of



443 metres. Chhatna Block has 1 *Panchyat Samity*, 13 *Gram Panchayats*, 147 *Gram Sansads*, 277 inhabited villages.

Fig. 1: Location Map of the study area.

Objectives

The objective of the present research work is to examine the inter- village inequality of rural development in Chhatna Block and to find out the role of different physical, socio-economical and infrastructural factors which are influencing these regional inequalities in rural development.

Methodology

The details methodology of this study are shown in Fig. 1 and list of indices and respective parameters are shown in Fig. 2.

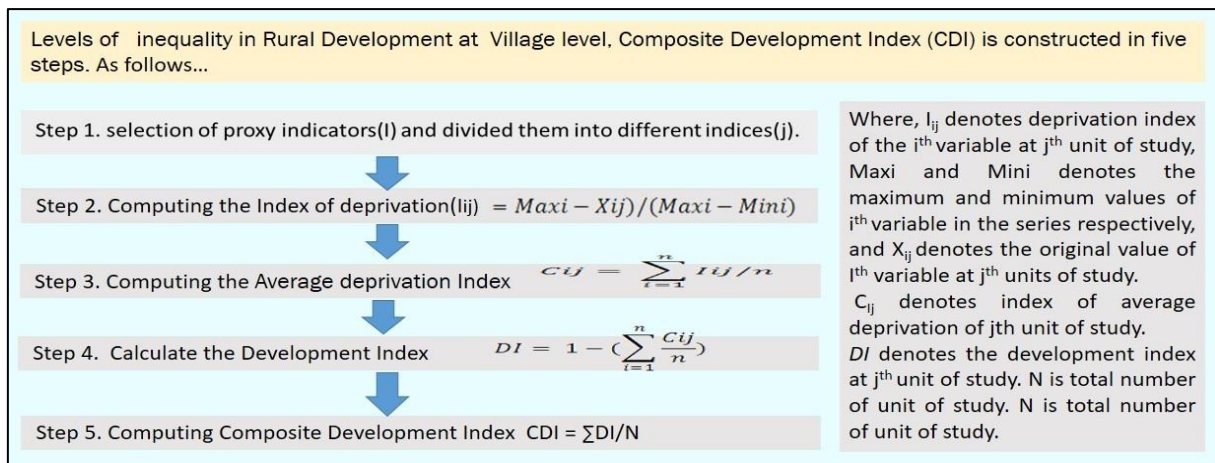


Fig. 2: The methodology flowchart.

Indices	Parameters
HEALTH	<p>X₁= Number of health Centre per 1000 population X₂= dispensary density per 1000 population X₃= Number of doctors per 1000 population X₄= Children immunization X₅= Child death rate X₆= Number of health staff per 1000 population</p>
EDUCATION	<p>X₇= Number of school per 1000 population X₈= Distance of nearest primary school from house in km. X₉= Number of professional trained person per 100 population X₁₀= Female literacy rate X₁₁= literacy rate X₁₂= percentage of secondary pass person</p>
ECONOMY	<p>X₁₃= Per capita cultivated land in hector X₁₄= Percentage of total workers to total population X₁₅= percentage of agricultural workers to total workers X₁₆= Percentage of secondary and tertiary workers to total workers X₁₇= Per capita monthly income in Rupees X₁₈= Per capita monthly electric consume in Rupees</p>
INFRASTRUCTURE	<p>X₁₉= Percentage of bank account holder to total population X₂₀= Percentage of electrified house hold to total house hold X₂₁= Percentage of drinking water available house hold X₂₂= percentage of latrine used household to total household X₂₃= Number of fair price shop per 100 population X₂₄= Percentage of family benefited by govt.</p>
SOCIAL	<p>X₂₅= Percentage of child workers to total workers X₂₆= Male female ratio X₂₇= Literacy gap between male and female X₂₈= Percentage of BPL family X₂₉= Number of school drop out X₃₀= Percentage of SC and ST population</p>

Fig. 3: List of indices and parameters used in this study.

Result and Discussion

Physiographically, the Block is located on the transitional zone between the Chhatonagpur plateau in the west and intermediate rolling plain to the east. It looks like a dissected highland overextended like a spur from the north to the middle portion of the Block which is bounded by 140 metre contour line. About 43.53% area of this Block is located above 140 metre contour line covering mostly the northern and middle parts of the western region. The extreme elevation of the Block is 443 metre which is found at the top of the Susunia hill, and the lowest elevation is about 93 metre which is found in the south-eastern part of the Block at the bank of river Silai. Fig. 4 depicts demographic and surface drainage of Bankura District.

Two rain-fed rivers run across the Block, Dwarakeswar flowing from the southern foothill of Susunia in the southern part of the Block and Kansachora, another small river, flowing on the southern part of the the Block. A number of first order streams are found at almost every part of the Block which prove the ruggedness of terrain of the area under study.

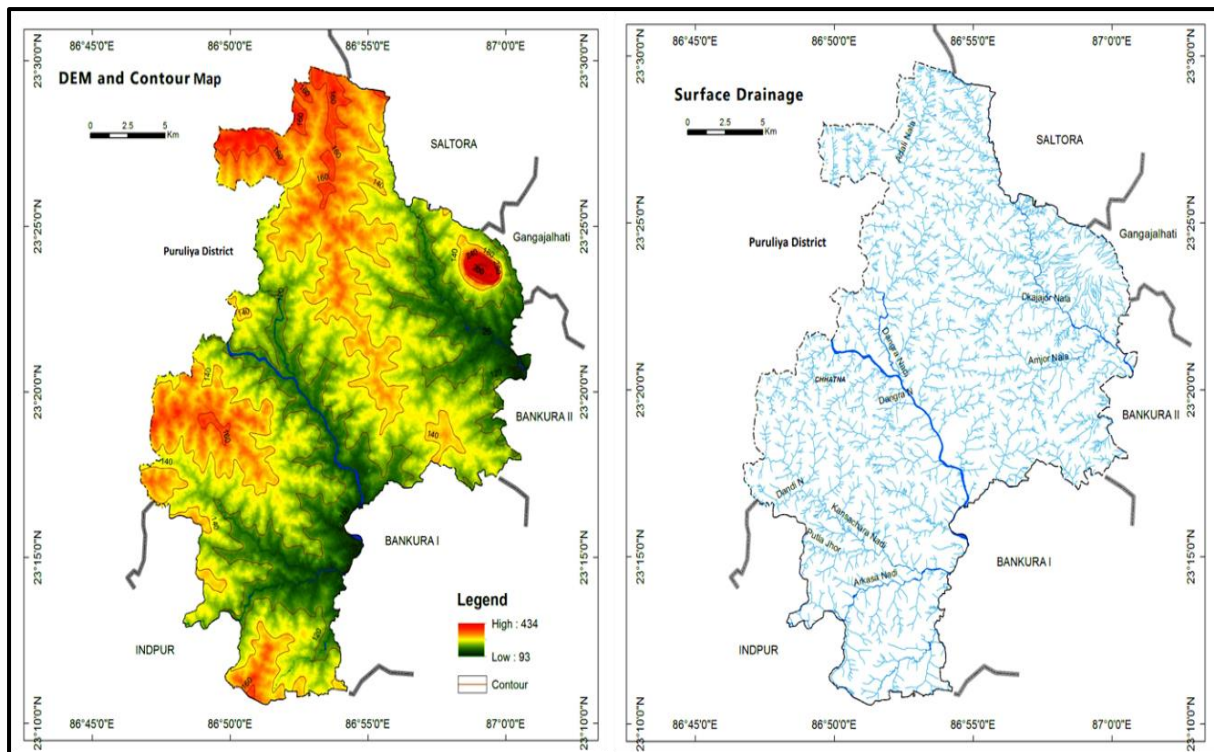


Fig. 4: Demographic and surface drainage of Bankura District.

The Block is mainly populated by rural population, except Jhatipahari, a Census town, all the settlements are rural in nature. Population is irregularly distributed over the Block. Fig. 5 shows population density and literacy rate of Bankura district. The Block has a population of 1, 95,038 in total (2011), of which only 5,236 are urban and 1, 89,712 are rural. The villages of Chhatna, Saldiha, Teghari, Ghoshergram, Metyala, Susunia, Jhunjka, Jirra, Dhaban, Arra etc. are the relatively populous villages.

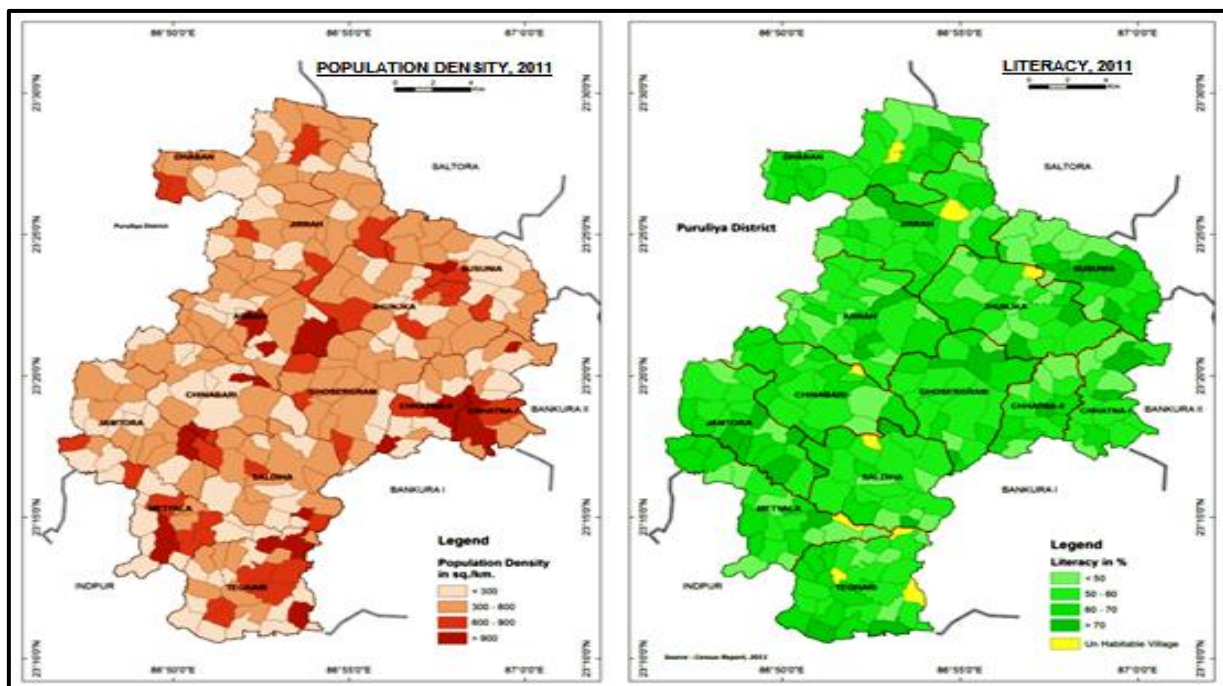


Fig. 5: Population Density and Literacy Rate of Bankura District.

A significant part of the total population in this Block are the Schedule Caste and the Scheduled Tribe population form which share 29.99% and 20.50% of total population. Bauri, Sunri (excluding Saha), Mal, Bhuiya, Bagdi etc are the main sub-castes of SC population. and the main sub caste of ST population are Santal, Bhumij, Kora, Munda etc. The decadal growth rate of this Block is 8.32%, literacy rate being 65.73% in which male literacy rate is 77.63% and female literacy rate is 53.33%. The Census data indicates the gender gap of 24.33% in literacy (Census, 2011). Fig. 6 projects the female-male ration and occupational structure of Bankura District.

The Block basically depends on agriculture; most of the workers are involved in agricultural activities for their livelihood. A Panchayat level study shows the concentration of highest percentage of main worker found in Saldiha Gram Panchayat (67.55%), followed by Chinabari (62.33%) and Chhatna II (61.08%). Jhunjka Gram Panchayat has the lowest percentage of main worker (39.86%). Concerning the distribution of marginal worker, Dhaban Gram Panchayat shows the maximum concentration (63.88%) and comparatively high concentration of marginal worker is found in Jhunjka, Jirrah and Metyala Gram Panchayats. The distribution of main and marginal worker clearly shows the inequality in work participation rate as well as in the socio-economic condition of the area under study.

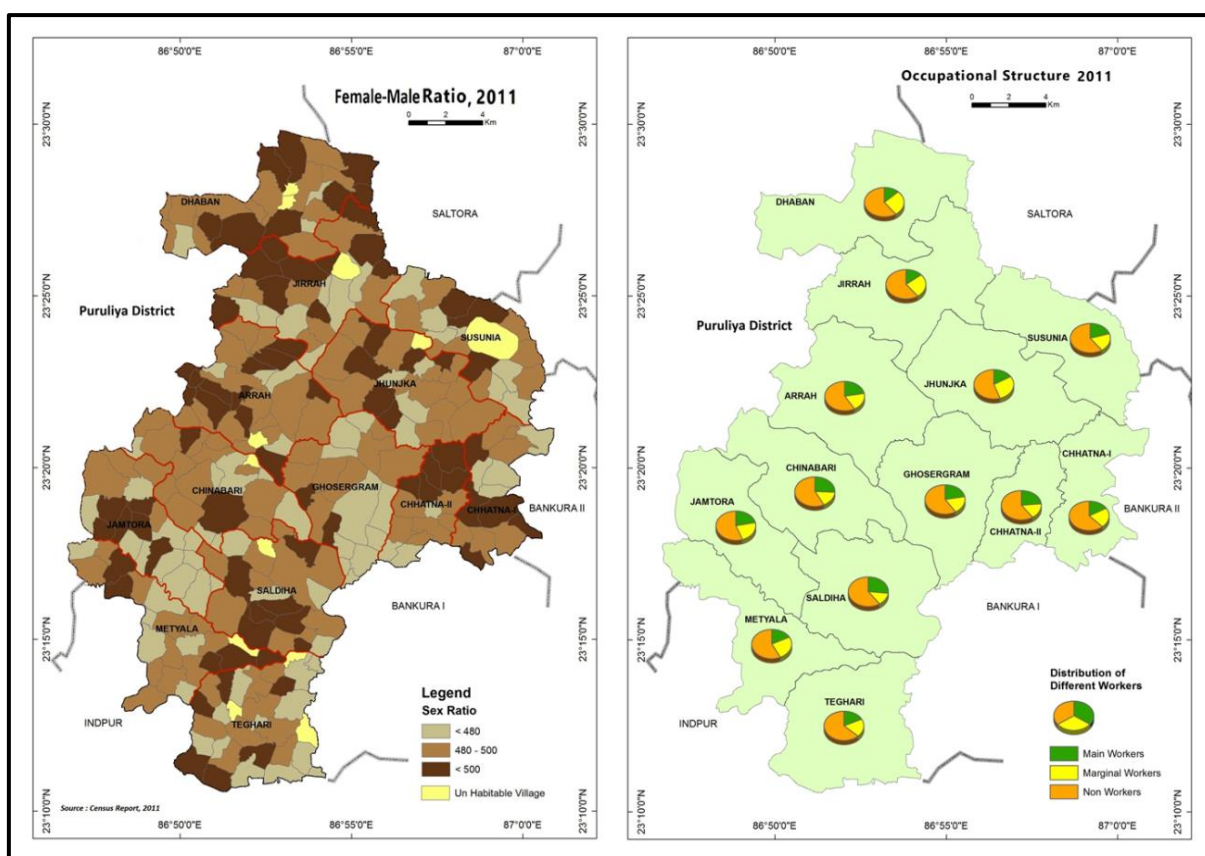


Fig. 6: Female-male ration and occupational structure of Bankura District

Inadequate infrastructural resource bases are one of the critical factors behind the inequality of development in the area under study. The Block has 1 General Degree College at Saldhiha. 198 villages have Primary School, 14 villages have Secondary School namely Arra, Aljhara, Kamalpur, Keshra, Danmari Dhaban, Dubra, Saluni, Jhunjka, Pahar Ghata, Lakshinarayanpur, Kamarkuli, Dumdumi, Jhantipahari, and only 6 villages have Higher Secondary School. The Banking facility is available only in the 11 villages. Concerning the matter of healthcare facility, there are Dispensary in 7 villages, Health Centre in 9 villages, Sub-centre in 26 villages. Safe drinking water is one of the primary demands of the villagers but only 142 villages of the Block have tap drinking water facilities.

To identify the inequality of development among the villages a comparative analysis has been made on the three sample villages which is situated in different physiographic conditions in the study area. These are village Ghoshergram Saldia, village and Parashibana village.

Table 1: A brief profile of three villages.

Demographic Pattern	Saldiha	Goshergram	Parashibana
Total Population	2504	1909	193
Female -Male Ratio	941	982	1014
Literacy			
Total Literacy Rate	64.59%	58.21%	45.89%
Female Literacy Rate	56.89%	41.43%	37.50%
Work Participation			
Main Worker	60.54%	49.11%	10.16%
Marginal Worker	39.46%	50.89%	88.84%
Female Worker	28.48%	28.25%	40.66%
Caste Structure			
General Population	59.22%	52.23%	Nil
SC Population	39.19%	14.93%	Nil
ST Population	7.59%	37.30%	100.00%
Civic Amenities			
Safe Drinking Water Facility	68%	51%	25%
Electrified Houses	86%	78%	41%

Source: Computed by the Author

COMPOSITE DEVELOPMENT INDEX OF THE SAMPLE VILLAGES

Table 2: An Indices level comparison of three villeges.

Indices	Ghoshgram	Shaldiha	Parashibana
Education	60	68	53
Health	56	76	40
Economic	45	85	57
Infrastructural	42	67	58
Social	42	54	61

Source: Computed by the Author

Major Finding

1. The studies run by the qualitative and quantitative data and information clearly stated that there are sturdy inequalities presence in various level among the villeges under the study area.
2. The villeges situated under Western Plateau Fringe region undergo less development mirrored by almost all sectors of rural development, on the other hand the villeges located on the eastern plain part of the block experience moderately better in rural development reflected in similar parameters.
4. SC and ST sections of the people with low social status, received less benefit of wellbeing compared to the section formed of upper cast of the society.
5. The inequality rural development shows that the availability of physical resources have direct control over the level of rural development, the obtainability or access to natural resources is the main factors of rural development of the area under study.
6. The absence or reduction of forest forces marginal or non-worker people to face more problem in their livelihood.
7. Inequality in rural development facilities are more noticeable among the marginal section of the people, mostly housed by the remote village to the north of the study area.
8. Control of geophysical environment are very clear also found among the sample villeges such as Saldiha is more developed in the field of rural development in compare to the other two villeges Parshibona and Ghosergram which are located on the rough terrain in the west.
9. One of the strong factors of inequality in rural development because the people of the comparatively unprivileged group reliant on government aid. In this investigation, it is strongly opposed that only job opportunity or, not the aid, can decrease the inequality between the different social groups.
8. Inequality in the rural development of the area under study basically effected by accessibility of education, ethnic or racial class, religious conflict etc.

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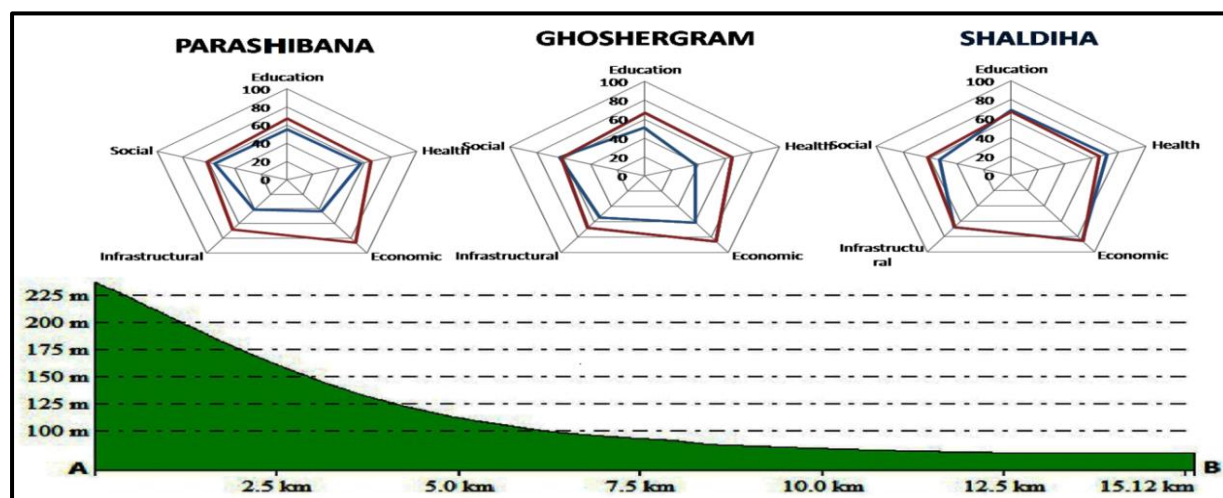


Fig. 7: Relation between physiography and the level of development indices

Conclusion

The factors leading to the inequality in rural development and living conditions incorporates the factors like topography and slope relating to physical environmental factors; unemployment and under-utilization of agriculture productivity relating to economic factors; unawareness of and unreachability to public amenities, social exclusion and charity vs. job opportunities pertaining to social factors and absence of opinion from the grass root level of the society, dominance of the representatives of local government and gender un-empowerment concerning to political factors. Different types of forces and factors have been resultant in the inequality in rural development within the villages can be minimized with active application of economic and social impartiality to the marginal section of the study area.

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