

Gender parity in the District of Murshidabad-A story of despair or hope!

Dr. Indrani Basu

*Associate Professor
Department of Economics
Berhampore College*

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ABSTRACT: The right to spend a dignified and healthy life irrespective of gender is the prerequisite for ensuring human development. Lack of availability of productive resources, basic education, health care facilities to the women, is in effect, is the denial of the basic freedom to build a better future. Studying the level of development of a region, it is essential to take into account the fact that the development outcomes should spread evenly across all sections of the society. During the process of socio-economic development, many countries have made significant progress towards achieving gender equality in development. Still, it is often observed that women, particularly, lag behind their male counterparts in many aspects. In reality, the development is not complete if the women lack proper education, health care and economic independence and are also socially less acceptable than men. District of Murshidabad, stands backward in the gender development ladder of West Bengal. This study tries to explore the pattern of accessibility of women in social, economic, education and health aspects in the district of Murshidabad in order to arrest the gender disparity.

Key words : Sex ratio, Gender Parity Missing Women, Juvenile Sex Parity Missing Women, social parity index, Economic parity index, Educational parity index.

INTRODUCTION

Gender is prevalent component of every aspect of human development. Whenever we are assigning specific and distinctive role to the male and female sexes, likewise, we expect different sets of reciprocation from them. In modern time, this difference has undergone subtle transformation. Today we are talking about liberty, equality and fraternity which aim to achieve parity in every facet of life. In this millennium the idea of human development rests on the right to lead a long and healthy life irrespective of gender. In this course of

development equal access to economic resources, basic needs like education, health, etc are prerequisite for success. Denial of giving such access hinder the growth of the economy and eventually jeopardizes the dream of enlightened future. But still in reality we are identifying the presence of discrimination in different aspects. Whenever we are studying the level of development, we should measure the parity in order to ensure that fruits of development have been spreading evenly across the regions and/or across the social groups. It is almost a well-accepted notion that in the world that women must enjoy equal opportunities compared to men. The efforts to ensure development is not complete yet if the women lack proper education, health care and economic freedom. In the mainstream economics, one aspect of development signifies fewer gender differences in employment within society (World Development Report, 2012). Following Sen (1999), we have observed that development as a process of ensuring equal freedom for all members of society. Keeping this essence Millennium Development goal has recognized women's empowerment and gender equality as one of the objectives of the process of development in the 21st century. World Development Report (2012) has illustrated that gender equality enhances economic efficiency and improves other development outcomes.

District of Murshidabad which had a glorious past in the history of Bengal, could have continued its glory but that did not happen. Under the circumstances, this study tries to explore the pattern of accessibility of women in social, economic, education and health aspects in the district of Murshidabad in order to arrest the gender disparity. This paper is classified into three sections. Section 1 represents a broad view of feature of the district of Murshidabad. Section 2 comprises with several sub-section and identifying the nature of gender parity in different component of human

development and finally section 3 concludes the study with recommendations.

Section 1. Salient physical features of District of Murshidabad

Murshidabad as a district of the state of West Bengal since 1947 has a rich historical past and heritage. It used to be the seat of political power in the Medieval Period in Bengal before the inception of the colonial rule in this country. On 17 August 1947 the final boundary adjustment of the Radcliffe Commission transferred Murshidabad to the Dominion of India, to ensure the Hooghly River was entirely within India (Basu, 2022). This district has a total area of 5324 sq. km. and it ranks 7th among all the districts of West Bengal in respect of land area. During 75 years of time span district shares only 5.99% of the total geographical area of the state, whereas its share in population was 7.78% in 2011. The total population of Murshidabad district as per 2011 Census is 71,03,807 of which 57,03,115 are from rural areas and 14,00,692 are from urban areas. It is basically an agrarian economy. The sex ratio of district in 2011 Census is 958 of which rural is 955 and urban is higher than that of total and rural with 974. Total sex ratio of the district does not maintain any specific trend from 1951 to 2011. The rural sex ratio also does not follow any definite trend like the total sex ratio. The urban sex ratio has been increased continuously from 933 in 1971 to 974 in 2011 Census except in 1991 (Census, 2011). Holding these features in the following section we will try to find out the nature of gender parity in the different aspects of development.

Section 2: Analysis on several parameters of gender development in the district of Murshidabad

Section 2.1: Sex Ratio and Gender Parity Missing Women.

Sex ratio is the most basic demographic parameters and provide an indication of both the relative survival of females and males and the future breeding potential of a population. Differences in sex ratio signifies gender-discriminatory outlook in the society which can lead to many problems like dominance and violence against a particular gender. Kinship institutions have a strong influence on sex ratios in India at the turn of the twentieth century. kinship rules vary by caste, language, religion, and region. So we construct sex ratios by these categories at the district level as well as block/Municipality level by using data from the 1991 to 2011 Census of India. We find that the female-to-male sex ratio varied along religion and region. Sen (1990) proclamation that more than 100 million women were missing around the world, referring to the abysmally low fraction of women in the total population, the case of “missing women” has generated considerable interest. The term "missing women" indicates a shortfall in the number of women relative to the expected number of women in a region or country. It is most often measured through male-to-female sex ratios, and is theorized to be caused by sex-selective abortions, female infanticide, and inadequate healthcare and nutrition for female children. It is argued that technologies that enable prenatal sex selection, which have been commercially available since the 1970s, are a large impetus for missing female children. The problem of missing women is the persistent feature in India there are strong reasons to believe that the causes of missing women are both historically determined and slow moving. For many scholars, the family and kinship systems, which often determine the rights of women in traditional societies, are the most likely factors for the historically persistent pattern of missing women (see Agarwal 1994; Das Gupta et al. 2003; and Kishor 1993).

Table 1: Status of District of Murshidabad in Missing women

Region	Total Population in 1991	Total Fem Population in 1991	Gender parity missing women 1991	Total Population in 2001	Total Fem Population in 2001	Gender parity missing women 2001	Total Population in 2011	Total Fem Population in 2011	Gender parity missing women 2011
Murshidabad	4740149	2300807	69267.5	5866569	2861569	71715.5	7103807	3476243	75660.5
West Bengal	68077965	32567332	1471650.5	80176197	38710212	1377886.5	91276115	44467088	1170969.5

Source : Statistical abstract,2015 table 1.7 Gender parity missing women: $(0.5 * \text{Total population} - \text{Female population})$



Figure: 1

From the above figure it is well showed that status of gender parity missing women is quite prevalent in Murshidabad vis-a vis State level . According to Agarwal 1994; Das Gupta et al. 2003; and Kishor 1993), the family and kinship systems, which often determine the rights of women in traditional societies, are the most likely factors for the historically persistent pattern of missing women. We have seen that in Murshidabad we

have a persistent patter of missing women. Murshidabad is a district of Islamic religion dominated rural area and that religion backing village exogamy which led to lower autonomy of women, lower age at marriage, higher fertility, higher childhood female mortality, and lower sex ratios. This view is well manifested in the following table2.

Table 2: Religion-wise presence of Missing women

	Gender parity missing women 1981	Gender parity missing women 1991	Gender parity missing women 2001	Gender parity missing women 2011
Hindus	18913	30426	30984.5	31502.5
Muslim	19513.5	38774	40330	43462.5
Christian	66	-115	203.5	428
Sikhs	87.5	63.5	30	54
Jains	69	95.5	70	48.5
Others	1	23.5	38.5	165

Source : Statistical abstract,2015, calculated by author herself.

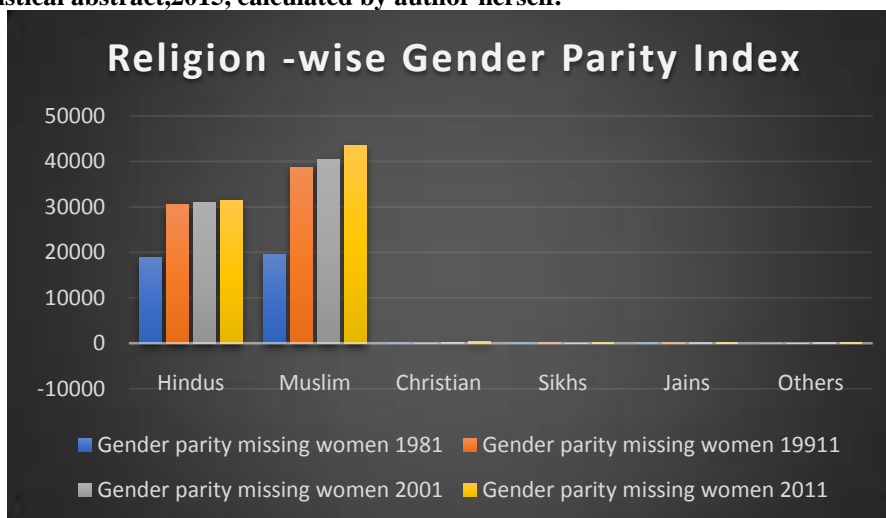


Figure 2

So intertemporal presence of missing women in Islamic culture is much vigorous than other religion. In this district, there are 5 sub-divisions named i) Sadar, ii) Kandi, iii) Jangipur, iv) Lalbagh and v) Domkal. The details of administrative units along the sub-division are given table 3.

Table 3: Administrative Units in the district of Murshidabad for the year 2018

Sub-Division	C.D.Block / Municipality(M)
Sadar Sub-Division	Berhampore Beldanga-I Beldanga-II Nowda Hariharpara Berhampore(M) Beldanga(M)
Kandi Sub-Division	Kandi Khargram Burwan Bharatpur-I Bharatpur-II Kandi(M)
Jangipur Sub-Division	Farakka Samserganj Suti-I Suti-II Raghunathganj-I Raghunathganj-II Sagardighi Jangipur(M) Dhuliyani(M)
Lalbagh Sub-Division	Lalgola-I Bhagwangola-I Bhagwangola-II Murshidabad - Jiaganj Nabagram Murshidabad – (M) Jiaganj-Ajimganj(M)
Domkal Sub-Division	Domkal Jalangi Raninagar-I Raninagar-II Domkal(M)

Source: District statistical Handbook, 2018

The above table gives us the clear view of location of C-D blocks and municipalities.

Table 4: Gender parity missing women along the sub-districts.

Block/ Municipality	Total Population 2001	Total Population 2011	female Population 2001	female population 2011	Gender parity missing women 2001	Gender parity missing women 2011
Sadar Sub - Division	1451800	1725525	703073	840668	22827	22094.5
Berhampore	378884	446887	184230	218237	5212	5206.5

Beldanga - I	259237	319322	124628	155175	4990.5	4486
Beldanga - II	210188	250458	101129	121314	3965	3915
Nowda	196246	226859	95254	110518	2869	2911.5
Hariharpara	221741	257571	107141	125937	3729.5	2848.5
Berhampore (M)	160143	195223	78406	94976	1665.5	2635.5
Beldanga (M)	25361	29205	12285	14511	395.5	91.5
Kandi Sub - Division	1003648	1155645	486581	563323	15243	14499.5
Kandi	193093	220145	93462	107356	3084.5	2716.5
Khargram	234780	273332	114441	133799	2949	2867
Burwan	224397	257466	108940	125027	3258.5	3706
Bharatpur - I	150896	172702	72531	83614	2917	2737
Bharatpur - II	150133	176368	73420	86337	1646.5	1847
Kandi(M)	50349	55632	23787	27190	1387.5	626
Jangipur Sub - Division	1531057	1972308	758480	971905	7048.5	14249
Farakka	220049	274111	107554	134885	2470.5	2170.5
Samserganj	211844	284072	105288	142038	634	-2
Suti - I	139445	179908	68841	88003	881.5	1951
Suti - II	213217	278922	105554	138927	1054.5	534
Raghunathganj - I	154371	195627	76613	95332	572.5	2481.5
Raghunathganj - II	192530	265336	98248	129613	-1983	3055
Sagardighi	252293	310461	123733	151820	2413.5	3410.5
Jangipur(M)	74458	88165	36266	43216	963	866.5
Dhuliyani(M)	72850	95706	36383	48071	42	-218
Lalbagh Sub - Division	1042031	1253886	507559	613123	13456.5	13820
Lalgola	267641	335831	130840	164834	2980.5	3081.5
Bhagwangola - I	163466	202071	79474	98652	2259	2383.5
Bhagwangola - II	129899	158024	63050	77325	1899.5	1687
Murshidabad-Jiaganj	200258	234565	96746	113378	3383	3904.5
Nabagram	196608	227586	96061	111452	2243	2341
Murshidabad(M)	36947	44019	18117	21842	356.5	167.5
Jiaganj-Azimganj(M)	47212	51790	23271	25640	335	255
Domkal Sub - Division	838033	996443	405876	487224	13140.5	10997.5
Domkal	311679	363976	151220	177794	4619.5	4194
Jalangi	215586	252477	104365	123047	3428	3191.5
Raninagar - I	154609	189105	75011	92857	2293.5	1695.5
Raninagar - II	156159	190885	75280	93526	2799.5	1916.5
District total	5866569	7103807	2861569	3476243	71715.5	75660.5

Source: Computed by author herself from census report of different years.

From the above table 4 it is clear that during 2001-2011, gender parity missing women has increased at district level, but apart from Kandi

and Domkal sub division, other sub-division are making positive contribution behind this expansion. The value of the gender parity missing women are

higher in rural areas compare to municipal areas. The reasons may be presence of strong legal process against sex-selective abortions, female infanticide, etc, the legal awareness of the people, economic prosperity as well as adequate healthcare facilities within the urban region vis-à-vis rural area. It is argued that Surprisingly in Berhampore subdivision, the value is declining but in Sadar town Berhampore it is quite high. In Kandi subdivision apart from Bharatpur and Burwan all CD blocks recorded lower value of the missing women. Surprisingly in Jangipur sub-division Raghunath gung I &II, Suti and Sagardighi are showing sharp increase in this value. In Lalgola sub-division apart from municipal areas, rural areas are showing increasing trends. In Domkal subdivision inspite of entirely rural areas the value is declining. Therefore, we can say that number of missing women varied negatively as we move from rural to urban areas. That means incidence of missing women is more visible in the rural areas than in urban areas.

We have already noticed that Berhampore municipality is going against the trend of lesser presence of missing women in urban areas. The reason may be that being a sadar town (district head quarter) it attracts male population to be reside here for capturing the economic opportunities available in the district town whereas women are not allowed to take the better job opportunities by leaving their native land. For example, daily wage rate of a bidi worker is higher in Berhampore than in Hariharpara. This is a reflection of oppressive kinship structure within the area. Women are residing in rural areas whereas male are migrated to urban areas for job. This can be cleared from economic status of the subdivisions. As Jangipur and Berhampore are more economically stronger so male population are clustered into those regions. On the other hand vis-à-vis other subdivision relatively higher presence of female population in Kandi and Domkal subdivision is not for relaxing kinship rules and regulation in favour of women rather this is showing due to migration of bulk amount of male population to other state for searching job.

Analysing sectoral composition of occupational structure, we have observed that the major share of working people was engaged in household industrial activities (Census, 2011). This district has a continuous trend of informalisation which allow the people to find out alternative occupations without leaving the place. But

production nature in the district, being predominantly agrarian, and it is basically seasonal which fails to create additional gainful employment on a sustained basis. Expansion of bidi industries in Dhulian, Aurangabad, and Jangipur etc could engage local working population – especially female working population in household industrial activities.

We have seen that one of the major strengths of the economy may be existence of huge labour force but if we consider age composition of total population we can observed that according to 2011 census, 60.18 % of total population belong to working age group(15-59) and it increased from 54.41% in 2001 to that position of 60.18 in 2011. But 63.55% of working population failed to get employment. On the other side literacy rate of this district was quite low with respect to state average i.e., 66.59. Even if the Jangipur sub-division which was most populous and 32.91 % of its total labour force acted as main work, seemed to be most developed but failed to provide educational facilities to its residence. Surprisingly, this sub-division was suffering from lowest literacy rate (i.e., 60.95). Therefore the expected population dividend which could have reaped by the district, but it didn't happen due to inefficient allocation of resources among gainful productive activities or inefficiency of creating alternative non-farm activities.

We can observed that where number of main and marginal worker are higher that is jangipur sub-division is bearing large incidence of social disparity. So what ever employment is available that is limited to male.

Another measure of the existence of gender disparity, which may be caused by female foeticide (girl child is less desired), dowry deaths, lack of proper maternal health care, nutrition etc is Juvenile sex parity missing women where adult female to the total population (AFR) including various age groups is declining compared to the RFT. RFT means Ratio of female child to total child between age 0-6 years. AFR: Ratio of adult Female to total Population.

The following Table 5 and 6 give estimates of Juvenile sex parity missing women during 2001-2011. Here we consider of the age group between 0-14. Gender parity missing women is found both in urban and rural Murshidabad but Juvenile sex parity missing women is mostly found in urban Hooghly.

Table 5: Population by age and sex in 2001

District	Total	0-6 years	7-14 years	15-19 years	20-24 years	25-29 years	30-39 years	40-49 years	50-59 years	60 years +	Age not stated
Murshidabad(total)	58665	10445	12908	5565	4919	4770	8161	5447	3052	3311	835
Murshidabad(Female)	28615	51473	62862	2520	2472	2464	3965	2488	1467	1763	385

Source: Statistical abstract, 2015. Juvenile sex parity missing women: {(Ratio of female child to total child between age 0-14years)* Total population – Female population}. In 2001 total

female child of age group 0-14 was 1143359 and total number of child was 2335390. So RFT I 2001 =0.489579 and AFR=0.292882 so juvenile sex parity missing women in 2001 =10582.75

Table 6: Population by age and sex in 2011

District	Total	0-4 years	5-9 years	10-14 years	15-19 years	20-24 years	25-29 years	30-34 years	35-39 years	40-44 years	45-49 years	50-54 years	55-59 years	60-64 years	65-69 years	70-74 years	75-79 years	80+
Murshidabad (total)	710380	706535	774855	843488	786792	707320	571574	469431	478875	425001	344287	281335	210112	185829	131202	89694	42383	50858
Murshidabad (Female)	347624	347405	381098	414886	378087	348531	281697	231628	237338	202357	162879	129061	99558	92278	67658	47567	23144	29091

Source: Statistical abstract, 2015

In 2011 total female child of age group 0-14 was 1143389 and total number of children was 2324878. So RFT I 2001 =0.491806 and AFR=0.328116 so Juvenile Sex parity missing

women of 2011=17452.06. Following table 7 and figure 3 will show the intertemporal changes in RFT, AFR and Juvenile Sex parity missing women.

Table 7. Intertemporal change in Juvenile Sex parity missing women

Year	RFT	AFR	Juvenile sex parity missing women
2001	0.489579471	0.29288158	10582.74565
2011	0.491806022	0.328116178	17452.05923

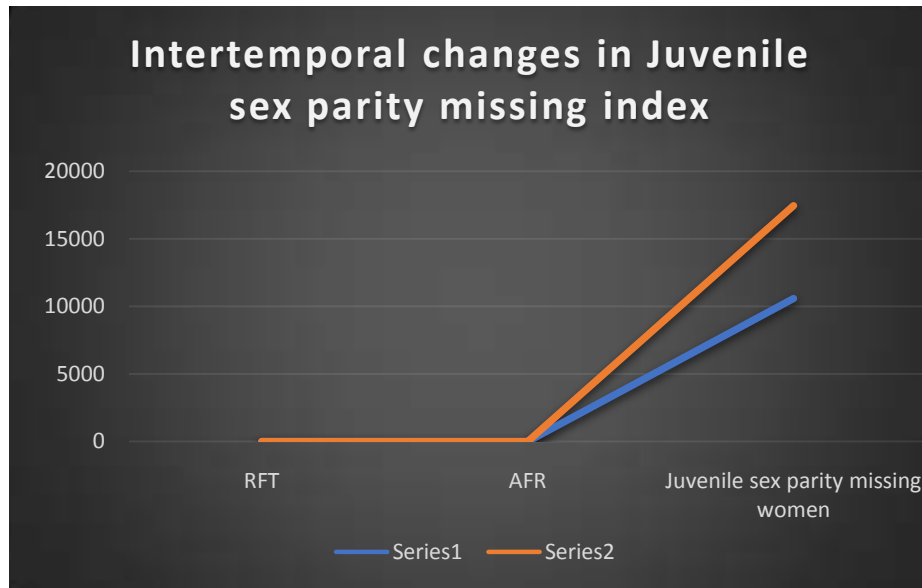


Figure 4

From the above figure it is crystal clear that value of Juvenile sex parity missing women has increased during 2001-2011. which may be caused by dowry deaths, lack of proper maternal health care, nutrition etc. Women in general are found to be ill-treated in relative terms with men, even within the same family. ‘This is reflected not only in such matters as education and opportunity to develop talents, but also in the more elementary fields of nutrition, health and survival’ (Sen, 2002). parental biasness for sons and unequal access to food and health care for husbands and wives in

poor families are responsible for rise in the value of Juvenile sex parity missing women. However, incidence of juvenile missing women is higher in urban area vis-a vis rural areas. This is not just a matter of poverty but a serious gender bias.

The difference in social status between men and women is judged through the social parity index. Accordingly, a Social Parity Index(s) can be constructed in order to examine the extent of variation of social status between men and women across blocks and municipalities of the district.

Table 8: Social Parity Components across Blocks and Municipalities of the District of Murshidabad

Block/ Municipality	Social parity index 2011	Score 2011	Place in 2011
Raghunathganj - II	954.98	0.26	18
Dhuliyani(M)	1009.15	1.00	1
Samsanganj	1000.03	0.88	2
Raghunathganj - I	950.52	0.20	21
Jangipur Sub - Division	971.51	0.49	
Suti - II	992.37	0.77	3
Suti - I	957.54	0.30	15
Jiaganj-Azimganj(M)	980.50	0.61	6
Sagardighi	957.00	0.29	16
Murshidabad(M)	984.89	0.67	5
Berhampore (M)	947.42	0.16	23
Bharatpur - II	958.97	0.32	13
Lalgola	963.96	0.39	9
Farakka	968.82	0.45	7
Nabagram	959.68	0.33	12
Khargram	958.91	0.32	13
Lalbagh Sub - Division	956.86	0.29	
Jangipur(M)	961.45	0.35	10
Berhampore	954.46	0.26	18

Bhagwangola - I	953.91	0.25	19
Burwan	944.03	0.12	25
Nowda	949.95	0.20	22
Bhagwangola - II	958.19	0.31	14
Domkal	954.95	0.26	18
Raninagar - I	964.77	0.40	8
Kandi Sub - Division	951.04	0.21	
Beldanga (M)	987.55	0.71	4
Domkal Sub - Division	956.81	0.29	
Sadar Sub - Division	950.06	0.20	
Jalangi	950.68	0.21	21
Kandi	951.83	0.22	20
Hariharpara	956.72	0.29	16
Murshidabad-Jiaganj	935.56	0.00	28
Raninagar - II	960.63	0.34	11
Beldanga - II	939.37	0.05	26
Beldanga - I	945.34	0.13	24
Bharatpur - I	938.56	0.04	27
Kandi(M)	955.98	0.28	17

Source: District statistical Handbook, 2018

The ranking of blocks and municipalities has been made in ascending order of gender disparity. Under social ranking order blocks like Dhuliyar, Suti, Samsergunj have achieved higher degree of social parity between men and women, while Beldanga II, Bharatpur-I and Murshidabad-Jiaganj are suffering from greater gender disparity. In the district, broadly, there are wide variations across the blocks in terms of social parity index.

Section 2.2: Gender and Economic Parity Index

Wide variation in social parity index can be come into view if we analyse the availability of access to gainful employment and earnings which is vital for control over resources as well as for

participation in the decision making process, both within and outside the household. One of the fundamental aspects of gender discrimination, in almost all parts of the world, is the unequal access of women to gainful employment opportunities. A very substantial proportion of women remain outside the job market and even if they join the job market they normally get less remunerative and less secure informal jobs.

Workforce participation rate which is defined as the proportion of working population to total population can be used as an indicator of economic well-being. Disparity in workforce participation rate would reflect the degree of economic inequality between men and women.

Table 9: Sex-wise distribution of work-force under different categories

Gender	Workforce participation rate	Workforce participation rate of main worker	Workforce participation rate of marginal worker	Percentage of non-worker
Male	54.74	45.83	8.91	45.26
Female	17.38	10.34	7.04	82.62

Source: District statistical Handbook, 2018

The gender segregated workforce participation rates under different working categories reveal that there is wide disparity in the access to productive resources for women in the District of Murshidabad. Women lag behind men in terms of economic independence. According to 2011 census, overall 54.74% of men are workers, whereas only 17.38 % of women are workers. Male Main workers are in higher proportion (45.83) than

that of female Main workers (10.34). In the Main workers category, a wide gap between male and female workers could be seen as shown in the above Table. In case of Marginal workers, there is workers (7.04 per cent). In case of Nonworker females dominates (82.62 per cent) over the males (45.26 per cent). Marginal workers category includes those who worked below 6 months in preceding year. However, existence of a difference

between the percentage of women and men who are working, this does not necessarily imply economic deprivation of women, as women are often unemployed by choice rather than by social compulsions. In fact, women often prefer to be homemakers when the family income is sufficient and this is reflected through the low work participation rates of women in some advanced

municipalities where some other components of gender parity are high.

Under the circumstances, the economic parity component (M) is captured by the ratio between percentage of main workers among working women and percentage of main workers among working men.

Table 10: Percentage of Main workers in total working population by Sex and value of Economic parity index in Sub-districts, 2011

Name of the sub-district	Percentage of female main worker among working female	Percentage of male main worker among working male	Economic Parity Index	
			Ratio(Mi)	Score
Berhampore	49.81	83.26	0.60	0.24
Beldanga - I	56.91	85.87	0.66	0.40
Beldanga - II	55.83	84.77	0.66	0.39
Nowda	53.13	84.24	0.63	0.32
Hariharpara	42.23	79.8	0.53	0.07
Berhampore (M)	84.97	95.95	0.89	0.94(2 nd)
Beldanga (M)	79.13	93.46	0.85	0.85 (4 th)
Kandi	52.71	81.9	0.64	0.35
Khargram	36.91	76.65	0.48	-0.05 (worst)
Burwan	43.2	72.59	0.60	0.23
Bharatpur - I	43.58	86.29	0.51	0.01
Bharatpur - II	58.86	83.81	0.70	0.49
Kandi(M)	74.72	89.54	0.83	0.82 (5 th)
Farakka	65.21	77.89	0.84	0.82(5 th)
Samserganj	61.58	85.32	0.72	0.54
Suti - I	49.68	82.7	0.60	0.25
Suti - II	66.3	83.77	0.79	0.71(7 th)
Raghunathganj - I	70.68	88.43	0.80	0.73 (6 th)
Raghunathganj - II	70.71	90.61	0.78	0.68(8 th)
Sagardighi	47.14	82.52	0.57	0.17
Jangipur(M)	66.15	88.95	0.74	0.59 (10 th)
Dhuliyar(M)	84.07	92.23	0.91	1.00 (1 st)
Lalgola	46.14	77.4	0.60	0.23
Bhagwangola - I	51.69	82.21	0.63	0.31
Bhagwangola - II	39.15	77.63	0.50	0.01
Murshidabad-Jiaganj	57.15	87.12	0.66	0.38
Nabagram	52.28	82.31	0.64	0.33
Murshidabad(M)	67.31	88.37	0.76	0.64(9 th)
Jiaganj-Azimganj(M)	81.08	93.17	0.87	0.90 (3 rd)
Domkal	42.98	84.49	0.51	0.02
Jalangi	54.34	86.19	0.63	0.32
Raninagar - I	53.31	83.99	0.63	0.33
Raninagar - II	49.03	84.21	0.58	0.20

Source: Author computed by herself from census 2011. Main Worker : A person who has worked

for major part of the reference period (i.e. six months or more during the last one year

preceding the date of enumeration) in any economically productive activity is termed as ‘main worker’

From the above table it is clear that there is a wide variety in economic parity index along the sub-district. Its values vary from 1 to -0.5. Sub-district Dhuliyān scores highest in compatible with its social parity index. It is quite compatible with values of social parity index. In Khargram women are lacking most from economic independence. The sub-district which are placed high rank in social parity index, mostly the urban areas are also scoring high economic parity index with some few exception like Samsargunj, Murshidabad(M),

Raninagar-I, Lalgola. In spite of having high score in social parity index, they are placed much below in economic independence.

Section 2.3: Gender and Educational Attainment

One of the important means for ensuring and expanding opportunities is to making scope for creating human capital. Opportunities of accessing education is essential for making informed choices and participation in political and economic process. Gender differences in educational attainment are one of the important indicators of relative welfare of women. In the district of Murshidabad, the general literacy rates are quite good.

Table 11: Distribution of Literates by Sex and District

	Percentage of Literates in 2001		Percentage of Literates in 2011	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
West Bengal	77.02	59.61	81.69	70.54
Burdwan	78.63	60.95	82.42	69.63
Birbhum	70.89	51.55	76.92	64.14
Bankura	76.76	49.43	80.05	60.05
Purba Medinipur	84.91	64.42	93.32	81.37
PaschimMedinipur	84.91	64.42	85.26	70.50
Howrah	83.22	70.11	86.95	79.43
Hooghly	82.59	67.21	87.03	76.36
24 Parganas(N)	83.92	71.72	87.61	80.34
24 Parganas(S)	79.19	59.01	83.35	71.40
Kolkata	83.79	77.30	88.34	84.06
Nadia	72.31	59.58	78.75	70.98
Murshidabad	60.71	47.63	69.95	63.09
Uttar Dinajpur	58.48	36.51	65.52	52.17
Dakshin Dinajpur	72.43	54.28	78.37	67.01
Maldah	58.80	41.25	66.24	56.96
Jalpaiguri	72.83	52.21	79.95	66.23
Darjeeling	80.05	62.94	85.61	73.33
Cooch Behar	75.93	56.12	80.71	68.49
Purulia	73.72	36.50	77.86	50.52

Source: Statistical abstract, 2015

The average literacy rate for the district has increased from 54.35% to 66.59% during 2001-2011. However its position compared to West Bengal was quite gloomy. Improvement has been list of of all district of West Bengal occurred but still it is placed fourth from below of the literacy rate. The difference in education between men and

women is captured here by the literacy rates (E₁) and then we calculate individual score on this indicator. Score has been calculated as. Table 12 represents the score of the blocks and municipalities in the context of educational attainment.

Table 12: Educational Parity Components across Blocks and Municipalities of the District of Murshidabad

Name of block/municipality	Male literacy rate	Female literacy rate	Educational parity Index (E _i) = (Percentage of Female literacy / Percentage of male literacy)	Score	Rank

Berhampore	76.52	70.34	0.92	0.52	
Beldanga - I	71.92	68.08	0.95	0.67	10 th
Beldanga - II	71.1	64.4	0.91	0.45	
Nowda	66.91	65.24	0.98	0.82	4 th
Hariharpara	69.97	68.39	0.98	0.83	3 rd
Berhampore (M)	92.25	87.74	0.95	0.69	9 th
Beldanga (M)	85.55	79.53	0.93	0.58	
Kandi	86.61	77.29	0.89	0.38	
Khargram	69.69	57.16	0.82	0.00	worst
Burwan	74.97	62.6	0.84	0.08	
Bharatpur - I	67.94	57.57	0.85	0.14	
Bharatpur - II	70.96	60.97	0.86	0.21	
Kandi(M)	86.61	77.29	0.89	0.38	
Farakka	65.56	53.77	0.82	0.00	worst
Samsorganj	60.42	49.57	0.82	0.00	worst
Suti - I	62.84	53.08	0.84	0.13	
Suti - II	60.44	49.98	0.83	0.04	
Raghunathganj - I	68.99	59.74	0.87	0.24	
Raghunathganj - II	64.71	57.45	0.89	0.36	
Sagardighi	68.34	62.05	0.91	0.46	
Jangipur(M)	83.33	74.99	0.90	0.42	
Dhuliyar(M)	69.15	56.98	0.82	0.02	
Lalgola	65.81	62.76	0.95	0.70	8 th
Bhagwangola - I	67.64	65.89	0.97	0.81	5 th
Bhagwangola - II	62.58	63.06	1.01	0.99	1 st
Murshidabad- Jiaganj	72.82	65.16	0.89	0.39	
Nabagram	85.97	77.85	0.91	0.45	
Murshidabad(M)	85.97	77.85	0.91	0.45	
Jiaganj- Azimganj(M)	85.07	76.37	0.90	0.41	
Domkal	64.47	63.31	0.98	0.85	2 nd
Jalangi	69.36	65.24	0.94	0.63	
Raninagar - I	68.42	66.03	0.97	0.76	6 th
Raninagar - II	64.78	62.36	0.96	0.75	7 th

Source: Statistical abstract, 2015. $E_i = (\text{Female literacy rate} / \text{Male literacy rate})$, $i = \text{block/municipality}$, $\text{Score} = (E_i - \text{Min } E_i) / (\text{Max } E_i - \text{Min } E_i)$

Taking into account all these scores, we find that among all the blocks and municipalities in the district Bhagwangola II has the highest level of parity between men and women so far as education is concerned, followed by Domkal, Hariharpara, Nowda and Bhagwangola I. Disparity is very much prevalent in the blocks. Khargram, Farakka and Samsorganj. though the score is moderate in the

municipalities like Berhampore, Beldanga, Murshidabad and jiaganj -Azimganj but that is too low for the municipality -Dhulian whose performance in economic parity much high. This is a reflection of the fact that though comparative a greater number of females are participated in job market as main worker but they have an enhance their skill which is an obstacle to get the better jobs

Table 13: Sub-district wise availability of public health

	No. of Family Welfare Centres	No. of Cases treated	Average rate of case treated
Sadar Sub - Division	226	24437	108.1
Berhampore	60	6706	111.8
Beldanga - I	44	3975	90.3

Beldanga - II	38	3458	91.0
Nowda	38	2885	75.9
Hariharpara	41	3756	91.6
Berhampore (M)	5	3657	731.4
Beldanga (M)	0	0	0
Kandi Sub - Division	178	14810	83.2
Kandi	35	3578	102.2
Khargram	43	3474	80.8
Burwan	42	3328	79.2
Bharatpur - I	27	1902	70.4
Bharatpur - II	29	2310	79.7
Kandi(M)	2	218	109.0
Jangipur Sub - Division	235	25033	106.5
Farakka	38	3752	98.7
Samserganj	36	3238	89.9
Suti - I	25	2222	88.9
Suti - II	34	3826	112.5
Raghunathganj - I	25	2529	101.2
Raghunathganj - II	30	4505	150.2
Sagardighi	42	3752	89.3
Jangipur(M)	3	1081	360.3
Dhuliyani(M)	2	128	64.0
Lalbagh Sub - Division	161	19619	121.9
Lalgola	37	4284	115.8
Bhagwangola - I	28	2930	104.6
Bhagwangola - II	24	3547	147.8
Murshidabad-Jiaganj	33	4094	124.1
Nabagram	37	4120	111.4
Murshidabad(M)	0	644	0
Jiaganj-Azimganj(M)	2	0	0.0
Domkal Sub - Division	141	15355	108.9
Domkal	49	4889	99.8
Jalangi	36	3486	96.8
Raninagar - I	28	3151	112.5
Raninagar - II	28	2896	103.4
Domkal(M)	0	933	0

Source: District Statistical Handbook, 2018

Section 3: Conclusion and recommendation

In the endeavour of illustrating the position of women in a region, one should take into account the parity indices of economic well-being, education level and health care available in a block/municipality and makes a comparative assessment among the blocks/ municipalities of a district. A higher score implies that development is relatively more evenly spread across men and

women in that block. The social component tries to capture the difference in social status between men and women, the economic component tries to capture the difference in availability of the economic opportunities, the educational component captures the difference in the education level while the health component captures the gap between the desired and the actual level of health care available to women. In our paper we have elaborately

analysed gender-wise differences in the social, economic and educational parameters. Due to lack of authentic information on health parameter we are not able to make in depth analysis. However, on the basis of performances of remaining three parameter we have found that blocks/municipalities with less disparity in economic component are suffering from more disparity in educational and health component. That cause behind these findings may be that women who have joined the labour force due to poor economic status of their family are not able to get adequate opportunities to be more skilled by having more educational and health facilities. Block/municipality wise ranking also has revealed that a large variation in gender parity is prevalent within the district. To overcome these problems of lack of parity a large-scale expansion of educational and health facilities should be furnished to each door step so that women of this district do have the ability to create human capital and live a decent life..

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