

How to Develop North Bengal in West Bengal of India: A Comprehensive Strategy for Balanced Regional Growth

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Abstract

Introduction: The concept of "Balanced Regional Development" has been formally adopted as a primary goal of Economic Planning on a Global Scale throughout history and into the future. Its intention is to minimize spatial disparities between geographic regions, as well as provide access to opportunity and resources equally across the country. North Bengal's development strategy must take a thoughtful, integrated, multi-dimensional approach that includes: improvements to physical infrastructure; initiatives to encourage new industry sectors; the expansion of human capital; and the development of institutional structures that promote participatory planning and equitable access to resources. **Objective of the Study:** The study has tried to identify the causes, which differ between the North Bengal and the South Bengal, and to focus primarily on ways to eliminate these disparities and develop in a unified plan for regional equity. **Methodology:** The Study is a combination of the analytical method to study regional differences, and the policy method to develop strategies for the equitable development of all regions. It uses a combination of both the theoretical perspective to understand and the empirical perspective to collect the data. **Result and Discussion:** Identification of gaps of development between North Bengal and South Bengal with its reasons and nature has been sought first and then shown. **Conclusion:** For North Bengal to succeed, it too needs a well-planned, long-term, and integrated approach to address all aspects of its development, such as making its economy more varied, building better roads and schools, improving access to quality healthcare, developing sustainable agricultural practices, and strengthening local institutions.

Keywords: Economic Planning, Global Scale, Geographic Regions, Multi-Dimensional, Healthcare.

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of "Balanced Regional Development" has been formally adopted as a primary goal of Economic Planning on a Global Scale throughout History and into the future. Its intention is to minimize spatial disparities between geographic regions, as well as provide access to opportunity and resources equally across the country or polity (for example: Sengupta & Chakrabarti, 2024). The disparities in India exist not only between the different States in the country, but also within the different States themselves by virtue of how the Economic Development and Access to Infrastructure, Industrialization, and Other Public Services are not equally distributed throughout the country. In West Bengal, the North Bengal Region illustrates the Intra-state disparity of West Bengal as an example, as the North Bengal Region retains a very strong Cultural Heritage and a high Level of Agro-resources vs. a respective lower Level of Industrial and

Service-Sector Development compared to the more economically developed Southern Parts of the State of West Bengal (Amirapu *et al.*, as cited in Sengupta & Chakrabarti, 2024). The Literature and Policy Studies that have been done on the issue of Regional Disparity have also identified Infrastructure, Connectivity, and the Concentration of Industrial Development as key causative factors of Regional Disparity (Sengupta & Chakrabarti, 2024).

Limited integration into high-growth sectors; inadequate transport and logistics infrastructure; and limited human capital development capabilities have created significant barriers to North Bengal's ability to take advantage of broader economic growth for the greater good of the region. The North-South Corridor and related improvements in connectivity demonstrate that strategic investments in physical infrastructure can act as a catalyst for regional integration and economic

development opportunities (North–South Corridor, n.d.). In addition, the creation of IT parks, support for MSMEs, and the holding of workshops to discuss sustainable regional development all indicate that policymakers are starting to recognize the importance of developing localized, inclusive strategies that consider the unique socio-economic context of North Bengal. To ensure that North Bengal has the opportunity to experience balanced growth in the future, North Bengal's development strategy must take a thoughtful, integrated, multi-dimensional approach that includes: improvements to physical infrastructure; initiatives to encourage new industry sectors; the expansion of human capital; and the development of institutional structures that promote participatory planning and equitable access to resources. By embedding the development of North Bengal into the larger discussions about regional equity and sustainable economic planning, this research will provide a roadmap for creating solutions that make use of the unique characteristics of the region and respond to historical disparities that have limited growth opportunities in North Bengal.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study has tried:

1. To identify the causes, which differ between the North Bengal and the South Bengal, and
2. To focus primarily on ways to eliminate these disparities and develop in a unified plan for regional equity.

METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study: The design is a combination of the analytical method (to study regional differences), and the policy method (to develop strategies for the equitable development of all regions). It uses a combination of both the theoretical perspective (to understand) and the empirical perspective (to collect).

Type of Study: the study has both an analytical and a policy focus. While the analytical section has provided

information on regional differences, the policy section has created a policy initiative for the equitable development of all regions.

Data Sources: The study is based on secondary sources: Government (Census of India); Economic Surveys; Ministry of Planning; Reports from the NBD Department; Research articles; Doctoral Dissertations; Working Papers; Reports from Peer-Reviewed Journals; and Other Academic Institutions; Reports and Analysis from Nationally/Internationally Recognized Organizations, including the Planning Commission and ILO; Recent Government Policy Statements (in relation to Northern Bengal); Newspapers and Commentaries on current governmental policy in reference to Northern Bengal.

Analysis: Analysis is performed on a District level, in order to compare districts in North Bengal to those districts in South Bengal in order to highlight differences in the spatial and/or sector aspect of these differences.

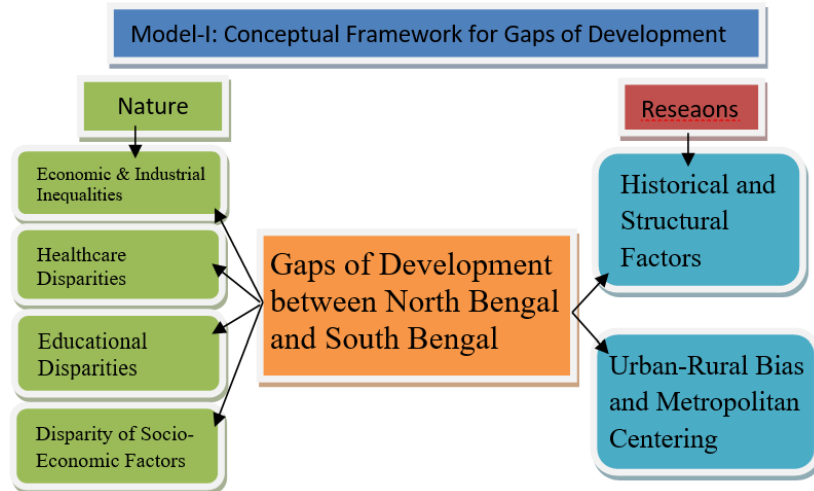
Analytical Framework: The relevant regional development theory is outlined in the framework that blocks all theories into Basic, Advanced, Intermediate, and Combination categories. Information is assessed in terms of economic, social, environmental, political, and human dimensions, with the main emphasis being on the economic aspect of each region.

Method of Analysis: Where appropriate use available of concrete data is followed by examples, records, and comparison of other similar regions to substantiate the findings. Use of qualitative and quantitative descriptive analysis has been considered for the evaluation of policies, programs, and processes.

Selection of Outcomes: How can the outcomes be used to develop policies, programmes, or processes that seek to maintain balanced economic growth in North Bengal?

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Identification of Gaps of Development between North Bengal and South Bengal with its Reasons and Nature



Explanation of Model-I: The diagram provides a framework for understanding the fundamental causes of the development gap between North Bengal and South Bengal. It has many interrelated dimensions. The most important dimensions of regional imbalance are those that stem from economic and industrial inequality, which is then reinforced by disparities in health, education and a variety of other socioeconomic factors. Historical and structural factors have determined the uneven distribution of both investment and institutional development within each region. The concentration of development in major urban areas and the marginalization of peripheral areas, including North Bengal, are caused by the urban-rural bias and metropolitan-centric approach to development. The ways in which policy and institutional factors interact with natural and geographic conditions both affect each region's ultimate development outcome. Consequently, each region's degree of economic, social, historical, and spatial disparity is a function of the cumulative interaction of those forces, and there is no single or isolated reason for these inequalities. Now we discuss in detail below.

NATURE OF DEVELOPMENT GAP

1. Economic & Industrial Inequalities: Research on economic disparities between districts within West Bengal demonstrates evident income disparities and growth rates; these disparities are particularly stark between districts nearer to the urbanised & industrial belt (e.g., Kolkata, surrounding districts) and many districts located to the north. These disparities have arisen as a result of uneven economic growth, indicating a need for regional economic equalisation (Sarkar 2010). (ir.nbu.ac.in), Regional human development index studies clarifying/spatial clustering of the highest human development are located in the southern districts of Kolkata, Howrah and South 24 Pargana as compared to

northern districts, which are lagging significantly in human development, requiring improvement in education, health, and livelihoods (Howrah) compared to peripheral (non-industrial) northern districts, such as Malda, and Uttar Dinajpur (Hanagadaimath 2023; spatial basis study).

2. Healthcare Disparities: Research highlighting differences in the quality of healthcare delivery and access between the northern and southern sections of West Bengal suggests that the northern districts of West Bengal (e.g., Puruliya, Maldah, Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar and parts of Uttar Dinajpur / Dakshin Dinajpur) offer significantly fewer options and lower quality of healthcare service delivery than do many southern districts (i.e., Purba Medinipur; South 24 Parganas), with these two region(s) often classed together (Rai & Chowdhury 2023). The paper attributes the difference in healthcare access to insufficient funding, fewer skilled healthcare professionals, and infrastructural deficiencies.

3. Educational Disparities: Quantitative studies illustrate the disparity in education outcomes and the distribution of education resources between educational districts south and north of West Bengal; (for instance), educational outcomes (literacy, school enrolment and pupil-teacher ratios) for the northern districts of Jalpaiguri and the southern district(s) of Kolkata show a stark difference (Roy 2010).

4. Structural Characteristics and Socio-Economic Factors: Indications of Empirical Studies on the comparative evaluation of poverty between South Bengal and North Bengal show that North Bengal is poorer in terms of numbers and that the variations in poverty levels can be partially attributed to a variety of different structural characteristics at the regional level

and also how socio-economic factors impact different regions (Chattopadhyay, 2011).

REASONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT GAP

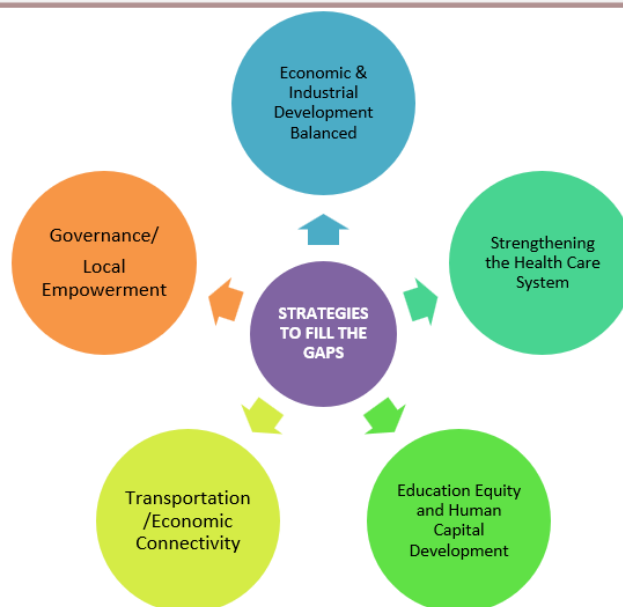
1. Historical and Structural Factors: There are many Historical and Structural Factors that cause uneven development, including the historical investment in Colonial Port Districts, Industrial Policies after Independence in India, and the way land use and agricultural productivity have developed over time favouring specific Districts. There are also those who criticise Industrial Policies that existed in India after

1950, stating that they primarily benefited the Western and Southern Coastal Regions by shifting investment from West Bengal (the development of the Industrial Sector in India through policy analysis).

2. Urban-Rural Bias and Metropolitan Centering: Kolkata is the largest metropolitan area in India and the primary Metropolitan Area of the State of West Bengal. Constantly, money, human capital, services, and Infrastructure are located within a few hundred miles of the city core. This is sometimes referred to as the Growth Pole Effect in Economic Terms or the Growth Pole of India Theory (the theory of polarisation).

STRATEGIES TO FILL THE GAPS

Model-II: Conceptual Framework for Strategies to Fill Up the Gaps



Explanation of Model-II: This diagram illustrates the conceptual strategy for closing the economic and social divide between South Bengal and North Bengal. This requires integration of the many different types of policies (rather than having isolated sectoral policies), and it proposes targeted economic & industrial growth, investment and generation of employment at a regional level; and enhancing the healthcare (through infrastructure) and educational (through infrastructure) delivery systems, which will ultimately increase Human Capital in the underdeveloped areas of the State. In order to achieve fairness and equity in development, and ensure that the Regions can grow in the same way that others have, the requirement of Balanced Regional Planning (i.e. during the process of developing a regional vision), as well as Reducing the Urban/Rural Bias, and Decentralisation of Governance will be needed to support growing inequality in Development. Overall, the model for Closing the Economic and Social Gap will

provide for a means by which the Economic and Social Gaps of North and South Bengal will be closed through the alignment of Economic, Social, and Institutional Measures in conjunction with a Vision to develop the Region over the Long Term. The need to resolve these inequities due to social class, race/ethnicity, the urban to rural divide, and other factors requires the use of multiple strategies. The types of strategies needed would be integrated or comprehensive strategies that utilize some type of combination of economic, infrastructure improvement, social development, and governance activity, etc. Now we discuss in detail below.

1. Economic & Industrial Development Balanced

1.1. Decentralized Industrial Policy: This refers to strategies that create an environment conducive to attracting investment in the form of greenfield industrial corridors and special Economic Zones in northern districts that will attract investment and create

employment. Also, it is important to diversify industrialization. When industrial diversification occurs, it will reduce reliance on agriculture and increase local income-generating opportunities. Studies (Sarkar, 2010; Ir.nbu.ac.in) indicate that when strategic policy supports decentralized industrial activity, regional income inequality can be decreased.

1.2. Support for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMES): This refers to small businesses that produce, create, or process local products, or create a service for local consumers. By providing support for MSMEs in agro-processing, handicrafts, and services, MSMEs will increase local employment opportunities and create a local entrepreneurial ecosystem.

1.3. Skills Development Tailored to Local Industry Needs: By developing a locally skilled workforce for the industrial and/or service sectors through training in the areas of tourism and hospitality (North Bengal has an abundance of tourism opportunities), logistics, and digital services, it will enhance the opportunity for creating local employment opportunities and sustainable income.

2. Strengthening the Health Care System

2.1. Support for Public Health Infrastructure Development: The public health infrastructure in underserved areas can be strengthened through capital investment (medical technology), increasing the workforce capacity of district hospitals, and creating capital for community health programming.

2.2. Use of Telemedicine and Mobile Clinicians: Establishing the use of tele-health platform technology to create access for those in remote areas and to supplement the existing physical infrastructure by linking the tele-health platform with the urban hospitals is a way to use technology for the delivery of healthcare services.

2.3. Create Targeted Programs to Address Women's Health Needs: Because the health outcomes of women are often not as good in northern districts compared to women from other areas of the State, policies can help enhance the education, training, and/or deployment of trained staff to these areas to address women's maternal and reproductive health care needs.

3. Education Equity and Human Capital Development

3.1 School infrastructure and educator placement programs: The education sector needs to develop and/or update school infrastructure in Northern Districts through building new facilities and developing qualified

educators using incentives such as subsidized housing and additional allowances.

3.2 Vocational training centers: Establishing vocational institutions that provide training aligned with local economies (tourism, agriculture, technology) will improve student job placement rates.

3.3 Scholarships and inclusion initiatives: The State can help students from disadvantaged socio-economic districts obtain higher levels of post-secondary education by offering Tuition assistance and/or other programs designed to decrease the number of dropouts and improve college access.

4. Transportation/Economic Connectivity

4.1 Transportation improvements: The State should focus on improving the road, rail, and public transportation network between Northern Districts and major retail distribution centers and urban areas so that these businesses can access Northern District markets and residents can travel to those areas to work. Conversely, students will now be able to travel to where their services and employments are located.

4.2 Digital infrastructure investments: The State should build/install a broadband network for e-education, e-Healthcare, and e-Commerce. This will assist in reducing the geographic isolation of Northern District residents.

5. Governance/Local Empowerment

5.1 Decentralized planning and panchayat strengthening: Build the capacity of local governing bodies through empowering them to lead the development planning and implementation in their Districts based on their needs.

5.2 Fiscal incentives and grants: The State and Central governments can provide additional financial assistance (e.g. Special Development Grants) to support poor-performing Districts.

Therefore, reducing the economic gap between North and South Bengal requires a multi-sector approach that includes Economic Development, Human Development, Infrastructure Development, Governance Development, and locally-specific policies. According to the scholarly literature, significant evidence supports the disparity between North and South Bengal in terms of Economic Performance, Health Status, Education Level, and Poverty Status. The literature also finds that Investments in Road Infrastructure, Human Development through Education, and Connecting Rural Areas to Urban Areas will be essential for achieving these other goals.

BALANCED REGIONAL GROWTH - A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY**Model-III: BALANCED REGIONAL GROWTH**

Explanation for Model-III: A Comprehensive Framework: A Model for Balanced Regional Growth: The figure provides a holistic view of how economic, social, and institutional elements of development can come together within an overall strategy for balanced regional growth. The model proposes that to achieve equitable growth within a region, there must be coordinated efforts at the level of the region, as opposed to simply having large concentrations of growth within major metropolitan areas. The components of the model demonstrate that inclusive economic growth, improved infrastructure, and increased human capital form the bases upon which balanced regional growth can occur. Furthermore, the model articulates the necessity of having decentralised forms of governance and of having region-specific policies that are designed to effectively address the needs of local communities. Although not explicitly identified, the presence of environmental sustainability and the optimal utilisation of natural resources contribute to the long-term stability of the region. Therefore, the figure emphasises that balanced regional growth is an ongoing and multi-faceted process that will help to reduce ongoing inter-regional disparities. Now we discuss in detail below.

1. Regional Development Strategy: North Bengal has a unique ecological and strategic location at the foothills of the Himalayas in West Bengal. It has a vast range of ecological zones including the Himalayan foothills, the Terai-Dooars plains and the Siliguri Corridor which connects the Indian mainland to the North-Eastern states.

The region has an abundance of natural resources, biodiversity, a plantation (tea) economy, and is also an international border area. However, despite these advantages, it has lagged behind South Bengal with respect to industrialisation, urban infrastructure development, income levels and human development indicators. Researchers attribute this imbalance to a number of factors, including: historical underdevelopment; a preference by Metropolitans for Kolkata and its hinterland; a lack of adequate infrastructure; and weak industrial diversification. Hence there is a need for a region-specific, integrated and inclusive regional development strategy that is based on the unique characteristics of the region rather than on generic, state-level planning and that effectively capitalises on the region's advantages while also addressing its major constraints to development.

2. Economic and Industrial Development Strategy

2.1 Structural transformation from agriculture to other economic sectors: The economy of North Bengal is largely based on agriculture/plantations (mainly tea) and the tea industry has provided the majority of the livelihood opportunities for residents of the region. The heavy reliance on a single sector (tea) has left the regional economy vulnerable to fluctuations in prices, social unrest among workers, and vulnerability to adverse climate conditions. The literature in economic development has consistently demonstrated that regions that are heavily reliant on the primary sector will experience slower growth in income than regions that

successfully diversify into the secondary and tertiary sectors.

In North Bengal, industrialization is primarily concerned with agro-processing industries and adds value to existing tea-based enterprises, food processing, vegetable cultivation and manufacturing, bamboo furniture production, and floriculture. By creating non-farm employment opportunities through establishing decentralised industrial clusters in the North Bengal Districts of Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar, Cooch Behar, and Uttar Dinajpur, there is the potential to create local employable skills that have positive effects on local economies within North Bengal. Empirical studies have demonstrated that higher per capita income and better human development indicators are found in the more industrial diversity regions of West Bengal (Sengupta & Chakrabarti, 2024).

2.2 MSME, Start Up and Local Entrepreneurship: MSMEs have the potential to transform North Bengal through their ability to absorb excess rural labour and build an entrepreneurial base within each community. The ability for these MSMEs to develop and diversify will be dependent upon reasonable policies of support, such as access to credit, marketing of agricultural produce, and access to digital platforms and skills training. The experiences in other less-developed regions of India have shown us that MSMEs offer a greater opportunity for inclusive growth than do traditional capital-intensive industries (Planning Commission, 2014).

3. Infrastructure Development and Connectivity Development

3.1 Transport and Market Integration: Historically, the lack of connectivity has limited North Bengal's ability to connect to state/national markets. Although Siliguri is still the main transport hub of North Bengal, the interior districts still have low road density and limited rail connectivity due to their weak transportation infrastructure located on the hilly area of North Bengal. The regional development theory provides insight that infrastructure is needed as a "social overhead capital" to develop private investment and promote the process of regional convergence (Myrdal, 1968).

Based on the opinion of the authors of this report, the most significant barriers to establishing and maintaining economic activities in North Bengal have been the lack of adequate infrastructure and connectivity with neighbouring countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal). Investments into highway systems, rural roads, rail links, and logistics hubs, particularly those linking production hubs to Siliguri and national corridors, can lead to cost reduction in transportation and increased industrial attraction to this area. Access to improved connectivity with neighbouring countries has also

enhanced regional economic integration and cross-border trade.

3.2 Digital and Urban Infrastructure: Digital infrastructure is equally as important when addressing regional geographic isolation from other areas of India. The extension of broadband connectivity, telemedicine, e-government, and online education will tremendously help improve service delivery in the remote and mountainous regions of North Bengal. Urban centres such as Siliguri, Jalpaiguri, and Cooch Behar should also be further developed as secondary growth areas and supported with proper housing and sanitation systems, transportation options, and smart city technology, which would create less dependency on excessive migration to South Bengal (Dey and Ray, 2024).

4. Human Capital Development: Education and Skills

4.1 Reducing Educational Disparities: Education and workforce development will also play an important role in the future of North Bengal. The availability of educational resources and high-level skills is a critical component in the overall success of a region's economy; this is illustrated by research conducted on educational disparities across the northern and southern districts of West Bengal. The northern districts consistently fall behind the southern districts in terms of overall literacy rates, quality of school infrastructure, availability of trained teachers, and access to higher education (Roy, 2010). Because human capital is a key driver of economic growth, targeted investments in education, teacher recruitment and development, and the establishment of digital learning infrastructure will create a locally grounded workforce and reduce the need for graduates from North Bengal to seek higher education outside the region. Furthermore, there appears to be a strong positive link between the level of educational attainment within a district and the corresponding level of development in that district (Dey and Ray, 2024).

4.2 Alignment of Skills Development with Regional Economic Activities: All skills development programmes should be initially aligned with specific regional economic activities such as tourism, hospitality, logistics, agribusiness, IT-enabled service industries and plantation management. Studies of the labour market show that a significant number of the reasons why young people in rural/peripheral areas are unemployed is directly related to the mismatch between the skill development programs being delivered and the actual skills that are required by industry (ILO, 2018).

5. Health, Social Welfare and Quality of Life: In North Bengal, access to healthcare services is still inequitable because there are still too few doctors and specialists as well as appropriate facilities available to provide adequate care to patients living in rural and border

locations. Research has shown that healthcare access and the quality of healthcare services in northern districts of West Bengal is considerably worse than those of the southern districts (Majumder *et al.*, 2023). The improvement of healthcare services not only improves the welfare of the local population, but also has an impact on the productivity and participation of the local workforce through an increase in the levels of healthcare and health-related activities. The improvement of health-related outcomes directly contributes to the creation of human capital and will support long-term growth in North Bengal.

6. Agriculture, Climate Change Resilience and Sustainability: Agriculture in North Bengal is particularly vulnerable to flooding, riverbank erosion and fluctuations in climate. Therefore, in developing strategies to support the future development of the agricultural sector within the Region, we must include components to support Climate Resilient Agriculture, improve irrigation and drainage systems, introduce diversified crop production and provide Agricultural Extension Services. A number of studies indicate that if Agricultural Development is achieved sustainably, Rural Incomes will increase and Environmental Degradation will be minimised (Das, 2021). Given the large quantity of Biodiversity and Forest Cover in North Bengal, it is critical that development follows an Eco-Sensitive Model that balances growth and conservation. The potential for Eco-Tourism, Sustainable Forestry and Green Industries to provide economic advantage while preserving Ecosystem Assets is enormous.

7. Governance, Institutions & Regional Planning: North Bengal has considerable difficulties due to weak institutional frameworks and a lack of decentralized planning. The creation of the North Bengal Development department is a step toward improvement; however for full effectiveness in the development of North Bengal, local bodies must be given more financial autonomy, create a district-level developmental plan and encourage greater participation from communities. According to Rodríguez-Pose (2013), the theory of "regional economy" indicates the need for the creation of regionally appropriate institutions and participative governance in order to promote effective and accountable policy-making in areas where development is lagging behind. Therefore, enhancing the empowerment of Panchayati Raj Institutions & Urban Local Bodies should be the driving force behind achieving equitable and inclusive growth in the region of North Bengal.

THE LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are several limitations associated with this study and our methodology:

1. This study is limited to secondary sources and as such is limited in terms of availability of data, time delays

experienced in acquiring data, and comparability across districts.

2. Due to the lack of primary research data, the ability of this study to capture participant experiences at the household level, local governance dynamics and micro-developmental limitations is limited.

3. The majority of metrics utilized in this study are based on district-level data; therefore, we are unable to provide as comprehensive of a set of district-level metrics across sectors for in-depth quantitative comparisons in this study.

4. This study is developed at a macro-level & meso-level, therefore this study cannot provide the required detail or analysis to characterize developments at micro-regional or block levels of planning in North Bengal.

5. Because policies and infrastructures involve ongoing development, new initiative data will be incomplete or unavailable.

6. Findings and strategies presented in this study are only relevant to North Bengal; any application to other locations must be completed using appropriate adjustments.

CONCLUSION

For North Bengal to succeed, it too needs a well-planned, long-term, and integrated approach to address all aspects of its development, such as making its economy more varied, building better roads and schools, improving access to quality healthcare, developing sustainable agricultural practices, and strengthening local institutions. Research has shown that regional differences are not automatically corrected; therefore, government involvement in developing policies designed to correct these differences must be made. North Bengal has the potential to be a thriving growth area, and with the proper support, it will contribute to equitable development throughout West Bengal, as it will be developing in tandem with South Bengal. Developing North Bengal will require an area-specific strategy that understands both its ongoing limitations and its vast potential that has yet to be realised. North Bengal is in an excellent position for future growth because of its unique geographic location, extensive natural resources, diversity of cultural experiences, biodiversity, plantation economy, and rich natural environment. However, because of the attention given to South Bengal in the past, poor infrastructure development, the lack of a variety of industries, and lower levels of human development, North Bengal continues to lag behind South Bengal's level of development as of today. These disparities are the results of many years of neglected development in North Bengal, not due to lack of efforts from the government. To develop North Bengal in a manner that is long-lasting, North Bengal needs to take an integrated approach, focusing on developing the economy, building the infrastructure, developing the future workforce, and strengthening the local government. By diversifying North Bengal's economy into areas such as agro-processing, micro, small, and

medium enterprises (MSMEs), tourism, logistics, and knowledge-based services will ultimately create jobs and increase incomes in the area. Developing physical and digital infrastructure will connect North Bengal with a large potential market and will reduce the isolation North Bengal experiences by being located far from other regions in India. In addition, developing secondary urban centres will be the main source of economic development within North Bengal and will act as "economic growth poles" to develop the surrounding rural areas.

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