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Inequalities of provision of basic amenities and services in urban areas in West Bengal, 2011: A district level analysis

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Abstract

This paper strives to peruse spatial patterns in the inequality in the provision of basic amenities and facilities in urban areas in West Bengal. It manifests that Kolkata and its peripheral areas have upheld more treated water near and within premises while non-bordering districts of Kolkata exercised more untreated water sources. The study divulges Kolkata Metropolitan areas and northern hilly areas have accounted for a better situation of bathroom and drainage facilities than distant districts. Outcomes also reveal that highly urbanized districts access more electricity and green energy (solar energy) as a source of lighting than least urbanized districts. Western and central northern districts are practicing more 'Other' sources than LPG/PNG while some northern hilly and south-eastern districts are utilizing more LPG/PNG than 'Other' sources. The low urbanized districts are cooking more outdoors of houses while high urbanized districts are cooking more inside of houses. Household amenities and services are positively associated with the degree of urbanization. Nevertheless, those districts that are highly urbanized have entree to more amenities and facilities.

Keywords: Basic services, amenities, urbanized, outdoors, periphery, household, district

Introduction

Basic amenities and services consign to the significant civic facilities which are obligatory to function in the cities and towns for the urban citizens. Therefore, electricity, sanitation, drinking water, drainage, and housing, the fuel used for cooking, etc., are noteworthy basic facilities and services, and all these are the quintessence indicators of standard and quality of life. Though, the abridgment of provision of indispensable facilities and amenities affects the human health of ordinary people in urban places. Nevertheless, the rapid rate of urbanization meets augmented demand for infrastructure, basic services, affordable homes, jobs, and land, especially for vulnerable urban sections. On the other hand, household amenities and facilities in urban areas are confronting challenges in terms of obtainability due to rapid unplanned development and an unhinged rate of urbanization. It is observed that Kolkata and its adjacent districts are enjoying more availability of facilities and services, whether aloof areas from Kolkata have very poor convenience of requisite amenities in West Bengal.

However, the study of household services, amenities, and assets in this paper, is further analyzed by the following flow chart:

In the last, two to three decades, economic progress, and infrastructure development have cropped up due to the new liberal policy in the 1990s, and the attention of the government to facilitate cities and towns in innovative ways. Still, it perseveres a major challenge in terms of full exposure to toilet facilities, safe drinking water, electricity, sewerage, and other facilities in urban areas. Population explosion and high rate of urbanization in developing countries like India due to rural to urban migration have an unswerving and antagonistic impact on urban infrastructure and other facilities because of inadequate and lop-sided delivery and maintenance of existing services.

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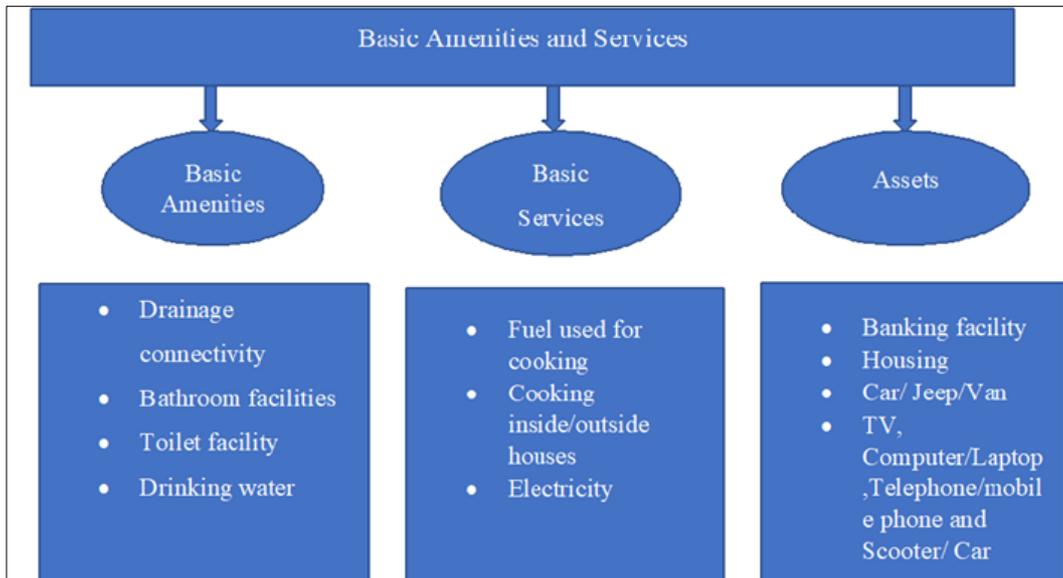


Fig 1: Basic amenities and services

Database and Methodology
Study area

West Bengal is stretched over an area of 88,752 sq. km. This state is situated between 21° 25' north to 27° 13' north latitudes and 85° 48' east to 89° 53' east longitudes. This state extended from the Himalayas in the northern part to the Bay of Bengal in the south. West Bengal is confined by three international bordering countries; Nepal, Bangladesh, and Bhutan. According to the 2011 Census, West Bengal is

divided into 19 districts. According to the census of 2011, there is a 9.13 crores population where 31% reside in urban and 69% in rural parts. The sex ratio has enhanced from 934 (2001) to 950 (2011) which is more than the national average of 943 (Census of India, 2011). The growth rate in population was 13.84% from 2001-2011. The overall literacy rate of the state was 76% in 2011 whereas 85% in urban and 72% in rural.

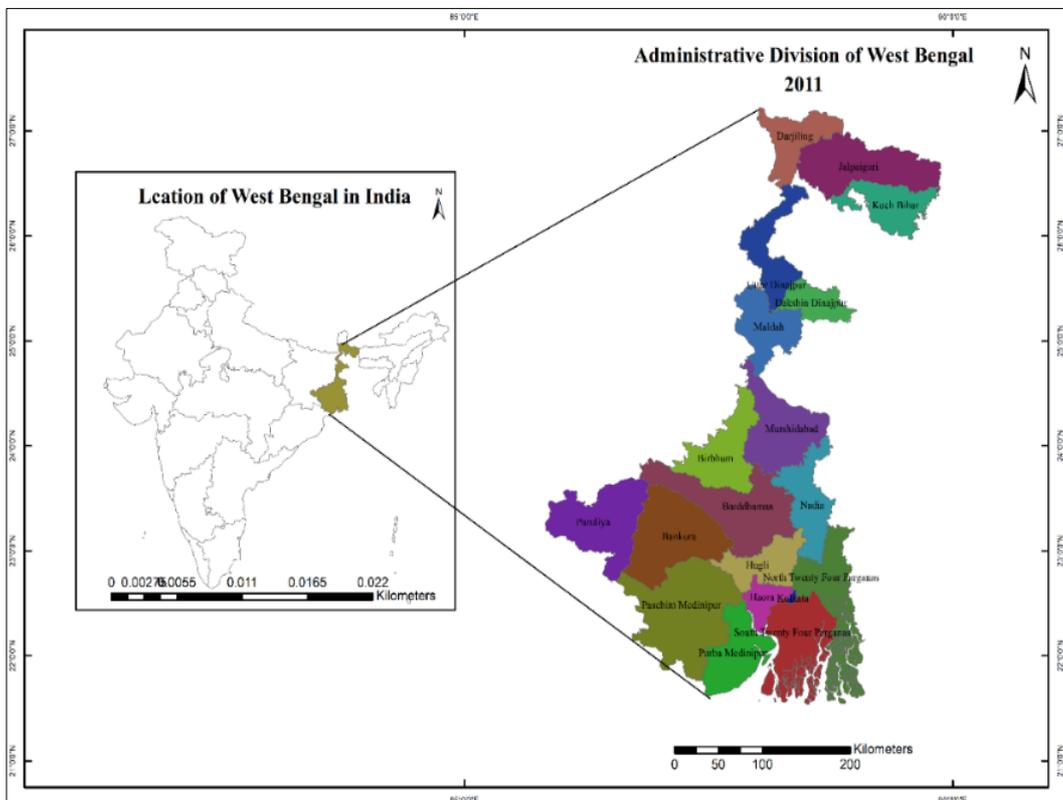


Fig 2: Location Map of West Bengal, 2011

Data source

This study is primarily secondary data-based. The relevant data has been attained from the Table on Houses, Household

Amenities and Assets, Census of India, 2011, District Census Handbook (DCHB) - West Bengal, Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India.

Table 1: Selection of Indicators and Variables

Indicators	Variables
Sources of drinking water supply	% of HHs getting treated and untreated drinking water (near and within premises)
Provision of urban sanitation facility	% of HHs have a drainage facility % of HH having Bathrooms and Latrine facilities (within and near premises)
Source of lighting	% of HHs having electricity and solar energy
Type of fuel used for cooking	% of HHs using LPG and others as cooking fuel
Availability of kitchen	% of HHs have a kitchen within or outside the house
Assets	% of HHs have TV/Computer/Laptop/ Telephone/mobile phone/ Scooter/ Car % of HHs availing banking facility Status of ownership of the house <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Owned (%) ▪ Rented (%) ▪ Any Other (%)

Sources: Accumulated from Census of India, 2011

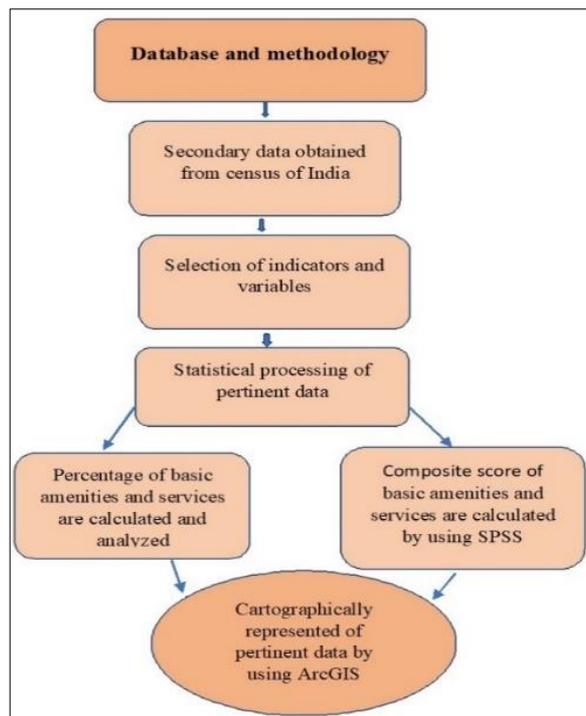


Fig 3: Flow chart of database and methodology

Data Analysis Method

Statistical Processing of Data

Firstly, the percentage of households availed of the amenity to total households was calculated. For example, % of Households have a bathroom calculated as-

Percentage of HHs have bathroom

$$= \frac{\text{Number of HHs Have bathroom in a district}}{\text{Total number of HHs in that district}} * 100 \quad (i)$$

Secondly, to calculate the composite scores out of a consistent set of data on varying levels of dimension, the standard score also acknowledged as the z score is tested by using SPSS. This technique emanates up with an assessment of the probability of a score turn up within the normal distribution and compares two scores having assorted normal distributions. The standard score formulates this by acclimating (in other words, standardizing) scores in a normal distribution to z-scores in what comes to be a standard normal distribution by the following formula:

$$Z\text{- Score epitomized as } Z_{ab} = \frac{X_{ab} - \bar{x}_a}{\sigma_a} \quad (ii)$$

Z_{ab} = Standardized value of the variable ‘a’ in district ‘b’.
 X_{ab} = Real value of variable ‘a’ in district ‘b.’
 \bar{x}_a = Mean value of variable ‘a’ in all districts.
 σ_a = Standard deviation of variable ‘a’ in all districts.

Finally, the district level Z score of all variables is added which is called the composite score (CS) for each district and is stated as follows.

$$\text{Composite Score (CS)} = Z_{ab1} + Z_{ab2} + \dots Z_{ab} \quad (iii)$$

Cartographic Representation of Data

Based on the data on basic amenities and facilities in 2011, the bar graph has been prepared for each district by using ArcGIS to illustrate the inequalities between the districts and between regions. For the state-level basic amenities and services, a simple bar diagram has been drawn. A pie diagram has been constructed for the types of fuels used for cook. Choropleth maps have been erected for the degree of urbanization to assess the relationship between basic services and amenities.

Results and Discussion

Urban amenities and facilities in West Bengal

Household amenities and facilities have enhanced in the last couple of decades. As per the 2001 census, 74% of urban households (HHs) had latrines within premises, 90% of HHs had access to safe water supply, 77% of HH had drainage connectivity, and 87% of HHs had electricity facilities in India. But in 2011, 81% of HHs have latrines within premises, 93% of HHs have electricity, 87% of HHs have bathing facilities within the house, and 82% of HHs have drainage facilities in urban India. As far as West Bengal are concerned, 71% of urban HHs have a bathroom, 67% of HHs have drainage connectivity, 50% HHs has got safe

drinking water from a treated source, 95% of urban household cooking inside the house while 5% of urban household cooking outside the house, 85% of the urban household has used electricity as the source of lighting, 85% of HHs having latrine facilities within and 15% outside of premises in urban areas in 2011. Therefore, in West Bengal, nearly 154 household has bathroom facility while 145 households have drainage connectivity per thousand of the population in urban areas. Around 186 households per thousand of the population used electricity as a source of lighting while 186 has latrine facility within premises. Though 109 HHs have safe drinking water in urban areas in West Bengal.

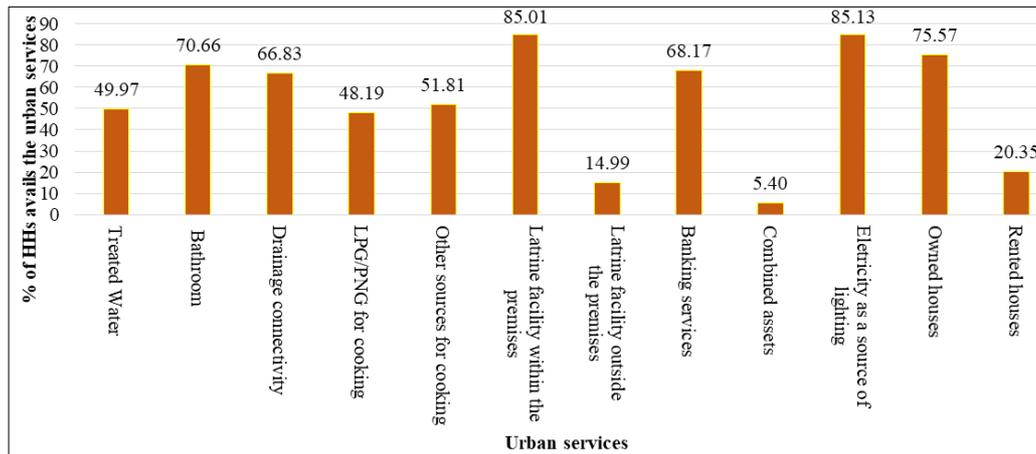


Fig 4: Household amenities and facilities in West Bengal, 2011

Sources of Drinking Water

Drinking water refers to the water used for human consumption from any source. Because of the high rate of urbanization and infrastructural development, water requirement is also increasing in the domestic as well as industrial sectors. There are several sources of water (underground, pond, rain, stream, etc.) and use for several purposes like drinking, washing, irrigation, industry, etc. Therefore, domestic use of water is included drinking, bathing, washing clothes, dishes, vegetables, cooking food, etc., in urban areas. There are several sources of drinking water like Tap water from a treated source and untreated source, covered well, uncovered well, handpump, tube well/borehole, spring, river/canal, tank/pond/lake, etc. in West Bengal. In urban areas, tap water from treated sources is the highest provider of water (safe drinking water) followed by Handpump, tube well/borehole, and tap water from untreated sources (unsafe drinking water). Many small towns in West Bengal are getting drinking water from rivers, ponds, and canals. On the other side, northern hilly areas have more rivers and springs; consequently, they used more spring and river water for drinking and other purposes.

Accessibility to Treated and Untreated Drinking Water Supply

Around 50% of urban households in West Bengal have got safe drinking water from the treated source (tap water), where 56% HHs from within the premises and 44% are from near the premises. Besides, 40% of HHs have got untreated within and 49% from near premises in West Bengal. Three northern districts (Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur, and Murshidabad) have recorded very low (less than 11%) of HHs getting safe drinking water from the treated source.

Four districts (21% of total districts), including Jalpaiguri, Koch Bihar, Nadia, and Purba Medinipur, have registered a low percentage (11% to 29%) of HHs. Five districts (21% of total districts) of the north-western and south-eastern parts (Darjiling, Maldah, Bankura, Haora, South 24 Parganas) come under the medium category (29%-42%). It is pointed out that most of these districts are very low to medium urbanized; therefore, designated urban policies cannot be applied to these districts. However, four districts (Birbhum, Puruliya, Hugli, and North 24 Parganas) have obtained a high (42%-59%), and three central and southern districts (Kolkata, Barddhaman, and Paschim Medinipur) have received a very high (>59%) percent of HHs getting safe drinking water from the treated source in urban areas; these are aggregately 37% of districts.

The highest number of HHs of Kolkata (93%) has received safe drinking water from a treated source within the premises, followed by Hugli (71%), Haora (71%), Barddhaman (61%), and Paschim Medinipur (58%) while Paschim Medinipur, Barddhaman, Kolkata, and Puruliya has obtained high treated drinking water near houses. Kolkata and its adjacent areas have received more treated water near and within premises because most of the large towns and cities are within these districts. Kolkata itself is a metropolitan city; apart from that, North 24 Parganas have retained 22 class I cities, nearly 9 class I cities in Hugli. As a result, more schemes and policies regarding large towns and cities are being executed in these urban areas. In small towns and cities, local people holes the supply water pipe; as a result, a huge amount of water is wasted. Uttar Dinajpur (94%), Dakshin Dinajpur (92%), Murshidabad (90%), Nadia (80%), and Koch Bihar (78%) have met a high percentage of untreated drinking water inside premises and near houses.

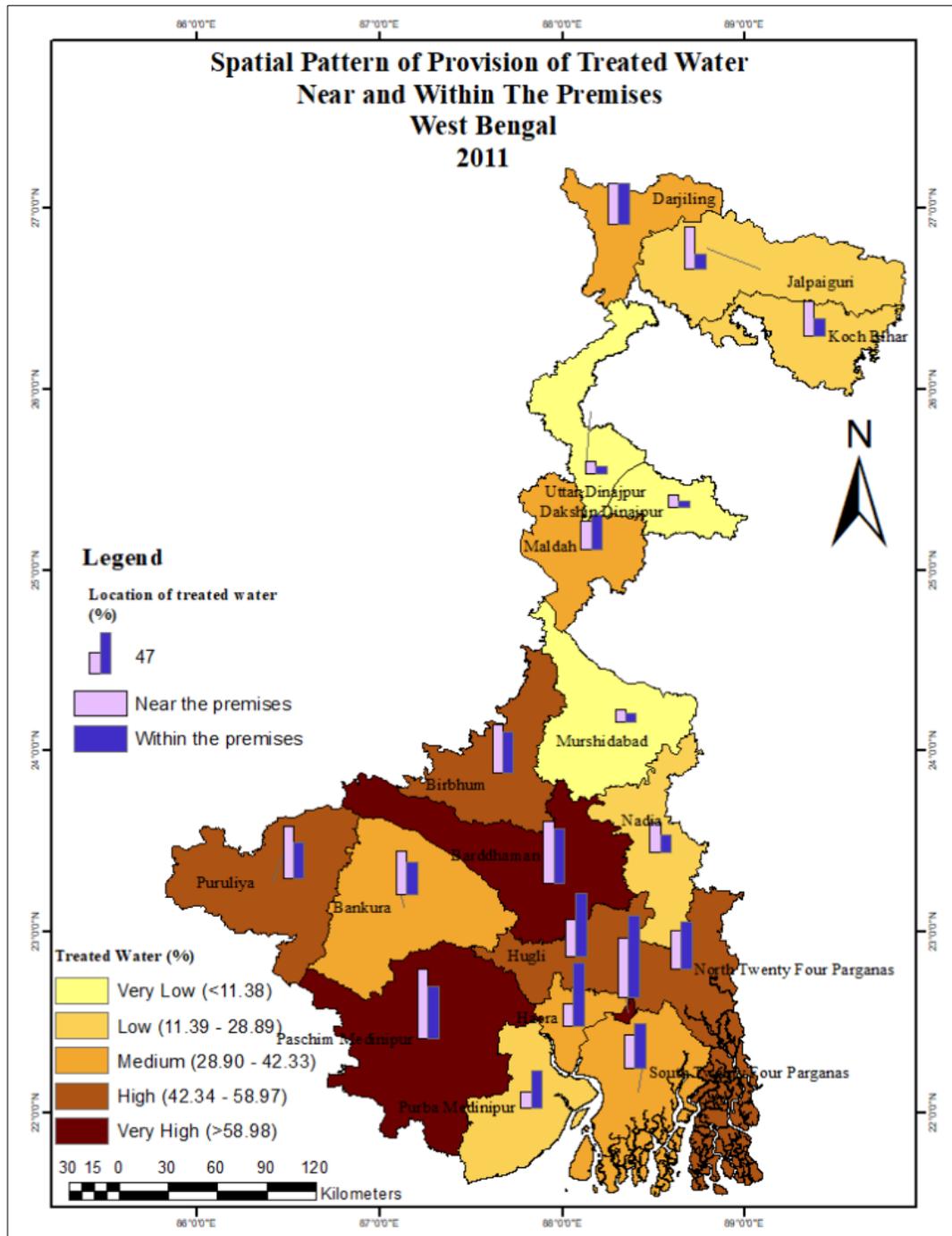


Fig 5: Accessibility Pattern of Treated Water supply in West Bengal, 2011

However, a maximum of the non-bordering districts of Kolkata are economically backward, politically powerless, and socially marginalized. As a result, lower water supply services are prevailing in low urbanized areas. It is observed that non-peripheral districts of Kolkata use more untreated water sources (Taps, Hand Pump, Covered Well, and Tube Well/Borehole) than peripheral districts of Kolkata.

Provision of Sanitation Facilities

Sanitation is defined as the public health condition associated with adequate treatment and disposal of human waste matter and sewage and safe drinking water. In other words, sanitation is one of the most important requirements facilities for human health as basic as food or potable water. However, sanitation is a comprehensive notion comprising potable water, garbage disposal, hygiene, domestic

sanitation, and drainage facility (Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, 2012) [12].

Provision of Bathroom and Drainage Facilities

Proper drainage connectivity of a city or town signifies its functioning system, and it is dependent on the activeness of urban municipal and other responsible bodies. Only the best drainage connectivity of an area keeps shielding from waterlogging, cleanliness, and hygiene. Most small towns are anguish from inferior drainage connectivity due to the apathy of government and local authorities. Due to a lack of appropriate drainage facilities, one to two hours of rain flooded the whole or part of the cities or towns. However, sewerage system and bathroom facilities in West Bengal in urban areas is not satisfactory as about 71% of urban HHs having bathroom facilities within premises while 67% HHs having drainage connectivity in 2011.

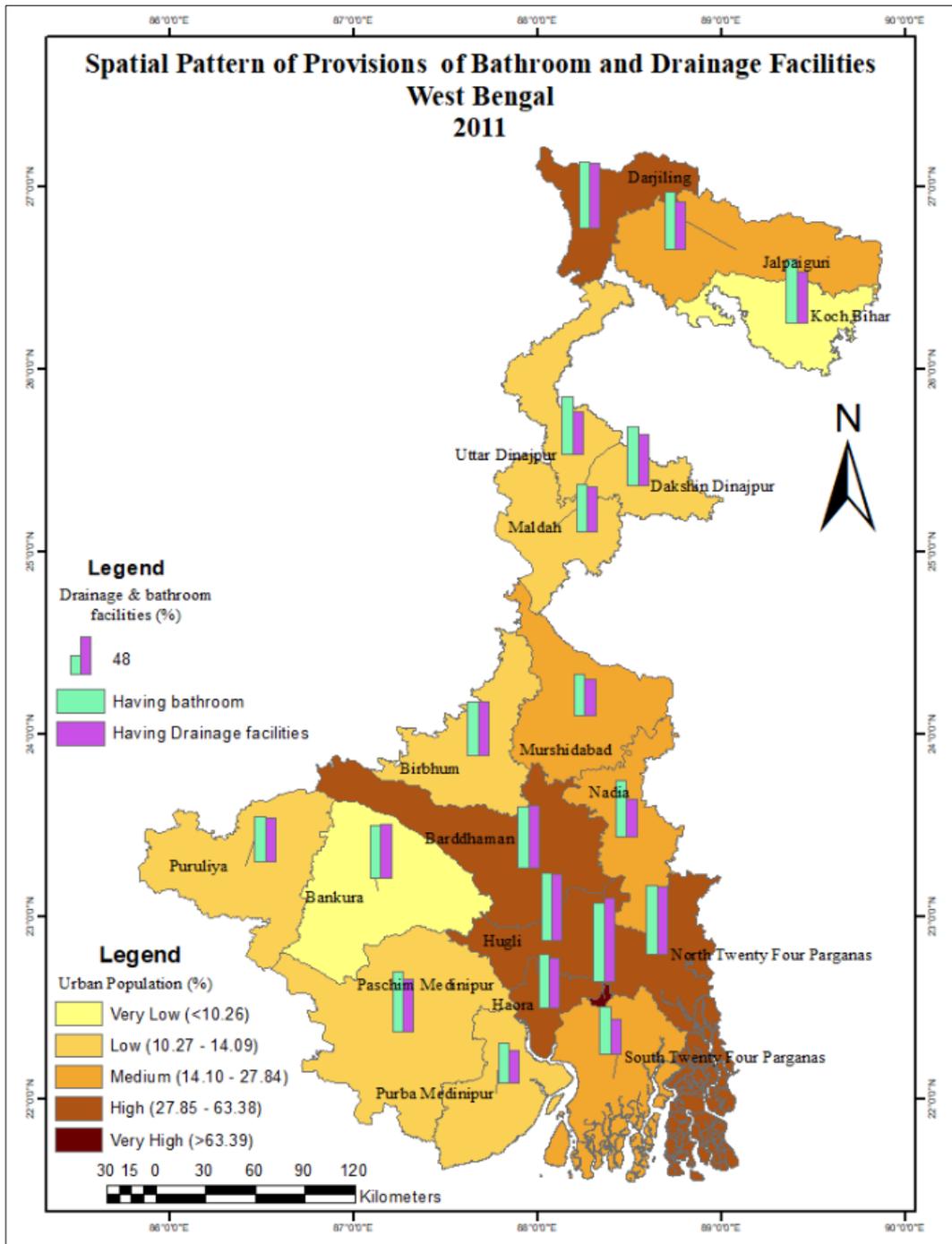


Fig 6: Spatial Pattern of Provision of Bathroom and Drainage Facilities in West Bengal, 2011

But 33% HHs do not have drainage facilities, and around 62% HHs are connected to open drains. The highest percentage of HHs in Kolkata has bathroom facilities (90%) followed by North 24 Parganas (89%), Hugli (77%), Darjiling (75%), Koch Bihar (72%), and Barddhaman (70%). Again, the highest percentage of HH in Kolkata has drainage connectivity (95%) followed by the same districts. On the other hand, low urbanized districts like Purba Medinipur, Murshidabad, Maldah, Puruliya, etc. districts demonstrate a low level of bathroom and drainage facilities. Remarkably, some peripheral districts of Kolkata, such as Nadia, South 24 Parganas, and Haora, have shown a low level of bathroom and drainage connectivity. Conversely, some non-peripheral districts of Kolkata like Darjiling, Barddhaman, Koch Bihar, and Paschim Medinipur have a high level of these facilities. It is observed that English

Bazar class I city in Maldah district and Dalkhola town in Uttar Dinajpur are facing different challenges. Due to poor drainage connectivity, heavy rain causes floods in these areas, and traffic jams become a common phenomenon.

Provision of Latrine Facilities

Various types of latrines are used within the houses like flush/pour latrine, pit latrine, and service latrine. Those people do not have latrine services; either they used a public latrine or open space. From big cities to small towns, open defecation is a serious issue. Open defecation took place because they do not have latrine accessibility or traditional cultural practices. Nearly 85% of HHs have latrine facilities within and 15% outside of premises in 2011. Approximate 94% of HHs have latrine facilities within houses in KUA in class I cities. Across all size class I cities in West Bengal,

almost 10% HHs do not have latrine facilities inside houses. Above 90% of HH of Kolkata, North 24 Parganas, Nadia, Dakshin Dinajpur, and Koch Bihar have latrine facilities within the premises. However, HHs of bordering districts of Kolkata has 89% of latrine services inside the premises. It is also noticed that Darjiling, Jalpaiguri, Uttar Dinajpur, Hugli, Haora, South 24 Parganas, and Purba Medinipur has shown more than 80% HHs latrine facilities within houses. But a huge percentage of HHs in the least urbanized districts like Puruliya, Bankura, Birbhum, Murshidabad, etc. have fewer

latrine facilities within premises. All the least urbanized districts have more either public toilets or open toilet services. It is pointed out that latrine facilities outside homes, more than 80% of HHs, used open toilet sources. But in recent times, using of other categories (Open and public) of latrine services is steadily declining because people are generally likely to accept moderately sophisticated means of toilet facilities like water closets, and government assistance.

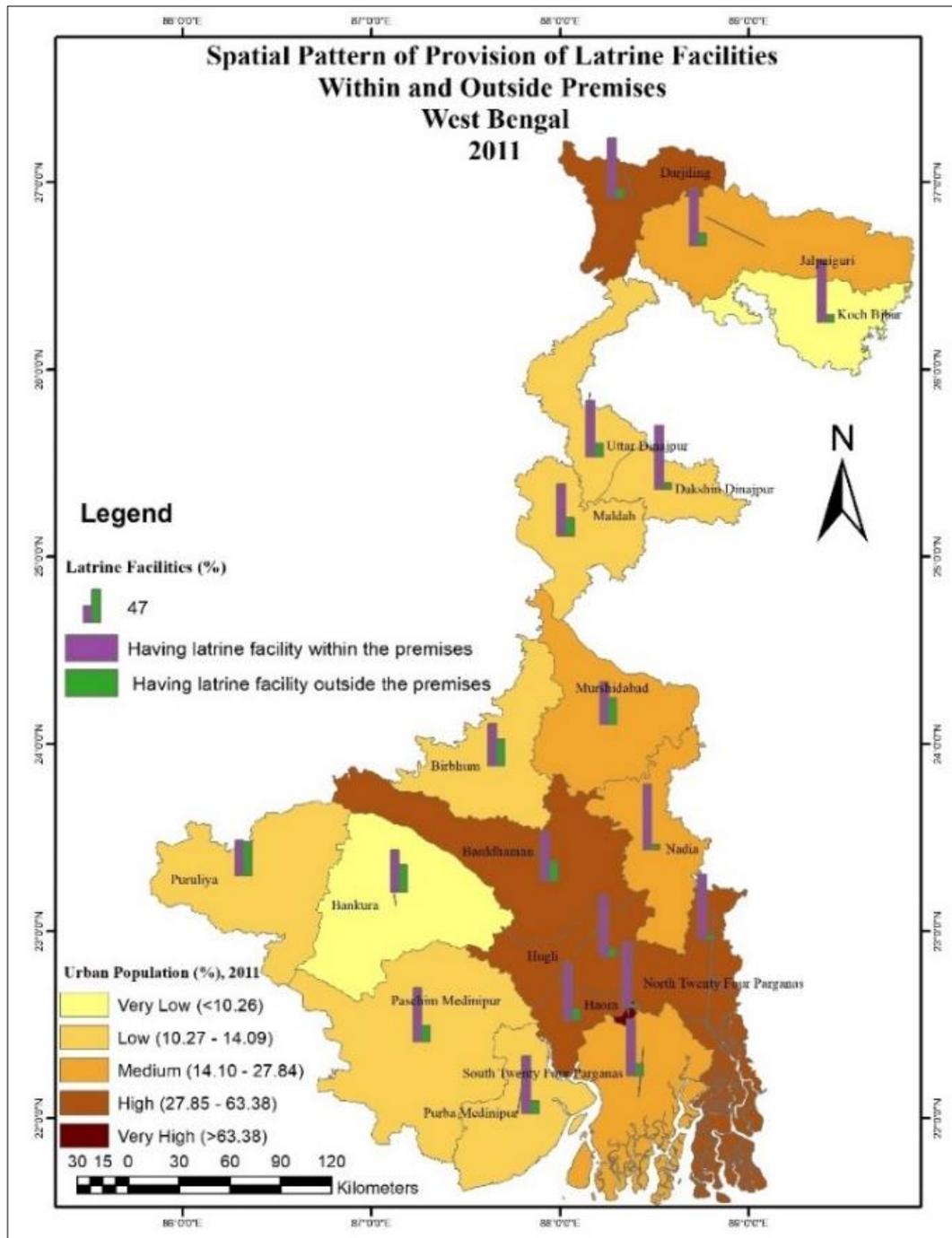


Fig 7: Spatial Pattern of Provision of Latrine Facilities in West Bengal, 2011

3.4 Provision of Sources of Lighting

Around 85% of the urban HHs used electricity as the source of lighting while only 1% of HH used Solar Energy in West Bengal in 2011. Nearly 14% of HHs in urban areas are using other means (Kerosene, other oil, and any other sources) as a source of lighting. Therefore, the highest percentage of

HHs in Kolkata (96%) has used electricity as the source of lighting, followed by North 24 Parganas (91%), Darjiling (91%), Hugli (91%), and Haora (87%). These districts also have used more than 1% of solar energy as a source of lighting. Less than 80% of HHs in the districts of Jalpaiguri, Uttar Dinajpur, Maldah, Murshidabad, Birbhum, Puruliya,

Bankura, Purba, and Paschim Medinipur have electricity as a source of lighting. On the other hand, Koch Bihar, Dakshin Dinajpur, Barddhaman, Nadia, and Paschim Medinipur have moderate (above 80%) use of electricity. Therefore, districts far away from Kolkata have less

electricity connection than districts adjacent to Kolkata. It is also pointed out that highly urbanized districts are using more electricity and green energy as a source of lighting than least urbanized districts.

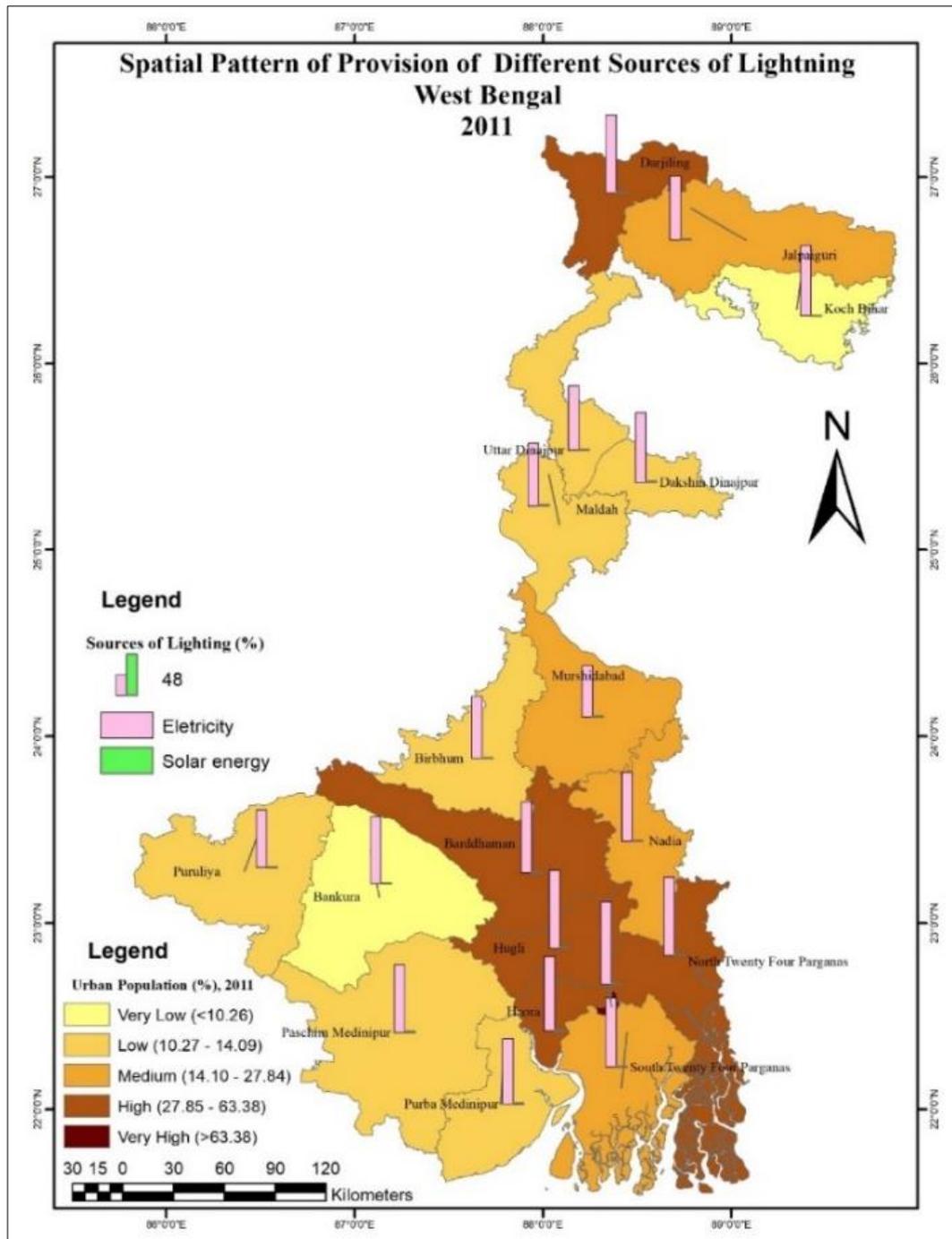


Fig 8: Spatial Pattern of Sources of Lighting in West Bengal, 2011

3.5 Type of Fuel Used for Cooking

In West Bengal, most of the small to medium town population is cooking with unclean fuels. Presently energy consumption pattern is changing due to the improvement of the socio-economic status of society and due to numerous government policies. Nearly 48% of HHs are using LPG/PNG, and 52% are using other fuels (Fire-wood, Crop residue, Cow dung cake, Coal, Lignite, Charcoal, Kerosene, etc.) for cooking in urban areas in West Bengal.

Darjiling (69%), Kolkata (65%), North 24 Parganas (57%), Koch Bihar, and Paschim Medinipur are using more LPG/PNG than other sources, while Murshidabad (77%), Purba Medinipur (70%), Puruliya (69%), Birbhum, Maldah and Barddhaman using more other sources than LPG/PNG. Out of other sources, firewood is used more, followed by Coal, Lignite, Charcoal for cooking after LPG/PNG. Forest and vegetation are mainly concentrated in northern hilly and southwestern regions. Therefore, people of these areas are using more firewood as fuel for cooking.

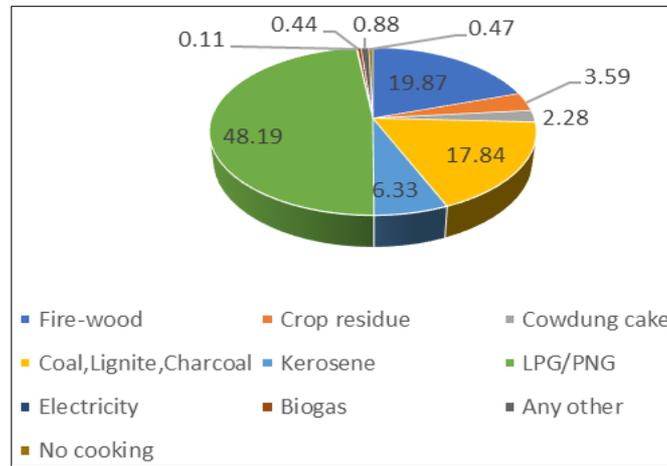


Fig 9: Types of Fuel Used for Cooking in West Bengal, 2011

Though other sources of cooking fuel are more accessible in rural and semi-urban to least urban areas, however, it should be noted that low urbanized districts are using more other sources than LPG/PNG while high urbanized areas are utilizing more LPG/PNG than other sources because they are receiving available services. However, all low urbanized areas are agriculturally developed; consequently, Cow dung cake, firewood, and Crop residue are easily available in

these districts. It is worthy of remark that Paschim Medinipur is a low urbanized district in terms of urban population share, but it has retained a high percentage of households using LPG/PNG because there are two large municipalities, namely Medinipur and Kharagpur, which share more population and using LPG/PNG than rest of the towns in the district.

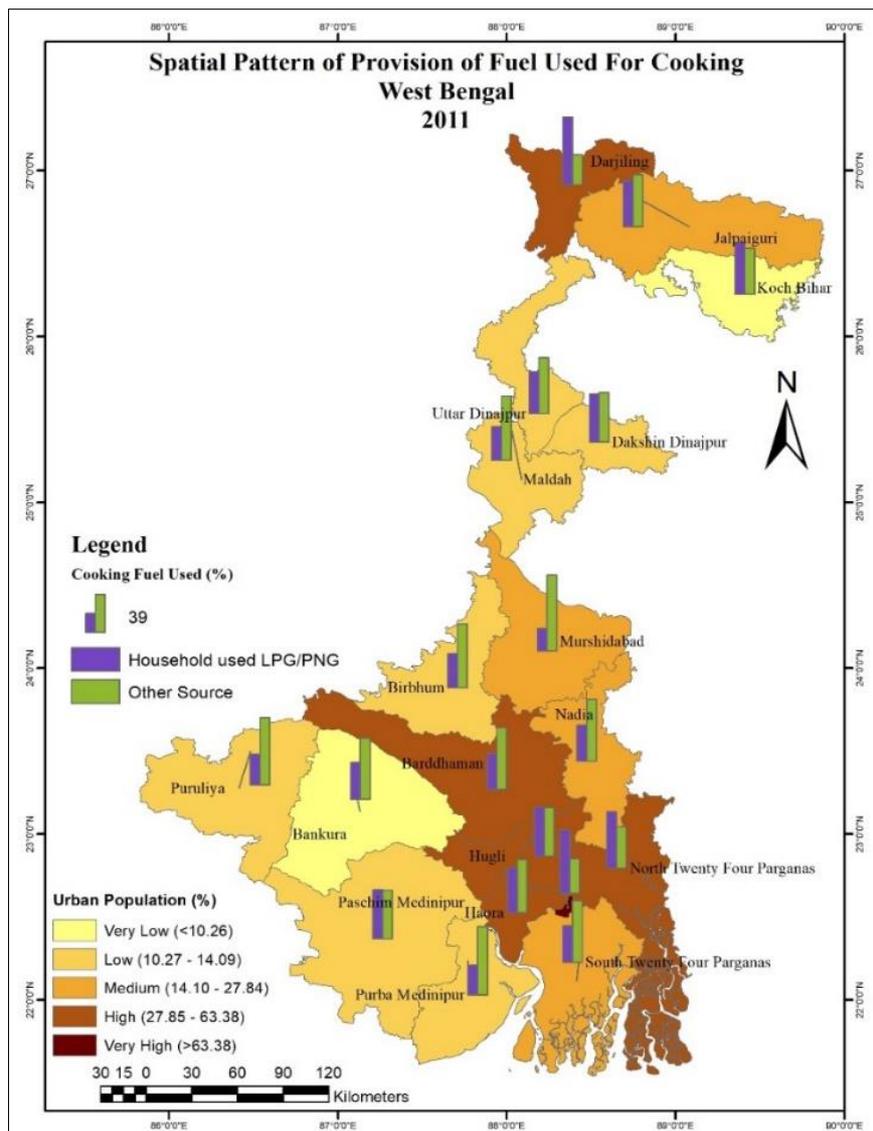


Fig 10: Spatial Pattern of Provision of Fuel Used for Cooking in West Bengal, 2011

Cooking Place of Households

Cooking in the kitchen is designated as a better status of the household. In the West Bengal context, large numbers of small-town HHs cooking outside of premises due to a lack of infrastructural facilities and availability of space. Though slum areas are experiencing worse conditions in West Bengal. In West Bengal, 95% of urban households cook inside the house, while 5% of urban households are cooking outside the house. Above 90% of HHs are cooking inside the house in all districts in urban areas except Purba Medinipur, and Paschim Medinipur. Around 98% of the

household of Kolkata and Koch Bihar cook inside the house, followed by Dakshin Dinajpur (97%), Hugli (96%), and North 24 Parganas. On the other hand, the highest percentage of the household of Purba Medinipur (13%), Paschim Medinipur (10), Bankura, Birbhum, and Barddhaman cooking outside the house. However, more HHs of non-peripheral districts of Kolkata are cooking outdoors in the house. In other words, the least urbanized districts are cooking more outside of houses while high urbanized districts are cooking more inside of houses.

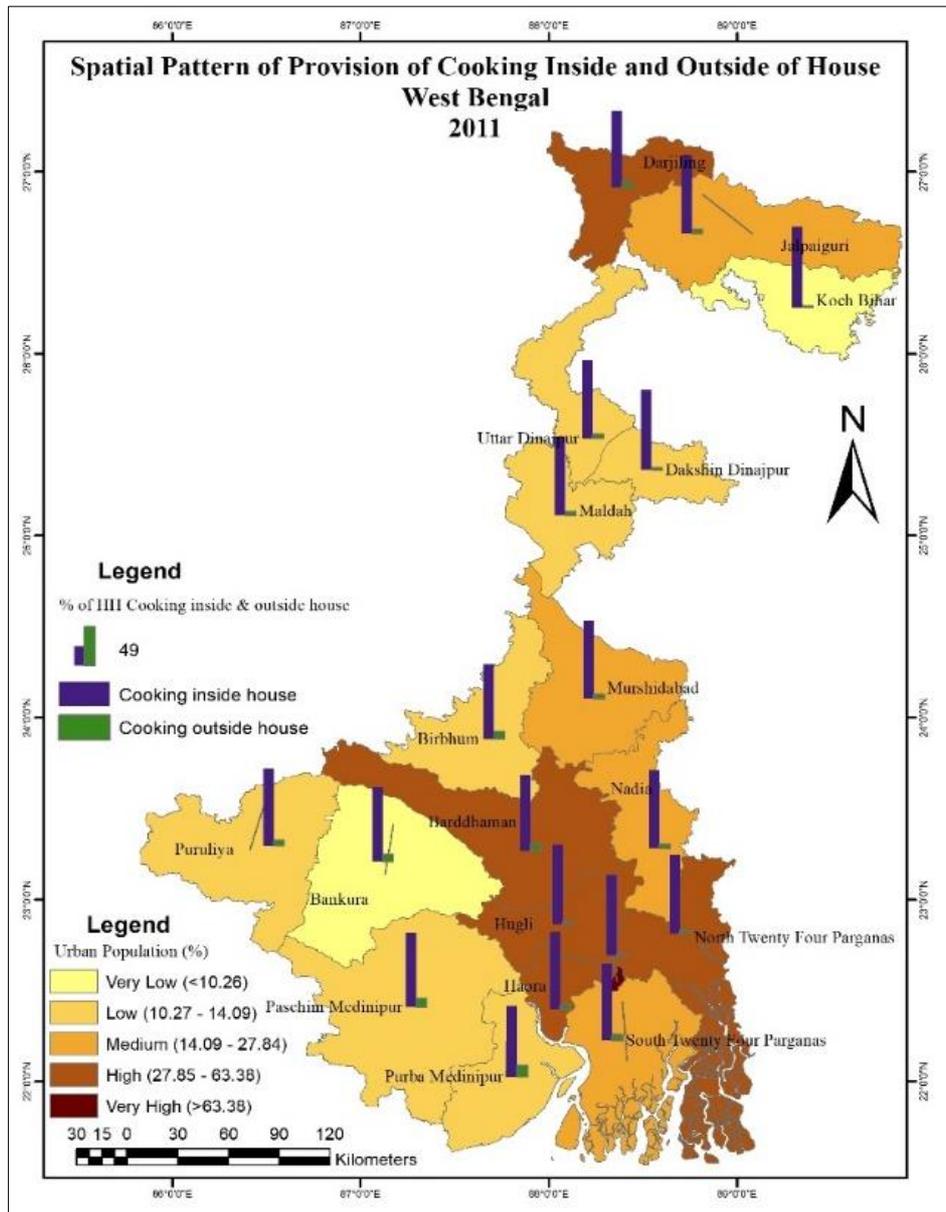


Fig 11: Spatial Pattern of Cooking Place at Household level in West Bengal, 2011

Availability of Assets of Households

Around 4% of HHs in urban areas in West Bengal have Car/Jeep/Van, while nearly 5% HHs have combined assets like a TV, computer/Laptop, Telephone/Mobile phone, and Scooter/Car. The highest percent of urban households in Kolkata has Car/Jeep/Van (9%) and combined assets such as TV, computer/Laptop, Telephone/Mobile phone, and Scooter/Car (10%) Followed by Darjiling (8%), North 24 Parganas and Barddhaman. On the other side, Murshidabad, South 24 Parganas, Koch Bihar, Bankura, Uttar Dinajpur,

and Nadia have shared a low level of assets. Therefore, it could be assessed that a high level of urbanization is highly associated with a high level of urban assets. Nearly 68% of the urban HHs have availed of banking services in West Bengal. Kolkata, Darjiling, North 24 Parganas, Bankura and Hugli have noted over 70% of the HHs availing banking services. Though Jalpaiguri, Uttar Dinajpur, Maldah, Murshidabad, Nadia, Puruliya, and South 24 Parganas have shown less than 60% of the HHs using banking services while Barddhaman, Koch Bihar, Dakshin

Dinajpur, Paschim, and Purba Medinipur has reported above 60%. Therefore, except for Bankura, all highly urbanized districts have better banking services than low urbanized districts. Though Bankura, Sonamukhi, and Bishnupur Municipality are there in Bankura districts, nearly 80% of the total urban population lives in three large towns and cities. Therefore, these large towns and cities prevailing better banking services in the Bankura district.

On the other hand, a house is the basic need of the human being after food and clothes. But in urban areas, especially big cities, it is very difficult for everyone to have their own house. In West Bengal, 75% HHs have their own house, and 20% are living in rented houses, while 4% of the population live any other houses in urban areas.

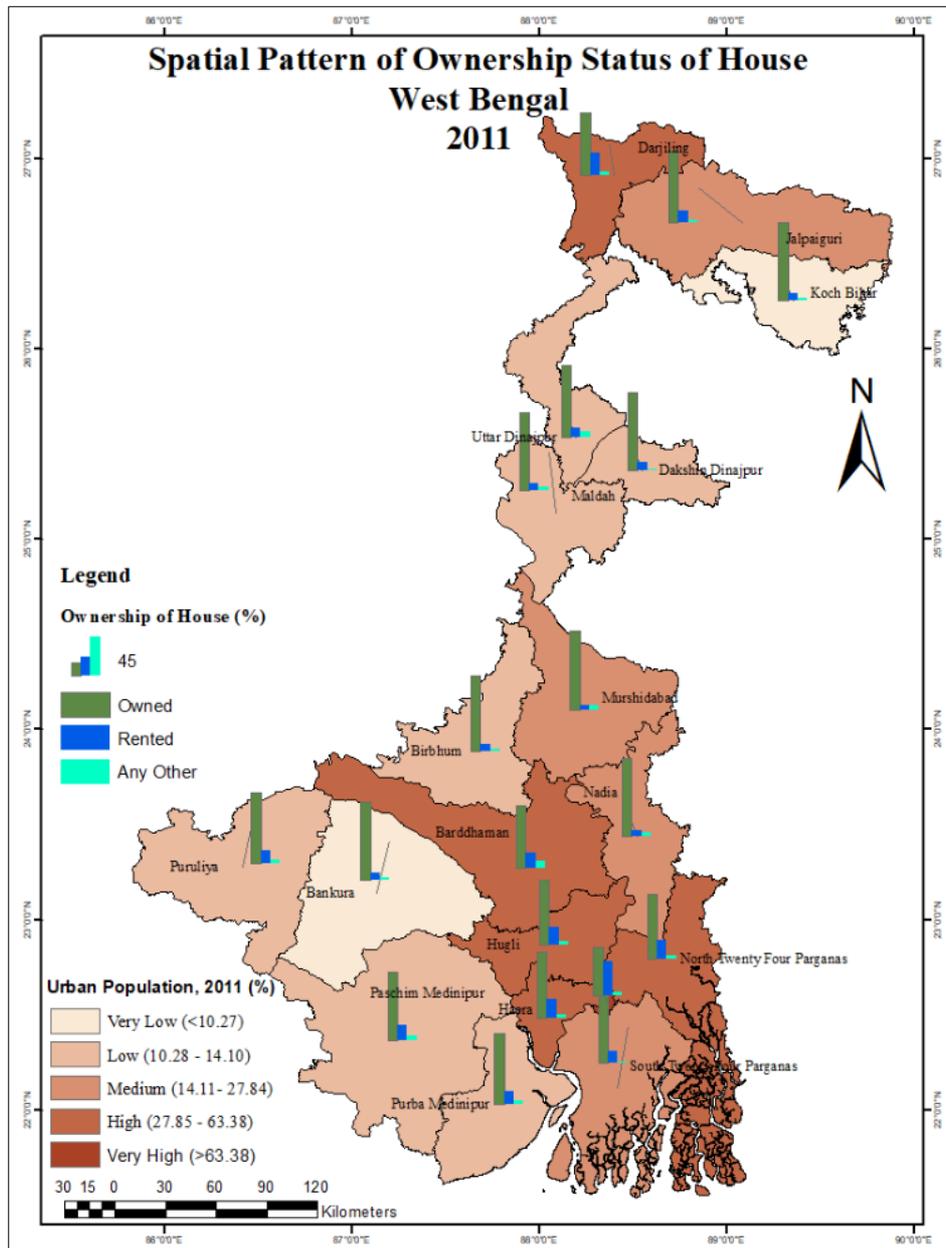


Fig 12: Spatial Pattern of Ownership Status of House in West Bengal, 2011

Kolkata showing a small section (56%) of HHs has its own houses, followed by Darjiling, Bardhaman, North 24 Parganas, Haora and Hugli because all these districts are industrially developed, and other economic activities and opportunities are also advanced. Therefore, a huge number of people from rural and small urban areas are coming to these economically sound urban centers for employment and other reason. As a result, either they do not buy the houses because of staying short duration or due to the low income, they are incapable of buying the houses. On the other hand, low and emerging urban areas, namely Dakshin Dinajpur, Maldah, Murshidabad, Koch Bihar, etc., have more their

own houses than Kolkata metropolitan areas because selective people are migrating to these urban centers due to low opportunities. Besides all these, no big urban centers and economic hubs have developed; most of the towns are small to medium census towns in growing urbanized districts.

Composite Z Score of Households Amenities and Facilities

Composite Z Score of Household amenities and facilities provisions indicating that peripheral districts of Kolkata (Haora, Hugli, and North 24 Parganas and a few non-

peripheral districts (Darjiling, Barddhaman, and Paschim Medinipur) are getting high to very high facilities. Murshidabad has noted very low (<-12.55) and three districts (Uttar Dinajpur, Nadia, and Purba Medinipur) recorded low (-12.54 to -6.21) the value of composite Z score. But nearly eight districts (Jalpaiguri, Koch Bihar, Dakshin Dinajpur, Maldah, Birbhum, Puruliya, Bankura, and South 24 Parganas) are included in the medium (-6.20 to -2.52) category. About six districts (Darjiling, Baddhaman, Hugli, Haora, Paschim Medinipur, and North 24 Pargana) come under a high (-2.51 to 8.92) category while only Kolkata belongs to the very high (>8.92) group of composite Z score value.

Biasness of urban policies provides the urban provision unequally based on the size and history of cities and towns. However, it is found that basic amenities and facilities are positively correlated with mostly economically developed urban areas (Kundu, 2005) [9]. Therefore, economically developed districts are enjoying a higher level of accessibility to basic amenities and facilities in the state. The percentage of the household availed basic amenities is

systematically decreased from large to small towns in West Bengal. However, small towns (<20,000 population) are not fully covered by toilets, safe drinking water, electricity, etc. in the state.

Moreover, many small towns are struggling to maintain their basic urban services and attract investment. Therefore, all economically deprived districts mainly situated in the western and northern parts (except Darjiling) have retained more small towns and are showing low coverage of urban services and facilities in the state. The 2011 census, it has assessed the basic infrastructure index that shows good performing towns in terms of urban basic services are spread across the states while the poorest performing towns are concentrated in West Bengal (NIUA, 2016). However, most of the worst-performing towns situated in low-urbanized districts. Household amenities and facilities provisions services are positively related to the degree of urbanization. However, those districts poses high level of urbanization have also facilitated more amenities and facilities.

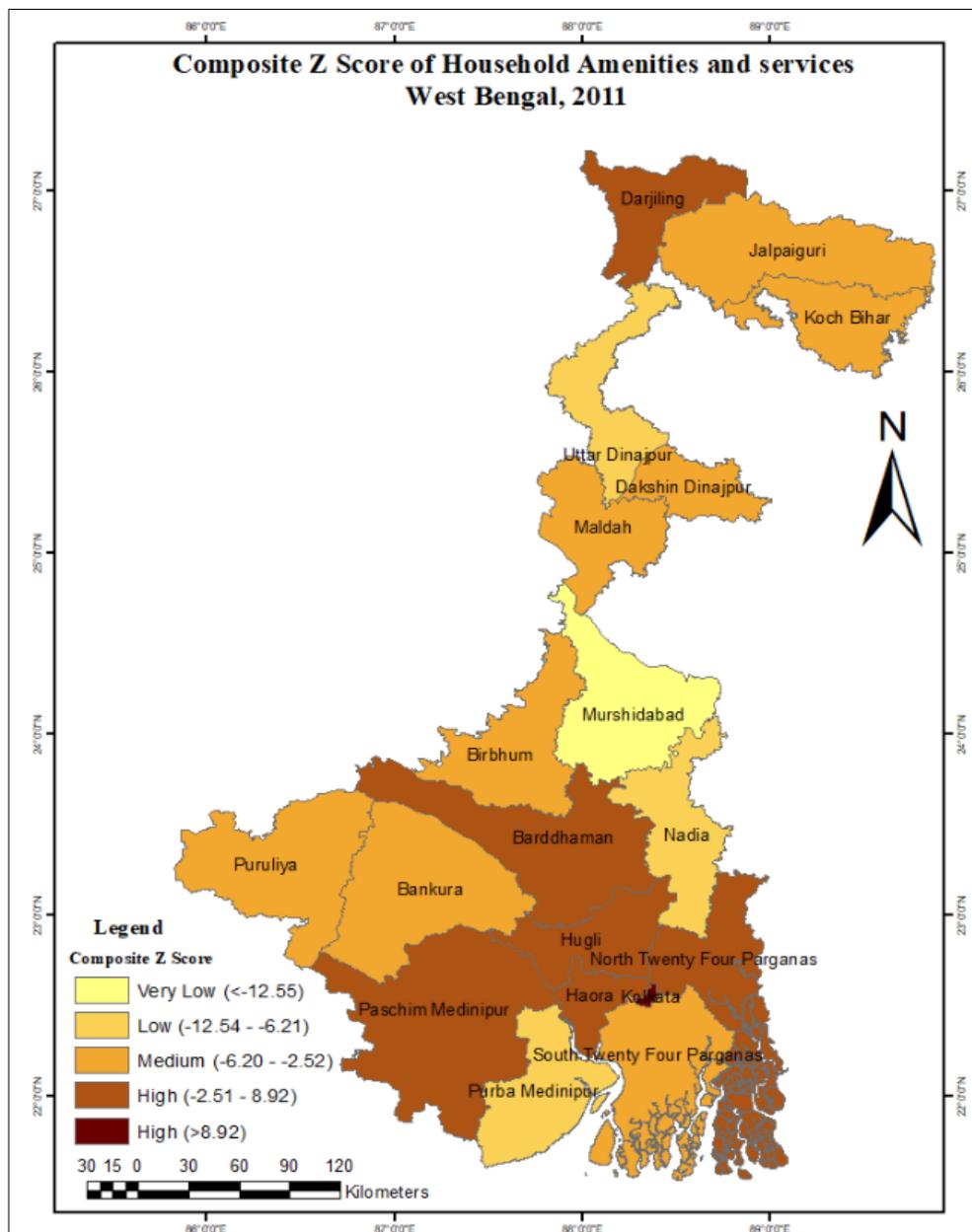


Fig 13: Composite Z Score of HH Amenities and services in West Bengal, 2011

Rapid population increase and minimum investment in urban sectors are the causes of deficiency in the availability of basic services, amenities, and infrastructures (Kundu *et al.*, 1999; Kundu, 2006) ^[10, 11]. It has been observed that large and big cities have a higher level of conveniences of basic services and socio-economic development in contrast to medium and small towns (Bhagat, 2011) ^[11]. However, some non-peripheral districts of Kolkata have availed far better than bordering districts of Kolkata in terms of social, economic, and urban amenities and facilities. Though, still a large section of households that do not have basic services and adequate housing, especially in small and medium towns/cities, particularly those belonging to the marginalized sections of society (Bhagat, 2013; Dreze & Sen, 2013; Kumar, 2013, 2014, 2015; Srinivasan & Mohanty, 2004) ^[2, 3, 6-8, 14].

The urban settlement adjacent to metropolitan areas has high accessibility of basic services and facilities than distant towns in West Bengal. The stagnant economic profile in small and medium towns is the consequence of the low quality of services and infrastructure in these urban centers (Karmakar, 2015) ^[5]. It is also supposed that highly urbanized districts or areas have covered more urban basic facilities and infrastructural opportunities. Most small towns are struggling to accomplish urbanization, draw investment, and satisfy the demand for infrastructure, housing, and basic urban services (NIUA, 2016). Although urban services in large cities are better than in medium to small towns because of the inclination of government policies to big cities, revenue-generating from big cities is high in contrast to medium to small towns. Besides all these, private participation in big cities is more than the small cities and towns. Apart from the middle to upper-class colonies in urban parts, slum areas are facing serious challenges in the inadequate basic services and facilities. Slums population (5.41% as of 2011) are struggling to survive in their daily life for drinking water, electricity, and sanitation from every small town to Megacities in India.

Conclusion

Basic amenities and services are lopsided in West Bengal and this inequality transpires due to differences in development, degree of urbanization, and the government's large city-centric policies. It could be assessed that highly urbanized areas have enjoyed more urban facilities and services in West Bengal. Most of the bordering districts of Kolkata (including Kolkata) have shown a higher level of availability of basic amenities as compared to far away districts of Kolkata. Basic amenities in urban areas vary in indifferent size class towns and cities. Large cities have a higher level of access to basic amenities and services compare to medium and small towns.

Ferre *et al.* (2010) ^[4] have scrutinized several developing countries and noted that policies designed to bring down urban poverty may suffer from metropolitan bias and more focus as well resource allocation to metropolitan areas. Though, there are many policies formulated for urban amenities and facilities like third Five-Year Plan (1961-1966) gave importance to financial support for the groundwork of a Master Plan for the development of cities and towns in different states, and around 400 master plans were set up. Integrated Urban Development Program (IUDP) with the objective of the overall development of large cities with a population of more than 300,000.

Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM in 2005) with aims of integrated development of infrastructure services in the cities, the formation of linkages between asset making and asset management to ensure efficiency, confirming adequate investment of funds to meet the dearth in urban services. Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT in 2015) with the goal of providing basic civic amenities such as water supply, sewerage, urban transport, and parks to ameliorate the quality of life, especially for the poor and deprived. This mission covers 500 cities that comprised all cities and towns with more than 100,000 population in notified Municipalities. Smart Cities Mission (SCM in 2015) with the purpose to strengthen the urban structure by the diligence of smart solutions and delivering a healthier quality of life to urban inhabitants. Some of the fundamental infrastructure elements in a smart city would include a secure electricity supply, sufficient supply of water, solid waste management, sanitation, inexpensive housing, robust IT connectivity and digitalization, e-Governance, etc. Therefore, besides all the aforesaid policies, for proper maintenance, the city needs a specific policy and control of huge migration from small towns and villages to scale down the burden on the infrastructures and resources. However, the responsibility of the local organizations is not only to develop new infrastructures but equally maintain old infrastructure. Therefore, appropriate planning, study, and accomplishment should be required to boost essential facilities and services, for all urban centers in a pertinent way. However, to minimize inequality of basic amenities and services between towns and cities, between districts and regions, the government should formulate equal policies for each district and urban center with the same population for development. Private partners also can contribute to developing the basic facilities in many ways.

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