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Socio-economic status of beggars in Aligarh district, india

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Abstract:

In the present study, an attempt has been made to examine the spatial patterns of beggars' demographiccharacteristics, literacy, employment, income, household infrastructural facilities, and their socio-economic status inAligarh district of Uttar Pradesh. This work is based on primary source of data, collected through the field survey in theAligarh district carried out during 2009. The 6 per cent villages (i.e. 70) of the total inhabited villages (1,180) of thedistrict have been selected for rural survey from the stratified random sampling technique and the 6 per cent wardsfrom the all 13 towns of the district were selected for urban survey. Further, the 25 per cent beggars' households weresurveyed from the each selected village as well as ward of the study area. Altogether, 892 beggars' households weresurveyed for the present study, in which, the rural survey consisted of 496 households and the urban surveycomprised of 396 households. The regional analysis reveals that beggars of the central blocks of the districtexperienced the low level of socio-economic status, while, the peripheral blocks witnessed high as well as mediumlevel of socio-economic status.

Key Words: ***Demographic Characteristic, Literacy, Employment, Per Capita Income, Household Infrastructural Facilities, Socio-Economic Status, Beggar, Region, Aligarh***.

Introduction:

Begging is generally viewed as an activity emanated from poverty and destitution. It is practiced to obtain means of survival from others what one is unable to get by oneself. This activity

is a request directed to the rest of the society to bring oneself out of misery and poverty. In this regard, MOLSA (1992) defined begging as a method of earning one's living from the income obtained from other sectors of society using age, health and economic conditions as a means of gaining sympathy. Most of the panhandlers or beggars live in poverty, 'panning' for a variety of reasons. Numerous sources point to support of alcohol and drug addictions as one of the major reasons for panhandling (Bodnarchuk et al. 2006, Bose & Hwang 2002, Duneier 1999, Lankenau 1999, and Addictions Foundation of Manitoba 1996 & 1993).

Begging, according to Webster' Third New International Dictionary (1976) is practiced especially habitually for the same reasons given by MOLSA. The Encyclopedia of Social Work in India (1968) viewed beggars as mobile charity seeker people who could easily be noticed by the way they live and earn money essential for survival; and most of who are homeless and live in the open or in the impoverished huts. While, Jelili, (2006) defined begging is a social ill whose implications for city economy and environment call for concern of urban planners. The negative impacts of begging on social and physical environments are obvious in the tendency of beggars to delay and obstruct free flow human and vehicular traffic and their high propensity to generate dirty materials either as waste or as parts of their belonging. Adedibu (1989) also observes that begging also has implications for the economy of the nation as beggars depend on the already overstretched workforce.

Primarily development can be perceived as reflection of personal values conditioned by societal framework in which one lives (Stohr and Taylor 1981). In the other words, development implies progressive changes in socio-economic structure of a country (Chand and Puri 1990). The development is an outcome of the efforts made for the eradication of poverty and unemployment and regional inequalities (Seer 1989). Thus, development is the state of change from a given situation of a region to become better one within a given period of time (Sharma 1989). The concept of development may be taken to imply an improvement in the material and cultural well being of the people in a region. The development of a region can be identified with an increase in the employment opportunities, availability of infrastructural facilities, amenities and services, proper distribution of resources, increase in production, and investment in consumption and so

on. Thus, the development refers to an improvement of all the sectors of economic, social and cultural pursuits (Verma 1993).

The matter of begging is not the ignorable issue of the society, but in fact, the begging has become one of the most problematic social issues of India. It is, therefore, necessary that empirical studies have to be undertaken aimed at collecting relevant data on the subject.

Objectives of the study

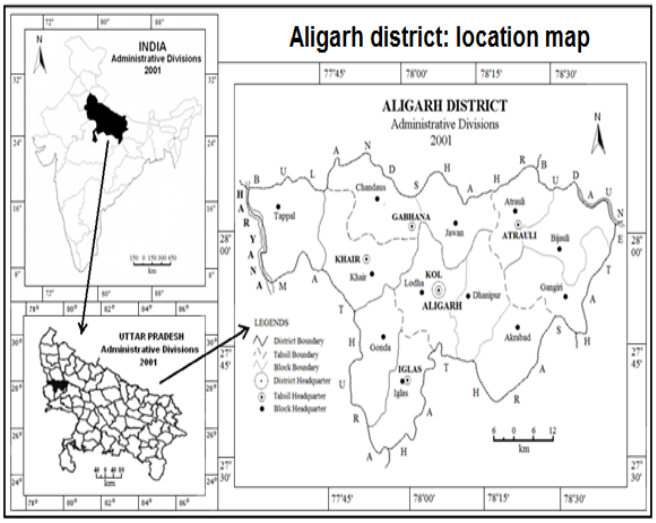
The present study has been undertaken with the following specific objectives:

i to analyse the regional variations of demographic characteristics, literacy, employment, per capita income, household infrastructural facilities of beggars in Aligarh district.

ii to examine the spatial disparities in the socio-economic status of beggars in the study area.

Study area

Aligarh district, a medium sized district, is spreading over an area of 3700.4 square kilometers in the Western part of Uttar Pradesh. It occupies the north-western part of the Uttar Pradesh which is fertile region of Ganga and Yamuna, known as *Doab*. In the world map, the geographical location of this district is in North-Eastern Hemisphere and lying between the parallels of $27^{o}29'$ and $28^{o}11'$ north latitudes and meridians of $77^{o}29'$ and $78^{o}38'$ east longitudes. Its boundary touches the boundaries of five other districts (Bulandshahr, Badaun, Mathura, Hathras and Etah) of the Uttar Pradesh and one state (Haryana) of India. At present, the district is divided into five Tahsils namely, Koil, Khair, Gabhana, Atrauli and Iglas for the purpose of land record keeping, land revenue collection, judicial administration, etc. These tahsils are further sub-divided into 12 development blocks namely: Atrauli, Gangiri, Bijauli, Jawan, Chandus, Khair, Tappal, Dhanipur, Lodha, Akrabad, Iglas and Gonda.



Source: *Census of India and Vikas Bhavan, Aligarh, 2008*

Figure 1

According to 2001 Census, the district accommodates a residential population of 29, 92, 286 of which 29 per cent was classified as urban and 71 per cent as rural. The density of population in the district was 820 persons per sq. km. However, it was 607 persons per sq. km. in the rural sector and 5,949 persons per sq. km. in the urban sector. The sex ratio that is the number of females per thousand males was 862 in the district, whereas, the figures for the rural and urban areas were 856 and 876 respectively. The literacy rate in the district is 58.5 per cent and the male literacy rate is 71.7 per cent and females are 43.0 per cent literate while, the percentage of literacy in rural and urban population was 56.5 and 63.2 respectively.

Database and methodology

The study is based on primary source of data that has been collected the through field survey in the Aligarh district, carried out during 2009. The villages have been selected on the basis of stratified random sampling technique. According to 2001 Census, the district had 1210 revenue villages of which 1180 were inhabited. The inhabited villages

Table I: List of the selected indicators of socio-economic status of beggars in Aligarh district, 2009

Categories	Indicators	Definition
DC	X_1	Percentage of male population to the total selected population
	X_2	Percentage of female population to the total selected population
	X_3	Sex-Ratio
	X_4	Household Size
LR	X_5	Total Literacy Rate
	X_6	Male Literacy Rate
	X_7	Female Literacy Rate
ER	X_8	Total Employment Rate
	X_9	Male Employment Rate
	X_{10}	Female Employment Rate
PCI	X_{11}	Per Capita Income
HIF	X_{12}	Percentage of households having own houses
	X_{13}	Percentage of households living in pucca houses
	X_{14}	Percentage of households having the drinking water facility

		within their premises
	X_{15}	Percentage of households having bathroom facility within their premises
	X_{16}	Percentage of households having latrine facility within their premises
	X_{17}	Percentage of households having electricity facility within their premises

Note: *DC= Demographic Characteristics, LR= Literacy Rate, ER= Employment Rate, PCI= Per Capita Income, HIF= Household Facilities.*

were stratified into three categories based on the size of population, so that, all types of population and villages may get reasonable representation in the samples randomly drawn for the survey. Keeping in view the constraints of time and cost, it was decided to collect data for this enquiry from 6 per cent villages of each category. Therefore, 6 per cent villages (i.e. 70) of the total inhabited villages (1,180) of the district have been selected for rural survey from the stratified random sampling technique and the 6 per cent wards from the all 13 towns of the district were selected for urban survey. Further, the 25 per cent beggars' households were surveyed from the each selected village as well as ward of the study area. Altogether, 892 households were selected for the present study, in which the rural survey consisted of 496 households and the urban survey comprised 396 households. However, a block has been considered as the smallest unit of study.

In the present analysis, a set of seventeen indicators of socio-economic status have been taken into account to determine the levels of socio-economic status of beggars at one hand and demographic characteristics, literacy, employment, income, household infrastructural facilities of beggars on the other hand in the twelve blocks of the district. The indicators of socio-economic status fall into categories like population characteristics, literacy, employment, income and household infrastructural facilities. In the first step, the raw data for each variable which determines the areal variations of demographic characteristics, literacy, employment, income, household infrastructural facilities and their socio-economic status have been computed into standard score.

It is generally known as Z value or Z-score. The score quantify the departure of individual

observations, expressed in a comparable form. This means it becomes a linear transformation of the original data (Smith, 1973: 85). It may be expressed as:

$$Z_{ij} = \frac{X_{ij} - \overline{X_i}}{\sigma_i}$$

Where: Z_{ij} = Standardised value of the variable *i* in block *j*,

X_{ij} = Actual value of variable *i* in block *j*,

$\overline{X_i}$ = Mean value of variable *i* in all blocks,

σ_i = Standard deviation of variable *i* in all blocks.

In the second step, the Z-scores of all variables have been added block wise and the average has taken out for these variables which may be called as composite score (CS) for each block and may be algebraically expressed as:

$$CS = \frac{\sum Z_{ij}}{N}$$

Where: *CS* stands composite score,

$\sum Z_{ij}$ indicates Z-scores of all variables *i* in district *j*,

N refers to the number of variables.

The positive values relating to the districts' Z-score explain high level, while, negative values indicate the low level of demographic characteristics, literacy, employment, income, household infrastructural facilities of beggars and their socio-economic status in the study area.

Besides, advanced statistical techniques, GIS-Arc view programme (Version 3.2a) has been applied to show the spatial variations of demographic features, literacy rate, employment rate, per capita income, household facilities of beggars and their socio-economic status among the blocks of the Aligarh district through maps.

Results & discussion

The need for better understanding of the effects of demographic factors on socio-economic development has become a matter of prime concern with the emergence of new demographic trends in the developing countries in recent decades. Demographic characteristics are significantly related with the socio-economic development. The present study includes four demographic characteristics i.e. male population, female population, sex-ratio and household size.

The development of human resource depends mainly on literacy or levels of education. As the education prepares the man to actively participate

in economic activities and social welfare programmes of the country, thus, literacy and socio-economic development are interrelated, interdependent with each other. In the present work three variables i.e. total literacy rate, male literacy rate and female literacy rate have been selected to measure the level of literacy in the blocks of the district.

Table II: Block-wise distribution of z-score of selected variables in Aligarh district, 2009

Name of the Block	DC	LR	ER	PCI	HIF	SES
Lodha	-0.67	-1.63	0.48	-1.47	0.24	-0.61
Dhanipur	-0.36	0.12	0.12	-1.74	-0.03	-0.38
Akrabad	0.40	0.1	1.9	0.12	0.08	0.52
Gonda	0.67	-1.12	1.24	0.28	-0.24	0.16
Iglas	0.34	2.01	-1.05	-0.18	0.24	0.27
Khair	0.13	0.02	-0.88	0.54	-0.23	-0.08
Tappal	0.07	1.11	-1.32	-0.69	-0.63	-0.29
Chandaus	0.07	0.55	-0.61	1.08	1.17	0.45
Jawan	-0.44	-0.55	0.08	1.16	-0.22	0.01
Atrauli	0.15	-0.53	0.44	-0.26	-0.52	-0.14
Bijauli	-0.05	0.29	-0.35	-0.32	-0.18	-0.12
Gangiri	-0.32	-0.37	-0.05	1.49	0.33	0.22

Source: *Calculation is based on Sample Survey.*

Note: DC= *Demographic Characteristics, LR= Literacy Rate, ER= Employment Rate, PCI= Per Capita Income, HIF= Household Infrastructural Facilities, SES= Socio-Economic Status.*

Demographic characteristics

The Table II shows the regional variations of demographic characteristics of beggars in the district and it varies from -0.67score in Lodha block to 0.67score in Gonda block. This range of variations may be grouped into three grades namely, high (above 0.19 score) medium (0.19 to -0.19 score) and low (below -0.19 score) (Table III). It is clear from the Figure II that the two distinct regions of high level (above 0.19 score) of demographic characteristics of population are located in the southern part of the district comprising the blocks of Gonda, Akrabad and Iglas because these blocks have high level of sex-ratio, female population and household size. Two different regions of the moderate level (0.19 to -0.19 score) of demographic characteristics have also been identified in the district. One locates in the north-western part of the district comprising three blocks i.e. Khair, Tappal and Chandaus and another lies in the north-eastern part

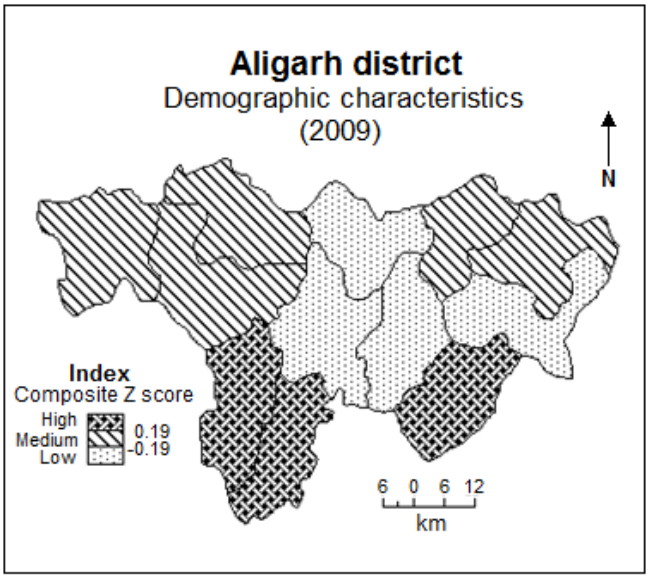


Figure II

Table III: Category-wise levels of selected variables in Aligarh district, 2009

Category	Z-Score	No. of Blocks	Name of the Blocks
Demographic Characteristics			
High	Above 0.19	3	Gonda, Iglas and Akrabad
Medium	0.19 to -0.19	5	Tappal, Khair, Chandaus, Atrauli and Bijauli
Low	Below -0.19	4	Lodha, Dhanipur, Jawan and Gangiri
Literacy Rate			
High	Above 0.48	3	Tappal, Chandaus and Iglas
Medium	0.48 to -0.48	5	Dhanipur, Akrabad, Khair, Gangiri and Bijauli
Low	Below -0.48	4	Lodha, Jawan, Atrauli and Gonda
Employment Rate			
High	Above 0.47	3	Lodha, Akrabad and Gonda
Medium	0.47 to -0.47	5	Dhanipur, Jawan, Atrauli, Gangiri and Bijauli
Low	Below -0.47	4	Iglas, Tappal, Khair and Chandaus
Per Capita Income			
High	Above 0.50	4	Khair, Chandaus, Jawan and Gangiri
Medium	0.50 to -0.50	5	Gonda, Iglas, Akrabad, Atrauli and Bijauli
Low	Below -0.50	3	Lodha, Dhanipur and Tappal
Household Infrastructural Facilities			
High	Above 0.24	4	Lodha, Chandaus, Iglas and Gangiri
Medium	0.24 to -0.24	5	Dhanipur, Akrabad, Khair, Jawan and Bijauli
Low	Below -0.24	3	Tappal, Gonda and Atrauli
Socio-Economic Status			
High	Above 0.16	5	Chandaus, Iglas, Gonda, Akrabad and Gangiri
Medium	0.16 to -0.16	4	Khair, Jawan, Atrauli and Bijauli
Low	Below -0.16	3	Lodha, Dhanipur and Tappal

Source: *Based on Table II.*

of the district including two blocks of Atrauli and Bijauli. The low level (below -0.19 score) of demographic characteristics is observed in the four blocks of the district they are Lodha, Jawan, Dhanipur and Gangiri which combinedly make a

remarkable contiguous region running from central to eastern parts of the district (Figure II).

The analysis of the Figure II depicts that the central parts of the district have the low level of demographic characteristics, the north-eastern and north-western parts witnessed the medium level of demographic characteristics while, the high level of demographic characteristics is observed only in few pockets in the southern parts of the district.

Literacy rate

The Table II show great regional variations in the level of literacy in the district and its z-score value varies from the lowest -1.63 in Lodha block to the highest 2.01 in Iglas block of the district. These range of variations may be categorized into three grades namely, high (above 0.48 score), medium (0.48 to -0.48 score) and low (below -0.48 score).

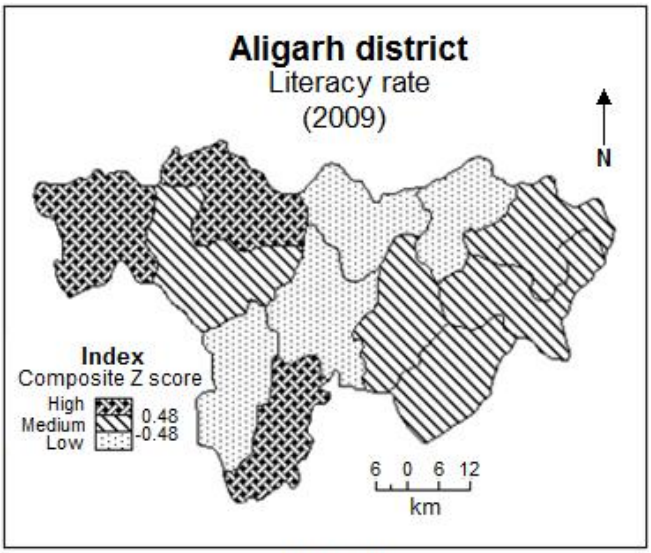


Figure III

The Table III shows category wise literacy in the blocks of the district. The blocks of Iglas, Tappal and Chandaus have the high level (above 0.48 score) of literacy and they are scattered in the district and fail to share the boundary of adjacent blocks of same grade to make any region. Five blocks of the district recorded medium level (0.48 to -0.48 score) of literacy, out of them; four blocks namely, Bijauli, Dhanipur, Akrabad and Gangiri constitute an outstanding region in the eastern part, while, the Khair block does not make any region in the district. Four blocks of the district fall under the low level (below -0.48 score) of literacy they are Atrauli, Jawan, Gonda and Lodha and constitute a contiguous region in the central part of the district.

The analysis of literacy rate of beggars depicts that the high and medium level of literacy is experienced in the western and eastern parts of the district, while, low level of beggars' literacy is observed in the central (Figure III).

Employment rate

The Table II depicts that the z-score values of employment rate of beggars vary from the lowest -1.32 in Tappal block to the highest 1.90 in

Akrabad block. This range of variations may be put into three categories namely, high (above 0.47 score), medium (0.47 to -0.47 score) and low (below -0.47 score) as given in Table III. The Table III exhibits that three blocks of the district have high level (above 0.47 score) of employment rate, among them, Lodha and Gonda blocks in the south-western part and Akrabad block in the south-eastern part make two very small distinct regions in the district. Five blocks namely, Dhanipur, Jawan, Atrauli, Bijauli and Gangiri of the district come under the medium grade (0.47 to -0.47 score) of employment rate and all these blocks constitute a big identifiable region in the north-eastern part of the district. Four blocks of the district witnessed the low level (below -0.47 score) of employment in which three blocks viz., Tappal, Khair and Jawan make a distinguished region in the north-western part of the district but Iglas block does not form any region.

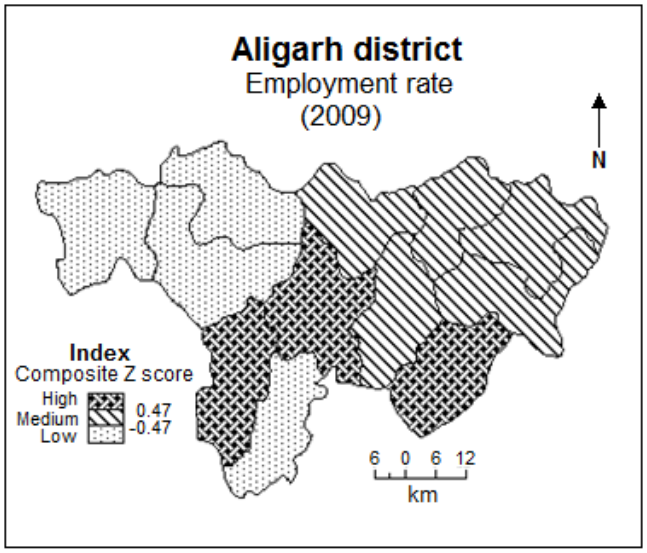


Figure IV

The Analysis of Figure IV shows that the employment is found to be higher in the south-western and south-eastern parts of the district, while, the north-eastern and north-western parts experienced medium and low level of employment rate in the study area respectively.

Per capita income

Per capita income is widely accepted as a measure of development. It is customary to identify whether a region is backward or advanced in level of development with the help of per capita income. The regions which enjoy higher per capita income are deemed to be more developed than those regions with low per capita income.

Block-wise z-score values of per capita income are given in Table II which shows that z-score of per capita income varies from lowest -1.74 score

in Dhanipur block to highest 1.49 score in Gangiri block. All the blocks may be arranged into three grades i.e. high (above 0.50 score), medium (0.50 to -0.50 score) and low (below -0.50). The Figure V reveals that four blocks of the district come under the high scores (above 0.50 score) of per capita income, in which, three of them, make a dominant region in the north and north-western parts of the district comprising the blocks of Jawan, Chandaus and Khair, and Gangiri block is found in the eastern part of the district. There are five blocks they are Gonda, Akrabad, Iglas, Atrauli and Bijauli which have medium grade (0.50 to -0.50 score) of per capita income and four blocks of them, constitute two different regions in the district. First region composes of the two blocks i.e. Gonda and Iglas in the south-western part, while, second region comprises of two blocks viz., Atrauli and Bijauli in the north-eastern part of the district but, the remaining one block (Akrabad) of the district does not share with any other surrounding block's boundary to make the region.

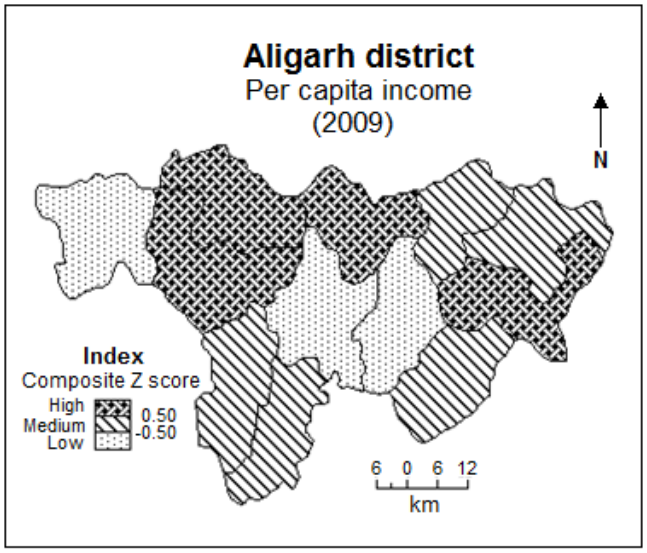


Figure V

Three blocks of the district namely, Tappal, Lodha and Dhanipur fall under the low category (below -0.50) of per capita income and two block of them, make a small region in the central part of the district however Tappal block does not form any region. The distribution analysis of per capita income in Figure V shows that the per capita income tends to increase from central part towards the peripheral blocks of the district into medium and high level.

Household infrastructural facilities To measure the level of household infrastructural facilities, six variables have been chosen in this study. They are X_{12}= own house, X_{13}= pucca house, X_{14}= drinking water facility available within their premises, X_{15}= bathroom facility available within their premises, X_{16}= latrine facility available within their premises and $X_{17=}$ electricity facility available within their premises (Table I).

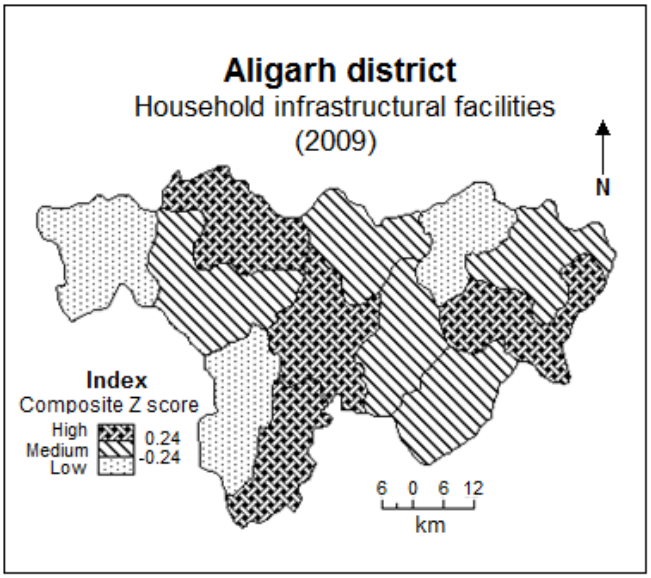


Figure VI

The level of household infrastructural facilities varies from the lowest -0.63 score in Tappal block to the highest 1.17 score in Chandaus block of the district (Table II). The range may be prearranged into three grades i.e. high (above 0.24 score), medium (0.24 to -0.24 score) and low (below -0.24). It can be revealed from the Table III that four blocks of the district fall under high level (above 0.24 score) of household infrastructural facilities and three block of them constitute a long linear important region running from north to south, comprising the blocks of Chandaus, Lodha and Iglas, and remaining Gangiri block does not form any region. About 40 per cent (5) blocks of the district possessed the medium level (0.24 to -0.24 score) of household infrastructural facilities, in which, three blocks (Jawan, Lodha and Akrabad) form a distinct region propelling from the north to south direction and remaining two blocks i.e. Khair and Bijauli do not share the boundary with neighboring blocks of same category to make any region in the district.

Three blocks namely Tappal, Gonda and Atrauli of the district have the low level (below -0.24 score) of household infrastructural facilities and they are widely scattered in the district. The spatial analysis of household infrastructural facilities reveals that the central part which runs north to south of the district fall under high level of household infrastructural facilities and it decreases with the increasing distance in east-west direction.

Socio-economic status of beggars

The level of socio-economic development is the aggregate output of the attainment of the various selected socio-economic indicators. Socio-economic development of an area can be measured with the help of several indicators but beggars are the persons who are considered as poorest of the poor and do not have so much facilities available within their households that is

why, only some important selected variables have been chosen to measure their socio-economic status like demographic characteristics, literacy, employment, per capita income and household infrastructural facilities.

The foregoing discussions of the development of demographic, literacy, employment, per capita income and household infrastructural facilities clearly indicate that there are wide regional variations in the level of development of different sectors among the blocks of Aligarh district. Since, some blocks are developed in one or two sectors but they experienced backwardness in some other sectors and vice-versa. To measure the overall level of socio-economic development, z-score of all seventeen indicators (as the list is given in Table I) have been calculated and they are added block wise to find out the composite index of the socio-economic status of beggars in the district (Table II).

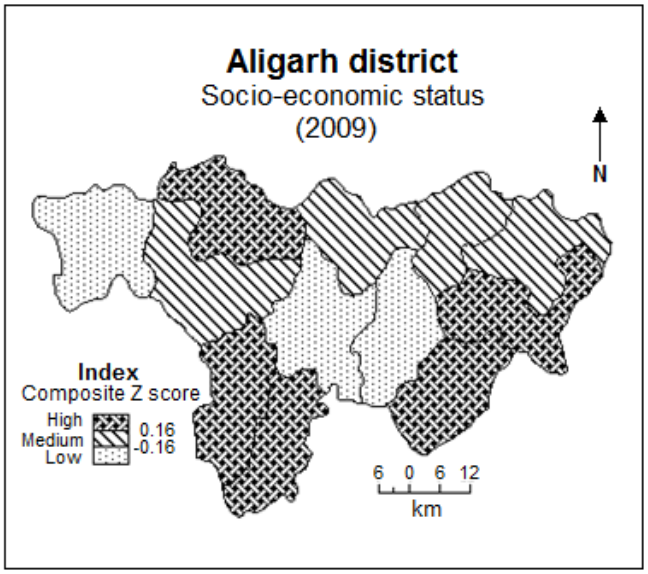


Figure VII

Table II shows that the z-score values of socio-economic status of beggars vary from lowest -0.61 in Lodha block to highest 0.52 in Akrabad block. This string of variations may be arranged into three groups i.e. high (above 0.16 score), medium (0.16 to -0.16 score) and low (below -0.16). Table III exhibits that the five blocks of the district they are Akrabad, Chandaus, Iglas, Gangiri and Gonda have high score (above 0.16 score) of socio-economic status, wherein, four blocks constitute two identifiable regions in the district. First region lies in the south-western part including the blocks of Iglas and Gonda and second region locates in the south-eastern part comprising the blocks of Atrauli and Gangiri (Figure VII). Four blocks witnessed the medium level (0.16 to -0.16 score)

of socio-economic status, out of which, three blocks namely, Jawan, Bijauli and Atrauli form a region, that is located in the north-eastern part of district and remaining Khair block in the western part of the district does not form any region. There are three blocks in the district which come under the low grade (below -0.16 score) of socio-economic status and two blocks of them viz., Lodha and Dhanipur make a region in the central part of the district but Tappal block does not form any region. The regional analysis of the Figure VII reveals that beggars of the central blocks of the district experienced the low level of socio-economic status, while, the peripheral blocks witnessed high as well as medium level of socio-economic status.

Conclusion

The overall analysis of the study reveals that the central parts of the district have the low level of demographic characteristics, the north-eastern and north-western parts witnessed the medium level of demographic characteristics while, the high level of demographic characteristics is observed only in few pockets in the southern parts of the district. The analysis of literacy rate of beggars depicts that the high and medium level of literacy is experienced in the western and eastern parts of the district, while, low level of beggars' literacy is observed in the central.

The employment is found to be higher in the south-western and south-eastern parts of the district, while, the north-eastern and north-western parts experienced medium and low level of employment rate in the study area respectively. The distribution analysis of per capita income shows that the per capita income tends to increase from central part towards the peripheral blocks of the district into medium and high level. The spatial analysis of household infrastructural facilities reveals that the central part which runs north to south of the district fall under high level of household infrastructural facilities and it decreases with the increasing distance in east-west direction. The analysis of socio-economic status reveals that beggars of the central blocks of the district experienced the low level of socio-economic status, while, the peripheral blocks witnessed high as well as medium level of socio-economic status.

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