ABSTRACT

This paper uses panel data on government spending on public goods from 311 community development blocks from 19 districts in West Bengal during the period 2010-2018 to study the effects of population, religion and political representation on government-induced rural economic development. It finds that the population and religion of an area significantly affect rural economic development. However, religion favors rural economic development in areas where the Hindus are a majority. Similarly, the religious identity of the elected political representatives positively impacts the Hindu majority areas. In contrast, the religion of an area and the religious identity of the elected members negatively affect rural economic development in the Muslim concentrated areas. There is evidence that increasing the Muslim political representation is found to have increased economic development in the Muslim majority areas. This paper refutes the claim of minority appeasement with strong statistical evidence. It simply does not exist. In fact, the Muslim majority areas are routinely discriminated in the allocation of public goods which led to their poor economic development.

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List of Abbreviations

BADP – Border Area Development Plan

BEUP – Bidhayak Elaka Unnayan Prakalpa

BPL – Below Poverty Line

BRGF – Backward Regions Grant Fund

DAY – DeenDayal Antyodaya Yojana

ECI – Election Commission of India

GP – Gram Panchayat

GOI – Government of India

IAS – Indian Administrative Service

IAY – Indira Awaas Yojana

IFS – Indian Foreign Service

IPS – Indian Police Service

IGNOAPS – Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Plan

IGNWPS – Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme

IGNDPS – Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme

MPLADS – Member of the Parliament Local Area Development Scheme

MP – Member of the Parliament

MLA – Member of the Legislative Assembly

MoRD – Ministry of Rural Development

MOSPI – Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation of Govt. of India

MSK – Madhyamik Siksha Karmashuchi

NFBS – National Family Benefit Scheme

NGO – Non-Governmental organization

NREGS – National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme

NRLM – National Rural Livelihood Mission

NRRDA – National Rural Roads and Development Agency

NSAP – National Social Assistance Program

OMMAS – Online Management and Accounting System

P&RD – Department of Panchayats and Rural Development

PBDRSSM – Paschimbanga Rajya Shishu Shiksha Mission

PS – Panchayat Samiti

PMGSY – Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana

PMAY-G – Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana Gramin

PROFLAL – Provident Fund for Landless Agricultural Laborers

RWS – Rural Water Supply

SC – Schedule Caste

SGRY – Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana

SGSY –Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana

ST – Schedule Tribe

SSK – Shishu Siksha Karmashuchi

SNAP – Social Network for Assistance to People

SRC – Socio-Religious Communities

TSC – Total Sanitation Campaign

WBSEC – West Bengal State Election Commission

ZP – Zilla Parishad

1 Introduction

There has been increasing rate of violence and riots between the Hindus and the Muslims in India in recent years due to the tremendous politicization of religion (Bhalotra et al., 2014). This is a cause of serious concern. From various television debates to election campaigns, it is evident that the mainstream belief among the right-wing nationalist political parties in India is that the Muslims are traditionally used as a 'vote-bank' through 'appeasement', and hence they enjoy a disproportionately higher level of government delivered benefits.

On the other hand, it is argued that the Muslims, the second largest religious group and the largest minority in India as well as in West Bengal, who constitute 14.64 percent of the population of India and 27.01 percent of West Bengal (Census of India, 2011), are not only poor, and illiterate, but also politically, the most disadvantaged and marginalized group (Mainuddin, 2011). It is often claimed that they are systematically excluded from the access to education, employment, political system, law enforcement, and security, etc. (Biswas, 2015). Clearly, as a result of these, their limited participation in the economy has prevented the Muslims to benefit from the astounding economic growth that India has seen since the late 1990s. Commenting on a recently published report by a group of NGOs, Amartya Sen is reported to have said in the Telegraph that, "what is remarkable is the fact that Muslims constitute a very much larger portion of the poor and the deprived in West Bengal" (Sarkar, 2016). He also says, "the fact that Muslims in West Bengal are disproportionately poorer and more deprived in terms of living condition is an empirical recognition that gives this report an inescapable immediacy and practical urgency" (Sarkar, 2016).

This strongly motivates me to look at the state economy and see the level of economic development in the areas where the Muslim population is densely concentrated and who represent them politically in those areas for public goods to understand if appeasement exists. One of the ways to find out the reality, would be to look at the rural economic development in West Bengal.

What is rural economic development? Rural economic development can be described as a process of improving the economic, social and political well-being of the people in rural areas. The goal of economic development is to improve the quality of life through higher productivity (Kuznets, 1966), i.e. higher income, education, life expectancy, reduction of poverty rates, etc. among others. Noble Laureate Economist Amartya Sen (1983) defines development as reducing deprivation or broadening choice, and economic growth is one aspect of the process of economic development. Therefore, raising the economic, social and political welfare values of the rural people can be argued to be central to rural economic development. According to the 1991 World Bank produced World Development Report, "the challenge of development is to improve the quality of life, better education, high standards of health and nutrition, less poverty, a cleaner environment, more equality of opportunity, greater individual freedom, and a richer cultural life".

Governments often undertake development policies and spend public funds under various rural development schemes to increase rural income, improve the access to education, healthcare, and rural infrastructure, to raise the economic and social welfare of the people in rural areas. This can be termed as government-induced rural economic development. This paper focuses on the government induced rural economic development in West Bengal. Implementation of development policies and, thereby, government

spending on crucial public goods, are essential to government led rural economic development. Generally, this government promoted rural economic development drive is executed by the government bureaucratic apparatus with instructions and recommendations from the governing political representatives, i.e. the elected members in various forms of government in the state. The elected members play a decisive role in recommending where and which of the development projects are to be implemented in the rural areas. Therefore, the government led rural economic development depends to a large extent on the decisions of the elected members of the government. What factors influence these decisions are the subject of this paper. Do the population and religion of a rural area matter? Does the religious identity of these elected members' influence decisions?

In this dissertation, using panel data analysis, I will argue that population and religion positively affect rural economic development. However, religion significantly affects and favors rural economic development only in the Hindu concentrated areas in West Bengal, whereas it negatively impacts areas that have a Muslim majority. I will also argue that the religious identity of the elected members also impacts rural economic development, but again, it acts in favor of the Hindu dominated areas and discriminates against the Muslim populated areas. Therefore, the mainstream political rhetoric against the Muslims having disproportionate government privileges due to minority appeasement, seems to have no empirical evidence and rationale to support. In fact, this paper would offer plenty of evidence to show that the Muslims are at a double disadvantage due to their religion and the lack of political representation in the government.

Therefore, the objective of this paper is to analyze empirical data on government spending on public goods during the period 2010-2018 and see if there exists any

significant positive relationship between population, religion and rural economic development. Furthermore, this paper also examines if the religious identity of the elected representatives influences rural economic development. One of the reasons to associate government spending on public goods to rural economic development, is that, there is evidence of a positive impact of public goods on economic growth and development (Das et al, 2011). The primary questions that this paper attempts to answer are the following.

Is there a significant relationship between Population and Religion on Government spending on public goods in rural areas? How does Government spending on public goods change as the Religion of the Population changes in rural areas? How does religious identity of elected representatives impact government spending on public goods in rural areas? However, it also looks particularly at the minority populated areas and examines the allocation of public goods and investigates if increasing the Muslim political representation leads to better economic development in areas, where they are a majority.

This study, therefore, is relevant and has a topical importance in India as it attempts to find out the reality behind minority appeasement. It is likely to contribute to the already limited existing work in this area as an original research.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews the previous studies. Section 3 and 4 discuss the case study area and data, while section 5 explains the methodology. Then section 6 discusses the empirical results and finally, section 7 concludes.

2 Literature Review

It is useful to note that there are a number of studies that have focused extensively on matters of castes, tribes, women and the impact of their political representation on the economy and development (Besley and Coate, 1997; Beaman et al, 2010; Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004; Pande, 2003). Singh (2015) has conceptualized the systematic and structural disadvantage that the religious minorities in India suffer as 'institutional communalism'. He argues "… institutional Hindu communalism remains pervasive in varying degrees in India's Constitution, judiciary, civil services, electoral, and parliamentary institutions, security forces, prisons, academia, media, corporate business, and even non-governmental organizations, … [and] continues as a social, cultural, and politico-economic force to disadvantage the lives of minority communities in India" (p. 48). Singh (2005) also explores in depth the dimension of institutional communalism in India's 'secular' Constitution.

However, the literature on this topic seems to be relatively limited. Biswas (2015) points out that sociological study of the Muslim community in West Bengal is rare and hence, limited available knowledge. One extensive countrywide report was published in 2006 by the central government appointed 'Sachar Committee', which highlighted the economic and social plight such as, the identity crisis, security concerns, equity issues of the Muslim community in India. Few other studies have focused on the low level of education among the Muslims in India (Hussain, 2009), but almost no one studied the poor rural economic development in the Muslim majority areas.

In this section, I will briefly discuss those studies that have focused extensively on matters of castes, tribes, women and their representation in politics and its impact on

policy choices, and development outcomes in India. Then, I will try to connect these ideas and see if this could help explain the poor economic development outcomes of the Muslims in West Bengal.

Rule and Zimmerman (1994), in their book 'Electoral Systems in Comparative Perspective: Their Impact on Women and Minorities', find evidence from their cross-country analysis with data from 20 countries that women and minorities are grossly underrepresented in politics globally. They argue that political parties are less likely to select women and minorities due to cultural and socioeconomic reasons relating to women and minorities perceived as adversely affecting their electoral success.

Pande (2003) studies the mandated political representation of the disadvantaged minorities in India and how it influences policy choices with data from 16 major states during the period 1960-1992. She argues that electorally accountable governments that make policies often fail to achieve the interests of the marginalized minorities, for example, the Schedule Castes (SCs) and the Schedule Tribes (STs).

Besley and Coate (1997), point out that there are differences in political and policy choices between men and women, and implemented policies often reflect the preferences of the policymakers. Therefore, it can be argued that political under-representation of women leads to potential bias in policymaking, which does not reflect female policy interest (Beaman et al, 2010). The argument, here, is that women, minorities, and the disadvantaged groups such as the SCs and the STs, have different needs and policy preferences. Hence, adequate political representation is necessary for these groups to ensure and protect their interests. Besley and Coate (1997) in their paper on 'An Economic Model of Representative Democracy', present an alternative model of representative

democracy and claim that increasing political representation of minority groups leads to improved development outcomes. Hence, it is often suggested that quotas for minorities is an option to improve participation in the political system.

Pande (2003) finds that political reservation in India for the SCs and the STs has benefited the group in terms of redistribution of resources in favor of them. She argues that mandated political representation, i.e. reservation of the marginalized groups is necessary to influence policy making that in turn benefits them. Many studies have found that there is evidence that increasing woman participation in government tends to encourage policies that reflect the interests of women (Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004; Clots-Figueras, 2011; Dhanda, 2008).

Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2004) in a paper on 'Women as Policy Makers: Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment in India' study the impact of political reservation of women and their leadership role in policy decisions. They examine data from 265 Gram Panchayats (Village Councils) in two states, Rajasthan and West Bengal, and argue that reservation, which was introduced to ensure adequate political representation also adequately delivered public goods to disadvantaged groups in their locality. The study finds that in those districts of West Bengal and Rajasthan, SC Pradhans (Village Council Head) invest more of public goods in SC hamlets than non-SC Pradhans. It also finds that women tend to invest more in goods, such as water that are relevant to women. However, the above studies do not focus on the effect of religion of an area as well as the identity of the elected representatives, which are important explanatory factors in explaining the provisions of public goods as an instrument of rural economic development.

In a study on religion, politician identity and development outcomes, based on data

from India, Bhalotra et al. (2014) find that increasing the political representation of the Muslims in India's state legislatures leads to what they claim as large and significant improvements in health and educational outcomes. Although, they focus on the identity of the elected representatives, but do not take into account the effect of religion of an area, which is an important explanatory factor, on development outcomes. Why is religious identity of the elected individuals an important explanatory variable in explaining the allocation of public goods? It is important because the elected representatives at the local level, such as, in the community development blocks or Panchayat Samiti (PS), Gram Panchayats (GP), and district councils or Zilla Parishad (ZP), are directly responsible for planning, administering and delivering public goods. Therefore, it is evident that the elected individuals have significant roles in rural economic development. These above studies, mostly used regression analysis to establish a relationship between development or policy outcomes and political reservation, caste identity, and gender. Beaman et al, (2010) argue that the Muslims in general are politically underrepresented social groups in India.

It is useful to look at the rural socioeconomic development status of the Muslims in West Bengal. Two reports, the first one by the central government appointed 'Sachar Committee' and another by three NGOs in West Bengal, reveal extensive details of inequality in income, education, health, and rural infrastructure, etc.

The 'Sachar Committee Report', published in 2006, informs that the Muslims are in a disadvantaged position in education compared to other socio-religious communities (SRCs) in India. The report expresses great concern about the low educational status of the Muslims. It says that the Muslims are low in absolute numbers in terms of both the Mean

Years of Schooling and attendance levels, and lagging behind even the historically marginalized groups, such as the SCs and the STs. It finds that the gap between the Muslims and other SRCs is higher even in urban areas. The time trends as reported, show that the Muslims have the slowest progress among others in educational attainments. It claims to have found a significant negative relationship between the proportion of the Muslim population and the availability of educational infrastructure, such as a primary school in rural areas. It also points out that the share of Muslim students in higher education is very low and, in the subjects, that have the brightest prospects of employment is even lower. This seriously undermines the prospects of economic empowerment of the Muslims and hampers their long-term economic development.

The report highlights the significantly lower aggregate work participation ratio of the Muslims in rural areas relative to other SRCs in the Indian economy. It finds that only 25 percent of the Muslim women participate in work in rural areas compared to 70 percent among the Hindu women. The workforce participation rate of the Muslim women (18 percent) is even lower in urban areas and most Muslim workers are engaged in the informal sector. In terms of salaried employment in both public as well as private sector, the report reveals that the Muslim work participation rate is abysmally low. Muslim regular employees in the government sectors also earn lower than other SRCs as most of the employees are in lower level positions. Surprisingly, there are only about 3.3 percent Muslims in all the government departments, agencies and institutions. Muslims constitute only 3 percent of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), 1.8 percent of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), and 4 percent of the Indian Police Service (IPS), compared to their population share of 14 percent in the country. The record is equally disappointing in other

public sectors, such as the Indian railways, banks, postal service, universities, etc. Overall, Muslim representation is disproportionately lower in all types of public sector employment than their population share in the country as well as in the states. In terms of access to banking and credit for small and medium size businesses, the report shows, Muslims face discrimination in getting loans as Muslim majority areas have been designated as negative or red flag zones by the banks. Also, the size of a credit is miserably small compared to other SRCs.

Similarly, the report reveals that about 30 percent of the villages that have a Muslim majority population, seems to have no educational institutions, 40 percent of them lack any medical facility. The Sachar Report also finds that the incidence of poverty among the Muslim households in urban areas is the highest in the country and the poverty headcount ratio is about 38.5 percent compared to 20.4 percent for the Hindus. In West Bengal, the corresponding numbers are 27 percent for the Muslims, while it is only 10 percent for the Hindus. Similarly, the rural poverty headcount ratio in India for the Muslims is about 27 percent compared to 22.6 percent for the Hindus. In West Bengal, the rural poverty headcount ratio among the Muslim households (33 percent) is almost 12 percent higher than the Hindus (21 percent). These gaps in the findings of this report are quite telling.

Three NGOs, Association SNAP, Guidance Guild and Noble laureate economist Amartya Sen founded Pratichi Instute, came together and recently published another report titled 'Living Reality of Muslims in West Bengal'. This report is based on primary survey data (7880 households) collected over 2 years across West Bengal. The purpose of this survey was to examine the socioeconomic progress of the Muslims if any, since the Sachar Report was published in 2006.

This 2016 report reveals a stark picture of the socioeconomic status of the Muslims in West Bengal in terms of education, employment, income, health and other important indicators. It shows that the work participation rate among the Muslims in rural areas is about 45 percent, which is extremely low compared to the Hindus. This rate is quite shocking as it means 55 percent of the Muslim working age (between 15-65 years) population is out of the workforce. One of the reasons for this low workforce participation rate among the Muslims as mentioned in the report could be due to the extremely low rate of Muslim women work participation, which is only 8.9 percent. It also notes that 47 percent of the entire Muslim workforce is daily wage workers in agriculture and in non-agricultural production. Only 1.55 percent of the Muslim workers are reported to have a job as a school teacher, while a similar percentage of workers are in public and private sector jobs.

According this report, about 80 percent of the Muslim households in rural areas in West Bengal depend on manual labor for survival and earn a meagre 5000 rupees or less a month, which is equivalent to the statutory Below Poverty Line income. Shockingly, 38.3 percent of the households have an income of about 2500 rupees or less a month. In the survey, only 3.4 percent of the households reported to have an income of 15,000 rupees or more per month.

The report also shows the extremely low level of education, i.e. literacy rate is 68.3 percent among the Muslims against 76.2 percent state average, while 14.5 percent of the school-aged (6-14 years) children are out of schools. About 5.4 percent of them dropped out, while 9.1 percent never enrolled, and 52 percent of Muslim children never completed beyond primary level education. The report finds that almost 97 percent of the illiterates among the Muslims come from households that have income below 5000 rupees a month. Higher

education among the Muslims is equally disappointing as only 2.7 percent of the literate Muslims has a graduate degree or higher.

It highlights disparity in terms of educational infrastructure in Muslim majority community development blocks as well as districts. For example, West Bengal has on an average 10.6 secondary and higher secondary schools per 100000 people. However, the corresponding number of schools in the Muslim majority districts is 6.2 for North Dinajpur, 7.2 for Murshidabad and 8.5 for Malda. About 52 percent of the Muslim majority blocks also have a lower number of schools compared to the state average, while the pupil to teacher ratio is higher in schools in the Muslim majority areas. About 3 percent of the Muslim majority villages, with more than 1000 people, are found to have no primary school. In terms of wealth and assets, the report indicates that about 41.5 percent of the rural Muslim households have some plot of land other than homestead, while only 23.5 percent own cropland.

In terms of health and hygiene infrastructure, about 27 percent of the roads in the Muslim majority areas are found to be waterlogged due to poor drainage facilities, while about 94 percent of the Muslim households depend on tube wells for drinking water, which is unsafe as many areas have arsenic contamination and excessive presence of iron. About 8 percent of the villages with a Muslim majority population have no electricity. The Muslim majority areas are found to have an inadequate and less number of rural hospitals, which is almost half of the state average of 1.8 per 100000 people. It is found that about 86 percent of the Muslim households use traditional fuels (wood fire) for cooking.

The empirical findings of these two reports based on the census and primary survey data are quite striking. They show a higher degree of socioeconomic backwardness among the

Muslims in West Bengal as well as in India. Although these reports are very useful for the purpose of this paper as they reveal the empirical reality that the Muslims face, however, they do not investigate as to why rural areas with a majority of Muslim population have such low level of economic development. These two reports take the comparative approach to analyze the socioeconomic conditions of the Muslims. They also do not attempt to find any link between religion and their poor socioeconomic backwardness.

However, there are few studies that tried to find a connection between the minority concentration and poor development outcomes. For example, a study by Das et al (2011), based on primary household data collected from 11 districts in West Bengal during the period 2007-08, found that there is strong horizontal discrimination against the Muslims, in terms of access to public goods. They claim that the Muslim populated areas have poor infrastructure, health, and transport facilities. Their results validate the findings of the Sachar Committee report mentioned above. This is one of the very few studies that focused on finding a relationship between Muslim concentration and socioeconomic development. However, their study does not involve the role of the political representatives in the allocation of public goods. Another study by Hussain (2009) finds an inverse relationship between the concentration of Muslims in an area and its literacy rate, which means literacy rate decreases as the Muslim population increases in an area.

3 Area of Study: West Bengal

This study is focused on the State of West Bengal, which is situated in the eastern part of India. There are 23 districts in West Bengal. The districts are divided into sub-divisions, sub-divisions into community development blocks, and blocks into Gram Panchayats (GPs) for administrative purposes. There are 341 community development blocks, and 3349 GPs in West Bengal. The State has a total area of 88,752 square kilometers with a total population of 91.3 million, according to the 2011 Census of India (Census of India, 2011). A quick look at the trends of socioeconomic development in rural areas and political representation of the Muslims in West Bengal reveals a disappointing picture. The Muslim political representation in the State Assembly shows that although the number has increased slowly from 22 in 1952 to 27 in 1962 to 35 in 1972 to 42 to 1991, then dropped to 38 in 2001 to 56 in 2016, it is still far short of the Muslim population share (Ansari, 2006; Election Commission of India, 2019).

The numbers in the district, block and GP level representation are not proportional either. Therefore, it can be argued that political under-representation of Muslim minorities in West Bengal is a common trend. Since political under-representation leads to potential bias in policy making (as the studies explained above) and public goods distribution, which are important factors of economic development, the Muslim interests are routinely ignored and this might be one of the reasons for poor economic development of the Muslims in West Bengal. Therefore, it is important to look at the empirical data on allocation of government spending on public goods and political representation in West Bengal to see if there exists any significant relationship. The empirical data are presented in the following tables.

Table 1. 1 Top 20 Blocks (Hindu Majority) with Total Govt. Spending During 2010-18

District	Block	Population	Total Payment (₹)
West Midnapore	Keshpur	339258	2505000995
North Dinajpur	Raiganj	430221	2398937212
South 24 PGS	Basanti	336717	2331841522
Bankura	Onda	252984	2317562583
South Dinajpur	Tapan	250540	2236083627
Jhargram	Binpur II	164522	2202899085
Hooghly	Dhaniakhali	320534	2154558969
West Midnapore	Salboni	188563	2132543827
West Midnapore	Debra	288619	2130008743
Jalpaiguri	Rajganj	287615	2004833186
North 24 PGS	Bangaon	380903	2002116921
South 24 PGS	Baruipur	433119	2000584427
Jalpaiguri	Jalpaiguri Sadar	280446	1978749672
Jhargram	Nayagram	142199	1974574282
South 24 PGS	Gosaba	246598	1945178516
Jalpaiguri	Dhupguri	417519	1940238147
South 24 PGS	Canning I	304724	1796146324
Bankura	Barjora	202049	1795766103
Birbhum	Rampurhat I	188435	1761596480
Nadia	Hanskhali	293040	1754244082
	Total	5,748,605	41,363,464,703.63

Source: Census of India, 2011 and West Bengal Department of Panchayats and Rural Development

Table 1. 2 Top 20 Blocks (Muslim Majority) with Total Govt. Spending between 2010-2018

District	Block	Pop	Total Payment (₹)
Murshidabad	Berhampore	446887	3280499515
Murshidabad	Domkol	363976	2152650457
Nadia	Kaliganj	334881	1942322972
Birbhum	Murarai II	222033	1832923436
Murshidabad	Khargram	273332	1765550420
Murshidabad	Beldanga I	319322	1653268776
Murshidabad	Lalgola	335831	1646199421
North 24 PGS	Baduria	285319	1584131789
Murshidabad	Hariharpara	257571	1576189492
South 24 PGS	Magrahat I	269494	1513505671
South 24 PGS	Canning II	252523	1468499283
South 24 PGS	Jaynagar II	252164	1466316820

Murshidabad	Farakka	274111	1458661294
South 24 PGS	Bhangar I	249170	1440102056
North 24 PGS	Hasnabad	203262	1425369823
South 24 PGS	Magrahat II	304744	1424396110
North 24 PGS	Basirhat II	226130	1319385139
Murshidabad	Suti II	278922	1319019148
Nadia	Karimpur II	217136	1295395501
Nadia	Chapra	310652	1291912874
	Total	5,677,460	32,856,299,996.23

Source: Census of India, 2011 and West Bengal Department of Panchayats and Rural Development

The above tables 1.1 and 1.2 show the list of top 20 (descending order) Hindu majority community development blocks and top 20 Muslim majority blocks respectively, that received the largest amount of Total Government Spending in 9 years between 2010 and 2018. Evidently, it can be seen that the Hindu majority blocks have received more government spending than the Muslim majority blocks for an almost similar number of populations. In total, the top 20 Hindu majority blocks with a combined population of 5.7 million have received 41.3 billion rupees in 9 years during the period 2010-2018, while the top 20 Muslim majority blocks have received 32.8 billion rupees for 5.6 million people, which is almost 8.5 billion rupees more than the Muslim majority blocks. In per capita terms, these Hindu majority blocks received about 7200 rupees per capita, which is 1400 rupees more per capita than what the Muslim majority blocks received (5800 per capita). Clearly, the empirical data point out that there is disparity in the allocation of the total government spending on public goods among blocks.

Table 1. 3 Top 20 Blocks (Hindu Majority) with Total BEUP Spending during 2010-2018

District	Block	Population	BEUP Payment (₹)
Hooghly	Balagarh	228998	54,726,435
Nadia	Santipur	241080	50,862,373
North 24 PGS	Barrackpore I	194333	50,531,546
East Burdwan	Jamalpur	266338	48,572,543
Nadia	Ranaghat II	368681	48,192,201
Howrah	Bagnan I	220915	46,338,887
South 24 PGS	Sonarpur	219863	46,202,614
South 24 PGS	Bishnupur II	214531	46,050,652
North 24 PGS	Barrackpore II	217171	45,757,759
East Burdwan	Bhatar	263064	45,635,361
South 24 PGS	Falta	249561	42,863,741
Bankura	Indpur	156522	41,595,910
Bankura	Bankura I	107685	41,525,288
West Midnapore	Dashpur II	238529	41,440,976
South 24 PGS	Basanti	336717	41,273,405
Howrah	Panchla	251930	40,594,778
East Burdwan	Manteswar	237398	40,464,072
East Burdwan	Khandakosh	189336	40,178,580
South 24 PGS	Canning I	304724	40,047,208
Nadia	Tehatta I	244322	39,621,962
	Total	4,751,698	892,476,291

Source: Census of India, 2011 and West Bengal Department of Panchayats and Rural Development

Table 1. 4 Top 20 Blocks (Muslim majority) with Total BEUP Spending between 2010-2018

District	Block	Population	BEUP Payment (₹)
Murshidabad	Berhampore	446887	67,903,377
Nadia	Kaliganj	334881	51,588,153
South 24 PGS	Magrahat II	304744	49,528,758
South 24 PGS	Magrahat I	269494	46,068,910
Murshidabad	Hariharpara	257571	39,849,358
Nadia	Karimpur II	217136	39,021,838
Nadia	Chapra	310652	33,280,525
Murshidabad	Kandi	220145	32,129,121
Birbhum	Murarai II	222033	30,720,467
Murshidabad	Jalangi	252477	30,659,373
Murshidabad	Raghunathganj I	195627	29,960,325
South 24 PGS	Bhangar I	249170	27,484,440
South 24 PGS	Jaynagar II	252164	27,414,741
Murshidabad	Beldanga I	319322	26,789,096

South 24 PGS	Canning II	252523	26,606,070
Murshidabad	Khargram	273332	25,903,612
North 24 PGS	Basirhat II	226130	24,656,213
North 24 PGS	Deganga	319213	24,386,444
Murshidabad	Suti I	179908	24,257,307
South 24 PGS	Bhangar II	246708	23,526,968
	Total	5,350,117	681,735,096

Source: Census of India, 2011 and West Bengal Department of Panchayats and Rural Development

Similarly, table 1.3 and 1.4 show the top 20 Hindu as well as the Muslim majority blocks that received the largest amount of BEUP (Bidhayak Elaka Unnayan Prakalpa) spending during 2010-2018. According to the above tables, in total, the top 20 Hindu majority blocks received 892 million rupees for 4.7 million people, while the top 20 Muslim majority blocks received 681 million rupees for 5.3 million people. Hence, the top 20 Hindu majority blocks with 0.6 million less people received 211 million rupees more than the top 20 Muslim majority blocks. In terms of per capita allocation of BEUP spending, these Hindu majority blocks received about 188 rupees per capita, which is 61 rupees more per capita than what the Muslim majority blocks received (127 per capita). The numbers show the existence of inequality in BEUP funds allocation among blocks.

Table 1. 5 Top 15 Blocks (Hindu Majority) with Total MPLADS Spending during 2010-2018

District	Block	Population	MPLADS Payment (₹)
South Dinajpur	Kushmandi	198752	810397886.8
North 24 PGS	Barrackpore I	194333	113845353
Bankura	Bankura I	107685	49969044.4
South 24 PGS	Sonarpur	219863	48955547
East Midnapore	Mahisadal	206277	46771530.66
West Midnapore	Keshpur	339258	44685268
Coochbehar	Mathabhanga II	196256	40740763
East Midnapore	Tamluk	217776	39093067
Jalpaiguri	Maynaguri	281554	37185115
North 24 PGS	Bagda	242974	36832169
North 24 PGS	Barrackpore II	217171	36404575
Bankura	Barjora	202049	36113204
East Burdwan	Manteswar	237398	35597369
Hooghly	Balagarh	228998	35347088
Bankura	Taldangra	147893	34857595
	Total	3238237	1,446,795,574.84

Source: Census of India, 2011 and West Bengal Department of Panchayats and Rural Development

Table 1. 6 Top 15 Blocks (Muslim Majority) with Total MPLADS Spending during 2010-18

District	Block	Population	MPLADS Payment (₹)
South 24 PGS	Magrahat I	269494	34554946
North 24 PGS	Amdanga	191673	33896085
South 24 PGS	Magrahat II	304744	27873700
South 24 PGS	Canning II	252523	24916601.86
North 24 PGS	Deganga	319213	24091730
North 24 PGS	Basirhat II	226130	23914632
North Dinajpur	Goalpokhor II	291252	20550456
South 24 PGS	Bhangar II	246708	19708672
South 24 PGS	Diamond Harbour I	156166	17830829
North 24 PGS	Minakha	199084	17193693
South 24 PGS	Jaynagar II	252164	15436726
North Dinajpur	Hemtabad	142056	11706485
Malda	Ratua I	275388	10776769
Birbhum	Murarai II	222033	10497711
North 24 PGS	Barasat II	200918	8152469
	Total	3549546	301,101,504.86

Source: Census of India, 2011 and West Bengal Department of Panchayats and Rural Development

It is important to note that the block wise Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) fund spending data were not available for all the blocks for Murshidabad, a Muslim majority district in West Bengal. However, it is evident from the above two tables, in terms of the allocation of the MPLADS spending, there exists a huge disparity among the top 15 Hindu and Muslim majority blocks. The above tables 1.5 and 1.6 present that the top 15 Hindu majority blocks received 1.44 billion rupees for 3.2 million people, which is almost 5 times more than what the top 15 Muslim majority blocks received (301 million) between 2010 and 2018. In terms of per capita allocation of MPLADS spending, these Hindu majority blocks received about 446 rupees per capita, which is 362 rupees more per capita than what the Muslim majority blocks received (84 per capita). This confirms the presence of a massive disparity in terms of MPLADS spending among the top 15 recipient blocks.

Therefore, the empirical data show, in general, there's a disparity at least among the top recipient community development blocks in terms of the distribution of the total government spending on public goods, BEUP, and MPLADS spending as found above.

Table 1. 7 20 Hindu Majority Blocks with Population and Elected PS Member share (%)

District	Block	Hindu Population	Hindu PS	Muslim Population	Muslim PS	Hindu PS Differential
Hoghly	Goghat I	89.7	95.0	9.8	5.0	5.3
West Midnapore	Salboni	89.5	96.7	3.2	3.3	7.2
West Midnapore	Garhbeta I	75.1	85.7	22.2	14.3	10.6
Nadia	Haringhata	71.1	91.7	28.2	8.3	20.6
Coochbehar	Sitai	70.6	80.0	29.3	20.0	9.4
East Burdwan	Katwa I	70.3	76.9	29.4	23.1	6.6
East Burdwan	Kalna I	68.6	92.6	29.0	7.4	24.0
Birbhum	Rampurhat I	67.4	79.2	30.6	20.8	11.8
Birbhum	Mohd. Bazar	67.1	85.7	31.3	14.3	18.6
South Dinajpur	Kumarganj	64.2	87.0	34.1	13.0	22.8

Nadia	Nabadwip	61.4	81.0	38.2	19.0	19.6
South 24 PGS	Mathurapur I	59.4	66.7	40.4	33.3	7.3
South 24 PGS	Kulpi	58.9	70.7	40.6	29.3	11.8
East Burdwan	Manteswar	57.7	61.1	41.8	38.9	3.4
Murshidabad	Burwan	56.8	59.5	43.1	40.5	2.7
Malda	Manikchak	56.0	67.7	43.9	32.3	11.7
North 24 PGS	Barasat I	55.4	53.85	44.1	46.15	-1.6
Howrah	Panchla	53.2	63.6	46.6	36.4	10.4
South 24 PGS	Budge Budge I	52.4	64.7	47.4	35.3	12.3
North 24 PGS	Swarupnagar	52.2	80.0	47.6	20.0	27.8

Source: Census of India, 2011 and West Bengal State Election Commission

Table 1. 8 20 Muslim Majority Blocks with Population and Elected PS Member share (%)

District	Block	Hindu Population	Hindu PS	Muslim Population	Muslim PS	Muslim PS Differential
Murshidabad	Domkol	10.2	18.5	89.7	81.5	-8.2
Murshidabad	Bhagwangola II	10.5	0.0	89.4	100.0	10.6
Birbhum	Murarai II	24.9	40.7	75.0	59.3	-15.7
Malda	Chanchal II	27.8	52.4	71.2	47.6	-23.6
North 24 PGS	Basirhat II	29.7	51.9	70.1	48.1	-22.0
Birbhum	Nalhati II	29.8	47.1	70.1	52.9	-17.2
North 24 PGS	Basirhat I	31.2	42.9	68.5	57.1	-11.4
South 24 PGS	Bhangar I	32.4	48.1	67.4	51.9	-15.5
South 24 PGS	Canning II	31.1	44.4	67.1	55.6	-11.5
Dinajpur (N)	Goalpokhar II	34.5	43.8	64.1	53.1	-11.0
North 24 PGS	Haroa	38.8	54.2	61.1	45.8	-15.3
Malda	Harish. Pur I	40.3	52.4	59.4	47.6	-11.8
Birbhum	Murarai I	40.6	52.4	58.9	47.6	-11.3
South 24PGS	Magrahat I	40.4	57.6	57.8	42.4	-15.4
North 24 PGS	Hasnabad	43.3	61.5	56.5	38.5	-18.0
Murshidabad	Raghunathganj I	43.3	55.6	56.5	44.4	-12.1
Murshidabad	Jiaganj	44.6	58.3	54.5	41.7	-12.8
Dinajpur (N)	Karandighi	45.7	68.4	53.7	31.6	-22.1
South 24 PGS	D. Harbour I	47.7	63.6	52.2	36.4	-15.8
South 24 PGS	Jaynagar II	47.0	70.0	52.2	30.0	-22.2

Source: Census of India, 2011 and West Bengal State Election Commission

The above two tables (1.7 and 1.8) compare the details of 20 Hindu and Muslim majority blocks of similar population and their elected Panchayat Samiti (PS) member

share (percentage wise). The blocks are chosen according to similar percentile i.e. above 80 percent, between 70 to 80 percent, 60 to 70 percent, and 50 to 60 to get a percentile wise comparison instead of the top 20. This is because there are no Muslim majority blocks with more than 90 percent Muslim population in the data and there are more than 35 Hindu majority blocks with more than 90 percent Hindu population. The tables show that all the Hindu majority blocks also have the majority of elected PS members in their blocks. Additionally, looking at the differential column, it's clear that the Hindu majority blocks have more elected PS members than their population share in those blocks, except for one block (Barasat I). However, excluding one block (Bhagwangola II), almost all the Muslim majority blocks have less elected PS members than their share of the population in those blocks. This comparison shows that the Hindu majority blocks share a disproportionately higher number of elected PS members, while the Muslim majority blocks share an unreasonably lower number of elected PS members than their population share respectively.

Table 1. 9 20 Muslim Majority Blocks with Less than Majority Elected PS Member (%)

District	Block	Hindu Population	Hindu PS	Muslim Population	Muslim PS	PS Differential
Malda	Chanchal II	27.8	52.3	71.2	47.6	-23.6
North 24 PGS	Basirhat II	29.7	51.8	70.1	48.1	-22.0
North 24 PGS	Haroa	38.8	54.1	61.1	45.8	-15.3
Malda	Harishchandra I	40.3	52.3	59.4	47.6	-11.8
Birbhum	Murarai I	40.6	52.3	58.9	47.6	-11.3
South 24 PGS	Magrahat I	40.4	57.5	57.8	42.4	-15.4
Murshidabad	Raghunathganj I	43.3	55.5	56.5	44.4	-12.1
North 24 PGS	Hasnabad	43.3	61.5	56.5	38.4	-18.0
Murshidabad	M Jiaganj	44.6	58.3	54.5	41.6	-12.8
Murshidabad	Khargram	45.5	55.5	54.2	44.4	-9.8
N Dinajpur	Karandighi	45.7	68.4	53.7	31.5	-22.1
Murshidabad	Berhampore	45.9	50.9	53.6	49.0	-4.6

Nadia	Nakashipara	46.5	57.7	53.1	42.2	-10.9
South 24 PGS	D. Harbour I	47.7	63.6	52.2	36.3	-15.8
South 24 PGS	Jaynagar II	47.0	70.0	52.2	30.0	-22.2
North 24 PGS	Minakhan	47.8	62.5	51.6	37.5	-14.1
Malda	Kaliachowk III	49.0	54.7	50.7	45.2	-5.5
N Dinajpur	Hemtabad	49.2	60.0	50.1	40.0	-10.1
South 24 PGS	Magrahat II	48.6	58.5	50.0	41.4	-8.5
Nadia	Tehatta II	49.1	57.1	50.0	42.8	-7.0

Source: Census of India, 2011 and West Bengal State Election Commission

The above table 1.9 shows the share of elected Panchayat Samiti (PS) members for 20 Muslim majority blocks in West Bengal. It is important to note that, in general, all the Hindu majority blocks also have a majority of elected PS members. However, this is not the case for the Muslim majority blocks. The above table shows that 20 out of the 65 Muslim majority blocks, do not have a majority of elected PS members in those blocks. It is significant, as more than 30 percent of the Muslim majority blocks do not have a majority of elected PS members in those blocks. Some of the Muslim majority blocks have a huge difference in terms of its elected PS member share in those blocks. For example, the Muslim majority blocks, such as Chanchal II in Malda, Basirhat II in North 24 PGS, Karandighi in North Dinajpur, and Jaynagar II in South 24 PGS, have a huge gap of more than 22 percent in their share of elected PS members in those blocks. This gap, which could be termed as political under-representation, seriously undermines the prospect of proportionate political representation at least in the Muslim majority blocks. This could also put these blocks at a disadvantage to their economic development. It is also found in the data that many blocks with a Muslim population between 35 and 50 percent, also have disproportionately lower number of elected Muslim PS members, while for blocks with a similar percentage of the Hindu population, have disproportionately higher number of elected Hindu PS members like the Hindu majority blocks. For example, Magrahat I in

South 24 PGS, a block with a Hindu population of 40.4 percent has 57.5 percent Hindu elected PS members in it, which is 17.2 percent more than its share of the population. On the other hand, Swarupnagar in North 24 PGS, a block with 47.6 percent Muslim population has only 20 percent Muslim elected PS members, which is shockingly 27.6 percent less than its population share of the block. Overall, the above tables show that there is significantly less than a proportionate political representation from the Muslims in the Panchayat Samiti (PS) level of government for the above-mentioned blocks.

Table 2. 1 West Bengal Political Representation in the Legislative Assembly (1952-2018)

Year	Total no. of Constituencies	Hindu Population	Hindu MLA	Hindu MLA (%)	Muslim Population	Muslim MLA	Muslim MLA (%)
1952	187	78.45	165	0.88	19.80	22	0.12
1957	195	78.45	170	0.87	19.80	25	0.13
1962	252	76.22	225	0.89	20.00	27	0.11
1967	280	76.22	245	0.88	20.00	35	0.13
1971	280	74.34	251	0.90	21.00	29	0.10
1972	280	74.34	245	0.88	21.00	35	0.13
1977	294	74.34	257	0.87	21.00	37	0.13
1982	294	73.72	258	0.88	21.50	36	0.12
1987	294	73.72	259	0.88	21.50	35	0.12
1991	294	73.01	252	0.86	23.60	42	0.14
1996	294	73.01	254	0.86	23.60	40	0.14
2001	294	72.47	256	0.87	25.25	38	0.13
2006	294	72.47	251	0.85	25.25	43	0.15
2011	294	70.54	240	0.82	27.01	54	0.18
2016	294	70.54	236	0.80	27.01	58	0.20

Source: Census of India, 2011 and Election Commission of India

The above table 2.1 shows the political representation by the Hindus and the Muslims in the Legislative Assembly of West Bengal between 1952 and 2018. According to the table, there has been 15 Legislative Assembly elections held since 1952 in West Bengal. The table shows the share of the population, and the Assembly seats held by both the

Hindus and the Muslims. It is quite clear that the Muslim political representation in the Legislative Assembly has always been lower than their share of the population of the State. It is important to note that about 22 percent of the Assembly seats have always had a Muslim majority population. The Hindu political representation seems to have been disproportionately higher than their population share of the State. However, the Muslim political representation in the Legislative Assembly has improved since 2011. In the 2016 Legislative Assembly election, the number of the elected Muslim MLAs reached 58, which is the highest number so far. Although it is still far short of the number according to the Muslim population (27.01 percent) share of the State, yet it seems to be catching up to the number of seats based on outright Muslim majority in a constituency.

Table 2. 2 West Bengal Political Representation in the Parliament of India (1951-2018)

Year	Total MP Seats	Hindu Population	Hindu MP	Hindu MP (%)	Muslim Population	Muslim MP	Muslim MP (%)
1951	26	78.5	24	92.3	19.8	2	7.7
1957	28	78.5	26	92.9	19.8	2	7.1
1962	36	76.2	33	91.7	20.0	3	8.3
1967	40	76.2	36	90.0	20.0	4	10.0
1971	40	74.3	36	90.0	21.0	4	10.0
1977	42	74.3	39	92.9	21.0	3	7.1
1980	42	74.3	35	83.3	21.0	7	16.7
1984	42	73.7	36	85.7	21.5	6	14.3
1989	42	73.7	36	85.7	21.5	6	14.3
1991	42	73.0	37	88.1	23.6	5	11.9
1996	42	73.0	37	88.1	23.6	5	11.9
1998	42	73.0	36	85.7	23.6	6	14.3
1999	42	73.0	36	85.7	23.6	6	14.3
2004	42	72.5	37	88.1	25.3	5	11.9
2009	42	72.5	36	85.7	25.3	6	14.3
2014	42	70.5	35	83.3	27.0	7	16.7

Source: Census of India, 1951-2011 and Election Commission of India

The above table 2.2 lists the number of elected Hindu and Muslim Members of the Parliament (MPs) of India between 1951 (1st Lok Sabha) and 2014 (the 16th Lok Sabha). It

can be seen that the total number of the MP seats has increased gradually from 26 in 1951, to 28 in 1957, to 36 in 1962, to 40 in 1967 and finally, to its current number 42 since 1977. The list compares the number of elected Hindu and Muslim MPs to their respective population share of the State. It is evident that the number of the elected Hindu MPs has always been more than their population share, while the number of the elected Muslim MPs has been lower than their share of the population. According to the above table, the Hindus have had a higher degree of political representation in the Parliament than the Muslims. The Hindus have enjoyed at least about 10 to 15 percent more parliamentary political representation than their population share of West Bengal. Although the Muslim political representation in the parliament from West Bengal has improved from a meagre 7 percent in 1951 to 16 percent in 2014, it is still disproportionately lower than their share of the population of West Bengal. Interestingly, there are at least 8 Parliamentary Constituency (Lok Sabha) seats that have an outright majority of Muslim population. Therefore, the empirical data as shown above, indicate that political representation of the Muslims has been remarkably lower in the Panchayat Samiti, Legislative Assembly, and also in the Parliament, while the Hindu political representation has been disproportionately higher in all types of government.

4 Data and Variables

This section gives the details of the variables and descriptions of the data that is used in the models. This paper examines the link between population, religion, political representation and rural economic development.

4.1 Data

The dataset consists of 2799 observations for 311 community development blocks in West Bengal over a period of 9 years between 2010 and 1018. The sample includes government spending on public goods in numerous development schemes in the rural areas, population, literacy rate, average per capita income, etc. for which comparable and consistent data were available from various sources, mainly from the West Bengal Department of Panchayats and Rural Development (P&RD), Ministry of Rural Development of Government of India (MoRD), Indian Census 2011, and Election Commission of India, etc. among others.

The State Government directs rural development funds through various programs. According to the Department of West Bengal Panchayats and Rural Development (P&RD), there are four different categories, such as the Plan Fund (P&RD), the Plan Fund (other than P&RD), the Non-Plan Fund (other than P&RD), and the Government of India sponsored scheme, through which rural government spending on public goods is directed. The Department of West Bengal Panchayats and Rural Development (P&RD) claims that their goal is to deliver rural economic and social development by facilitating numerous development programs. For example, the P&RD department uses central and state government funds to create employment opportunities for the rural population, such as

wage employment through the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) by building and improving physical infrastructure, such as roads, canals, and health center, etc. providing social security through the Widow and Old Age Pension for the disadvantaged and excluded groups.

In this paper, I have created a database and included all these programs into four different categories. These will be used as dependent variables in the empirical model for regression analysis. Below, these four categories, which include all the rural development programs and schemes are explained in detail.

Government of India (GOI) Sponsored Scheme

The Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, is responsible for the socioeconomic development of rural India. To accelerate rapid rural socioeconomic development, the department sponsors various schemes by focusing on education, health, housing, drinking water, roads etc. among other social and economic issues. These programs are known as the Government of India Sponsored Schemes. While some of these sponsored programs are fully funded by the Central Government of India, others are partly funded and implemented in collaboration with the State Government through the community development blocks office or through the Panchayats. The following development programs are included in the Government of India Sponsored Schemes and described briefly.

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS)

The Central Government of India passed the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) in 2005 to provide economic security through employment guarantee in the rural areas. This Act, according to the Ministry of Rural Development of Government of India,

guarantees 100 days of unskilled manual wage employment to any willing adult member of any household at a well-defined statutory minimum wage in each financial year (Nrega.nic.in, 2017). This Act has now been renamed as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). It aims to create long-term rural assets in the form of rural infrastructure development by absorbing under-employed and surplus labor in rural areas through wage employment (Nrega.nic.in, 2017). The MGNREGS is generally implemented through the Gram Panchayats (GPs). One interesting feature of this Act is that the State Government is obliged to pay the minimum statutory wage rate as an unemployment allowance to an eligible applicant in case the Panchayats fail to provide work within the specified 15 days after receiving the job application.

Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana (SGRY)

The Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), launched in 2001, is a self-targeting, Central Government of India run program to provide supplementary wage employment to the rural poor, mainly those living Below the Poverty Line (BPL) (Tnrd.gov.in, 2019). Under this program, priority is given to women, the Schedule Castes (SCs), and the Schedule Tribes (STs) and food grains are given to provide food security along with a specified wage. The Gram Panchayats (GPs) in each community development block manage this program. Although this scheme provides gainful wage employment to the rural poor, it has been observed that its reach is limited. Due to the limited reach of this program, the Central Government of India launched the more universal and guaranteed employment program MGNREGS.

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)

This scheme is part of the rural infrastructure development program initiated in the year 2000 by the Central Government of India. The PMGSY is a fully funded GOI program, which aims to build new all-weather roads in rural India to improve connectivity among all eligible villages that are not yet connected. The funding arrangement changed later in 2015 to a 60:40 partnership between the Central and State Government. According to this scheme, the eligible habitations (cluster of population) with more than 500 inhabitants in the plains and 250 inhabitants in the hilly areas, should have a new all-weather road by the end of 2019 (Omms.nic.in, 2012). However, this scheme also has the provision of upgrading existing roads in areas that also fall under the above-mentioned category. While the National Rural Roads and Development Agency (NRRDA) manages and implements the PMGSY scheme, the Online Management, Monitoring and Accounting System (OMMAS) is responsible to look into its progress. A report published in the Assam Tribune, claims that the PMGSY scheme has brought positive benefits to many villages in the North-Eastern State of Manipur (Assamtribune.com, 2010).

Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana - Gramin (PMAY-G)/ Indira Awaas Yojana

The Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G), is a social welfare scheme aimed at providing housing for the households under the Below Poverty Line (BPL) category in rural India. This program is used to be known as the Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY). According to the Ministry of Rural Development of Government of India, a one-time financial assistance package of around 70,000–120,000 rupees is given to construct or upgrade a house to the rural poor, mainly the Schedule Castes (SCs) and the Schedule Tribes (STs), minorities in the BPL category, and few other targeted groups under a 75:25 partnership between the

Central and State government. The primary objective of this program is to gradually replace all the temporary (kuchcha) houses in the rural areas and provide better living spaces to the poorest section of the society in India (Pmayg.nic.in, 2013). This program, which is primarily a public housing scheme, is also part of the poverty eradication strategy of the Central Government.

Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)

The Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) is a poverty alleviation program by the Central Government of India in rural areas. It is done through the Self-Help Groups (SHOs), which motivate the rural poor to self-employment by enhancing their skills through training. It also encourages the rural poor to participate in numerous government-run economic development programs by availing government subsidy and investment credit from banks to start their own small business, such as poultry, fishery, pottery, dairy, etc. This program, which provides income opportunities for the rural poor to increase household income, was launched by the Central Government in 1999 but has since been renamed twice, in 2011 as the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), and DeenDayal Antyodaya Yojana (DAY) in 2017 (Aajeevika.gov.in, 2015).

Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF)

This Central Government sponsored program was institutionalized in 2007 and covers 250 districts in 27 States in India. The goal of the Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) is to address the regional economic development gaps or backwardness among districts (Pib.nic.in,2012). Under this scheme, first backward districts are identified and then, funds are channeled to those districts to reduce the existing developmental inequalities. The BRGF is allocated only after receiving proper planning from the backward districts to fill

infrastructural gaps in areas, such as safe drinking water facility, road connectivity, and electrification, etc. Clearly, this program plays an important role in the economic development of backward regions in West Bengal as well as in India.

National Social Assistance Program (NSAP)

The National Social Assistance Program (NSAP), in line with the Directive Principles in the Article 41 of the Constitution of India, aims to ensure at least minimum social assistance to the poor. The NSAP consists of four different social security programs, such as the Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS), the Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS), the Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS), and the National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) (Nsap.nic.in, 1995). It is a Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) administered social welfare program, which provides public assistance for old age, disability, unemployment, etc. to maintain a basic minimum living standard of the poor. According to the Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS), any person aged between 60 and 79 years and belongs to the Below Poverty Line (BPL) category, receives 400 rupees a month and 500 a month for anyone above 79 years as old age pension (Wbprd.gov.in, 2019). The Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS) ensures a widow belonging to the BPL category a monthly pension of 200 rupees. An eligible widow, as per the scheme, should be aged between 40 and 59 years to receive this social benefit. Similarly, any person with severe and multiple disabilities and under the BPL category, currently receives 200 rupees a month as a disability pension under the Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS). The National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) currently gives 10,000 rupees as a single social benefit payment to any household that has lost its primary income earning

member due to death. The eligible household must belong to the BPL category and the age of the deceased primary income earner must be between 18 and 64 years (Wbprd.gov.in, 2019).

Plan Fund (P&RD)

The Plan Fund (P&RD) includes all the rural development schemes and programs that are sponsored by the West Bengal State Government. Below, some of the major development programs among a multitude of programs undertaken by the State Government are explained briefly.

Shishu Shiksha Karmasuchi (SSK) and Madhyamik Shiksha Karmasuchi (MSK)

The objective of this State Government sponsored program is to provide greater access to elementary and upper primary education in the rural areas. According to the P&RD, the SSK program along with the Madhyamik Shiksha Karmasuchi (MSK) program are implemented and monitored by the Paschimbanga Rajya Shishu Shiksha Mission (PBRSSM). Understanding the importance of education in poverty alleviation and to achieve universal primary education, the State Government put greater emphasis on improving access to primary and upper primary education in West Bengal. According to this scheme, a school (Shishu Shiksha Kendra) can be opened even if there are only 20 children that need access to primary education in a village. These essentially community organized and managed primary schools (SSKs) get financial support from the Gram Panchayats (GPs) as facilitators. Similarly, according to the P&RD, the MSKs are organized and managed by the community as well. However, the community also provides some necessary basic infrastructure in this case (Wbprd.gov.in, 2019).

Rural Water Supply (RWS) & Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC)

According to the P&RD, the Panchayats are responsible to provide safe drinking water and sanitation facilities in the rural areas in all the districts. This is part of the State's strategy to improve public health in West Bengal. The Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) was launched to improve access to proper sanitary facilities in the rural areas and reduce water borne diseases in West Bengal (Wbprd.gov.in, 2019). Under this scheme, the delivery and installation of sanitary products, such as toilets, are done in collaboration with an NGO. The Panchayats are responsible for the campaign and encourage households to join the program. According to a report published by the department of P&RD, as a result of this TSC program, access to sanitary toilets for rural households in West Bengal has improved from 27 percent in 2001 to 74 percent in 2007.

Provident Fund for Landless Agricultural Laborers (PROFLAL)

The Provident Fund for Landless Agricultural Laborers (PROFLAL) scheme provides an opportunity for agricultural landless laborers to get a lump sum amount after reaching the retirement age of 50 years. The eligible laborers aged between 18 and 50 years, who do not hold more than 0.5 acre of land, but earn a living out of agricultural labor, contribute 10 rupees a month to this program until its maturity. The State Government also equally contributes in this program and the participants get the total amount including the interest payments after it reaches its maturity at 50 years (Wbprd.gov.in, 2019). The GPs and the Block Development Officers are responsible for collecting the funds and maintaining the accounts.

Border Area Development Program (BADP)

The objective of the Border Area Development Program (BADP) is to improve the essential development requirements of the community development blocks located near the international border with Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. Although it is a Central Government sponsored program, it is implemented and its progress is monitored by the State Government through the department of P&RD (Pib.nic.in, 2019).

Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS)

The Members of the Parliament of India recommend developmental works in their constituencies according to local needs through the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS). This program is monitored and managed by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI) of the Government of India. According to this scheme, each elected Lok Sabha (Lower House of the Parliament) and nominated Rajya Sabha (Upper House of the Parliament) Members of the Parliament of a State is allowed to recommend developmental work worth 50 million rupees in each financial year during their 5-year term in areas, such as safe drinking water, roads, health and sanitation, education, sports, agriculture, etc. among others (Mplads.gov.in, 2019). The district authorities get the funds directly from the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation and implement development works recommended by the MPs. This scheme, along with other programs, intends to create durable rural community assets for long-term economic and social development. It is important to note that each Parliamentary Constituency consists of several community development blocks. A Member of Parliament (MP) has the liberty to choose blocks to recommend development work according to his/her preferences. Therefore, this may lead to block preference bias and

consequently, skewed distribution of development funds. In this paper, panel data have been used for 35 Parliamentary Constituencies, which cover 285 community development blocks for nine years between 2010 and 2018. The data for the MPLADS, have been collected from the West Bengal Department of Panchayats and Rural Development (P&RD) and the Ministry of Rural Development of the Government of India. The data consists of the 15th (2009-2014) and the 16th (2014-2018) Indian General Elections (Lok Sabha). This paper uses MPLADS as a dependent variable to see if and how factors, such as population, religion, and religious identity of the MPs, affect its distribution among the community development blocks in West Bengal.

Member of Legislative Assembly Local Area Development Scheme (MLALADs)

The above-mentioned scheme in West Bengal is known as the Bidhayak Elaka Unnayan Prakalpa (BEUP). It is quite similar to the MPLADS program. According to the West Bengal Department of Planning and Statistics, the elected Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) of the state of West Bengal can recommend development work in their respective Constituencies through the BEUP program. Under the BEUP program, each MLA, during their 5-year term, is allowed to recommend socioeconomic development work worth 6 million rupees in each financial year in their local Constituency area. The Department of Planning, Statistics and Programme Monitoring manages and monitors the recommended works and their progress. The BEUP fund is released twice a year in equal installments of 3 million to the community development office. The MLAs, in general, recommend development work as per local needs and overall priority of a district. Although there are 341 community development blocks, but the total number of the Legislative Assembly (Bidhan Sabha Constituency) seats in the West Bengal Bidhan Sabha is 294. This means

there are more community development blocks than the Legislative Assembly seats. While, in general, each community development block has its own legislative assembly seat, in some cases, a few small community development blocks are combined to form a Legislative Assembly seat. For example, the Baduria community development block in North 24 PGS district has Baduria Bidhan Sabha Constituency as its Legislative Assembly seat. However, community development blocks, such as Galsi I, Galsi II, and Kanksa are merged together to form Galsi Bidhan Sabha Constituency. The BEUP data include three Legislative Assembly Elections in West Bengal, such as the 2006, 2011, and 2016 West Bengal State Elections, which capture development spending patterns under different MLAs for each block. The BEUP data for 311 community development blocks have been collected from the West Bengal Department of Panchayats and Rural Development (P&RD) for 9 years from 2010 to 2018. In this paper, BEUP fund is used as a dependent variable to see if and how factors, such as population, religion, and the religious identity of MLAs, etc. affect its distribution among the community development blocks in West Bengal.

Plan Fund (Other Than P&RD) & Non-Plan Fund (Other Than P&RD)

These are also West Bengal State Government funded programs. They include all the other programs, excluding those mentioned in the GOI and Plan Fund category. These miscellaneous temporary programs are implemented from time to time according to the local demands. Examples, such as the river embankment repairs, fishermen grant, Khal-Bil conservation, temporary health camp, maintenance of BPHC, flood control, cultural affairs, animal husbandry, Kutir Jyoti, and horticulture, etc. are included in these two categories. These two types of government spending are also used as dependent variables in this paper.

Population

The data for the population of the community development blocks in West Bengal have been collected from the 2011 Census of India database. In this paper, the population of the blocks has been used as an explanatory variable to see if and how population affect government spending on public goods among the community development blocks in the rural areas. Although the population of West Bengal has been growing at a reasonable pace, it has been kept constant for each block in this paper as there has been no official count since 2011. According to the 2011 Census of India, the population of West Bengal is 91.34 million (Census of India, 2011). The following table gives the district wise population figures. The community development block wise population is shown in Appendix A.

Table 2. 3 District wise Population, Income Per Capita and Literacy rate in West Bengal

District	Population	Hindu (%) Population	Muslim (%) Population	Literacy Rate (%)	Income Per Capita (₹)
Bankura	3,596,292	84.3	8.1	71.0	69,000.0
Birbhum	3,502,404	62.3	37.1	70.7	62,000.0
Cooch Behar	2,819,086	74.1	25.5	74.8	60,000.0
East Burdwan	4,835,532	73.7	25.8	74.7	98,000.0
East Midnapore	5,095,875	85.2	14.6	87.0	111,000.0
Hooghly	5,519,145	82.9	15.8	81.8	87,000.0
Howrah	4,850,029	72.9	26.2	83.3	95,000.0
Jalpaiguri	3,872,846	81.5	11.5	73.3	72,000.0
Jhargram	1,136,548	87.1	1.9	70.9	60,000.0
Malda	3,988,845	48	51.3	61.7	61,000.0
Murshidabad	7,103,807	33.2	66.3	66.6	61,000.0
Nadia	5,167,600	72.2	26.8	75.0	70,000.0
North 24 PGS	10,009,781	73.5	25.8	84.1	90,000.0
North Dinajpur	3,007,134	49.3	49.9	59.1	46,000.0
Purulia	2,930,115	81	7.8	64.5	60,000.0
South 24 PGS	8,161,961	63.2	35.6	77.5	72,000.0
South Dinajpur	1,676,276	73.5	24.6	72.8	57,000.0
West Burdwan	2,882,031	84.7	13.3	78.8	72,000.0
West Midnapore	5,913,457	85.5	10.5	78.0	67,000.0

West Bengal	91,347,736	70.54	27.01	77.1	108,372.0

Source: Census of India, 2011

The population of the community development blocks is also used to create the qualitative explanatory variable, i.e. the Religion Dummy in the study. This is done by identifying blocks with a majority of religion, such as a Hindu majority block and a Muslim majority block, where Hindus and Muslims are more than 50 percent respectively. For example, in the community development block of Amta I in Howrah district, the total population of the block is 223261 and 73 percent of the population are Hindus and 26.8 percent of the population are Muslims. Hence, this block is categorized as a Hindu majority block. This is important as one of the objectives of this paper, is to find out if and how religious belief of a block changes government spending on public goods among the community development blocks.

Literacy Rate

The literacy rate of the community development blocks has been used as an explanatory variable as well. However, it is used as a control variable in the regression model, which means, although it is believed to have a significant impact on rural economic development and determining government spending on public goods, but the aim is to see the impact of other variables while keeping the effect of literacy rate constant. The data on the literacy rate of the community development blocks have been taken from the 2011 Census of India.

Average Per Capita Income

The average per capita income of the community development blocks has been calculated based on household income data from the 2011 Census of India. The Census data show three different categories of income groups in each community development block as the

percentage of the population. The three different categories of income groups are described as the percentage of the population having a household income below 5000 rupees, between 5000 and 10000 rupees and above 10000 rupees respectively. In this paper, I have created an index of the average income (estimate) per capita for all the blocks from the available data. For instance, in the Arambag community development block of Hooghly district, 84.34 percent of the people have an income which is below 5000 rupees a month, 9.86 percent have an income between 5000 and 10000 rupees, and only 5.81 percent have an income more than 10000 rupees a month. Therefore, the estimated average per capita income of the Arambag community development block is calculated to be 1846 rupees per month. In this paper, like the literacy rate, I have also used the average per capita income of the community development blocks as an explanatory variable in the regression model. However, as I have mentioned above, it is used as a control variable to see the impact of other variables, while its impact is considered as constant. It is important to note that the control variables are believed to have a significant impact on the dependent variables and without their presence, the regression model is more likely to suffer from misspecification i.e., missing or omitted variable bias. For the purpose of this paper, the control variables, such as the literacy rate and the average per capita income of the community development blocks, are not of primary focus.

Elected Political Representatives (PS, MLAs, and MPs)

There are three different types of democratic elections conducted every 5 years in West Bengal to elect political representatives, who then in turn, govern the State. These are namely, the General Election that elects the Members of the Parliament (MPs), State Election which elects the Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), and the three tier

Panchayat Elections that elect the Gram Panchayats (GPs) members or the village council representatives, the Panchayat Samiti (PSs) members or the community development block representatives, and the Zilla Parishad (ZPs) members or the district representatives. These elected representatives are responsible for all the decisions taken during their time in power at all levels of governance. Since all the decisions are taken by these elected representatives, it can be argued that their decisions might have an impact on the rural government spending on public goods in West Bengal. For example, if one of the community development blocks among two similar sized blocks, gets more development projects, such as the MGNREGS, PMGSY, SGSY, SSK, BRGF, TSC, etc. implemented, it can be argued that it is more likely to benefit from these socioeconomic development programs and have better roads, health facilities, income, literacy, and sanitation, etc. i.e. higher level of economic development than the other block that gets less of those programs. Now, the decisions of which community development blocks get how many and which development schemes, are taken by these elected representatives at all levels of government, but mostly at the block and district levels.

Elected representatives have different religious beliefs and they come from different social background. A number of studies confirm lower levels of economic development among the Muslim populated community development blocks (Sachar, 2006; Association SNAP and Guidance Guild Report, 2016) than other blocks. Now, this low level of economic development might be related to many factors. One of the objectives of this paper is to see if the religious identity (being a Hindu or a Muslim representative) of these elected representatives has any impact on government spending on public goods. This will test if there is any religious discrimination against the Muslim populated community

development blocks in terms of government spending on public goods. The data on the elected representatives in the Panchayat Samiti include all the elected members of the 2008, 2013 and 2018 three tier Panchayat Elections in West Bengal for 311 community development blocks in 19 districts for 9 years between 2010 and 2018. While the data on the elected MLAs include three State Elections, namely the 2006, 2011, and 2016 West Bengal State Assembly Elections (Vidhan Sabha), the data on the elected MPs include only two general elections, i.e. the 2009 and 2014 Indian General Elections (Lok Sabha) of India, which cover the 9-year period between 2010 and 2018. For the purpose of the paper, I will focus on the Panchayat Samiti (PS) members as the majority of the rural government spending decisions on socioeconomic development programs are taken and implemented at the block and district levels. I will also look at the MPs and MLAs separately for the distribution of the MPLADS and BEUP funds among community development blocks. The data on the elected representatives mentioned above, have been collected from the West Bengal State Election Commission (Wbsec.gov.in, 2019) and the Election Commission of India (Eci.gov.in, 2019).

4.1.1 Descriptive Statistics

Three datasets have been used to carry out the objectives of this paper.

Table 2. 4 Descriptive Statistics of the Variables in the Dataset

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Total Govt. Payment	2799	1.23e+08	7.73e+07	332002	6.99e+08
Total Govt. Receipt	2799	1.25e+08	8.01e+07	0	7.02e+08
Total Govt. Balance	2799	5.77e+07	3.59e+07	-1.23e+07	5.80e+08
GOI Payment	2799	6.26e+07	5.48e+07	0	4.77e+08
GOI Receipt	2799	6.23e+07	5.76e+07	0	6.58e+08
GOI Balance	2799	2.39e+07	2.55e+07	-9.11e+07	5.41e+08
Plan Fund Payment	2799	3.74e+07	4.16e+07	0	5.47e+08
Plan Fund Receipt	2799	3.75e+07	4.24e+07	0	5.50e+08
Plan Fund Balance	2799	1.42e+07	1.75e+07	-1.12e+08	1.61e+08
PF (Other) Payment	2799	2.06e+07	2.10e+07	0	2.03e+08
PF (Other) Receipt	2799	2.20e+07	2.38e+07	0	2.12e+08
PF (Other)Balance	2799	1.75e+07	1.76e+07	-1.73e+07	1.44e+08
NPF(Other) Payment	2799	3010000	8080000	0	1.41e+08
NPF(Other) Receipt	2799	3240000	8940000	0	1.48e+08
NPF(Other) Balance	2799	2350000	5870000	-1.61e+07	1.21e+08
BEUP Payment	2793	2160000	2280000	0	3.02e+07
BEUP Receipt	2793	2120000	2490000	0	3.28e+07
BEUP Balance	2793	1540000	1770000	-1750000	1.09e+07
MPLAD Payment	254	1.10e+09	4.41e+08	1.47e+08	2.51e+09
MPLAD Receipt	254	1.11e+09	4.45e+08	1.45e+08	2.56e+09
Population	2799	207352.1	70846.35	77979	446887
Hindu Population	2799	68.48	21.2	10.2	97.8
Hindu PS	2799	76.73	22.37	0	100
Muslim Population	2799	28.91	22.59	.2	89.7
Muslim PS	2799	23.31	22.37	0	100
Literacy Rate	2799	72.41	8.69	42.26	90.98
Income Per Capita	2799	73804.51	52345.24	5370.33	414192.1
Identity Dummy	2799	.85	.34	0	1
Religion Dummy	2799	.79	.40	0	1

Source: Census of India, 2011, ECI, WBSEC, WBP&RD

The above Table 2.4 reports the descriptive statistics of the dataset. The dependent variable, the annual Total Government Spending on public goods among the community

development blocks, varies from a low of 0.33 million to a high of 699 million rupees with a mean of 123 million rupees. The yearly GOI Spending varies from 0 rupees to 477 million rupees with a mean of 62 million rupees. Similarly, the annual BEUP Spending varies from 0 rupees to 30.2 million rupees with a mean of 2.1 million. However, the 9-year combined MPLAD Spending varies from 147 million rupees to 2510 million rupees with a mean of 1100 million rupees. So, in all the cases, spending varies widely. The explanatory variable, Population varies from a minimum of 77979 to a maximum of 446887 with a mean of 207352.1. The mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum of other dependent and explanatory variables are presented in the above table.

5 Methodology

This paper uses panel data on the yearly government spending on public goods, average per capita income, literacy rate, and population, etc. for 311 community development blocks in order to achieve the specified objectives. Below, I discuss the model and the results of the objectives separately.

This study is based on secondary data from 19 districts in West Bengal. It is observed in the literature review section that Bhalotra et al. (2014), Das et al (2011), and Pande (2003) used the regression analysis to examine the effect of the religious identity of State Legislators on development outcomes, minority concentration on the access to public goods, and political reservation on policy choice and public goods transfer outcomes respectively. Clots-Figueras (2011) also uses the same technique to study the effect of female political representation in the State Legislatures on public goods, policy and expenditure. Following their lead, I use the regression analysis method to estimate the relationships among the variables mentioned below.

Here, 19 districts out of the 23 districts in West Bengal are selected. Other districts, such as Alipurduar, Darjeeling, and Kalimpong are excluded due to non-availability of data and Kolkata is excluded as it is a metropolitan city and the focus is on rural areas. The data include 311 community development blocks as the other 30 blocks do not have comparable data for the specified time period of the study. Since the dataset consists of almost all the blocks in West Bengal, it ensures representativeness. The sampling methodology in this study is partly revised from the Census of India, where the villages are replaced by the community development blocks from the rural areas as the primary sampling units. Therefore, all the villages in those blocks are automatically included in the sample.

I will use the Census of India (2011) for the population, literacy rate and the average per capita income of the community development blocks. I will also use the West Bengal Departments of Panchayats and Rural Development, the Ministry of Rural Development, the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation, Govt. of India for the yearly government spending on public goods. Also, the primary survey data collected by the Sachar Committee in 2006 and the Association SNAP/Guidance Guild/Pratichi Trust in 2016, will be used for various socioeconomic indicators. The 311 community development blocks are identified and categorized according to the percentage of Hindu and Muslim population, and the percentage of Hindu and Muslim elected representatives. Following are the four categories.

1. Blocks with a majority of Hindu population (Hindus $>$ 50 percent)
2. Blocks with a majority of Muslim population (Muslims $>$ 50 percent)
3. Blocks with a majority of Hindu elected representatives (Hindu Elected members $>$ 50 percent)
4. Blocks with a majority of Muslim elected representatives (Muslim elected members $>$ 50 percent)

Then, an index of the elected representatives (PS members, MLAs, MPs) representing each block based on their religious identity, i.e. being a Hindu or a Muslim, is created with information from their election nomination form submitted to the election commission office during the election process.

Since these elected representatives are responsible for policy-making and government spending on public goods and its distribution, it is then possible to construct a relationship between the yearly government spending on public goods in these blocks and the religious

identity of the elected representatives. The explanatory variables are the population, religion, and the religious identity of elected representatives of a block. The dependent variable is the yearly government spending on public goods. In this paper, it is considered as a proxy for rural economic development as socioeconomic development outcomes are measured in terms of income, the quality and availability of government provided public amenities such as villages with safe drinking water facilities, electricity connection, paved roads, and primary schools, healthcare facilities, and various other rural infrastructures, etc. Since government spending on public goods is likely to lead to the quality and availability of public amenities in a block, it can be argued to be treated as a proxy of economic development. It is quite similar to the way household consumption is often taken as a proxy for household income. The control variables include the literacy rate, and the average income per capita of the blocks.

Here, I regress (using Ordinary Least Squares) the yearly government spending on public goods on the number of population and religion of a block, controlling for the average income per capita, and the literacy rate of the blocks. The following econometric model is used to investigate if there is a significant relationship between the population and religion of a block and government spending on public goods in that block in the rural areas.

If there is constant minority appeasement, we would expect a significant negative coefficient on the religion dummy. The qualitative explanatory variables, such as the religion dummy and the identity dummy are used in the equation (1) to detect discrimination due to religion. If the coefficients on the dummies are found to be positive and significant, then that would imply that religion has an impact on the yearly government

spending on public goods in the rural areas as well as the presence of religious discrimination. Following is the general model.

$$Y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{it} + \beta_2 Z_{it} + \beta_3 D_{it} + \beta_4 M_{it} + \mu_{it} \quad \ldots (1)$$

Where Y_{it} = Yearly government spending on block i for t years, X_{it} = Population of a block i for t years, Z_{it} = Control variables (education, income per capita etc.), and D_{it} is a qualitative explanatory variable, i.e. the Religion Dummy,

D_{it} =1 if a block has a Hindu majority, i.e. Hindu population >50 percent

= 0 if a block has a Muslim majority, i.e. Muslim population >50 percent

M_{it} is another Qualitative explanatory variable, i.e. the Identity Dummy

M_{it} =1 (if the Elected member is a Hindu or the percentage of elected Hindus members > 50 percent)

= 0 (if the Elected member is a Muslim or the percentage of elected Muslim members > 50 percent)

5.1 Effect of Population and Religion on Economic Development

5.1.1 The Model

The following model (2) has been used to estimate the effects of population and religion of economic development.

$$Y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{it} + \beta_2 Z_{it} + \beta_3 D_{it} + \mu_{it} \quad \ldots (2)$$

Where Y_{it} = Yearly government spending on block i for t years, X_{it} = Population of block i for t years, Z_{it} is the control variable, and D_{it} is the qualitative explanatory variable, i.e. the Religion Dummy, where

D_{it} =1 if a block has a Hindu majority, i.e. Hindu population > 50 percent

= 0 if a block has a Muslim majority, i.e. Muslim population > 50 percent

5.1.2 Regression Results

Table 2. 5 Effect of Population and Religion on Total Government Spending (2010-2018)

	(1) TG Payment	(2) TG Payment	(3) TG Payment	(4) TG Payment
TG Receipt	0.98***	0.98***	0.98***	0.98***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
TG Balance	-0.37***	-0.37***	-0.38***	-0.39***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Population	66.14***	65.10***	72.27***	85.27***
	(7.10)	(7.44)	(7.52)	(7.75)
Religion Dummy		-572970.05	3017922.50**	3802075.79***
		(1228908.34)	(1385921.39)	(1382388.66)
Literacy Rate			-337365.50***	-130366.16*
			(61335.30)	(69402.52)
Income Per Capita				-68.75***
				(11.04)
_cons	8379112.23***	9048288.49***	29747134.96***	17615700.16***
	(1490624.25)	(2069427.62)	(4289492.34)	(4684992.07)
Obs.	2799	2799	2799	2799
R-squared	.89	.89	.89	.90

Standard errors are in parenthesis
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The above panel data regression results show the effect of Population and Religion of the community development blocks on the yearly total Government spending (including all the Central and State Government Schemes) patterns in them. The primary explanatory variable is the Population of a block and the dependent variable is the annual Total Government Spending, while the Religion Dummy, a qualitative explanatory variable captures discrimination in spending allocation due to the religion of a block. The above results show that the explanatory variable population is positively related to the yearly

total government spending in all the four regression models. It is evident that the coefficient on the explanatory variable Population increases as more variables (the control variables and the Dummy variable) are included in the models. The positive coefficient suggests that as the Population (number of people) increases in a block, so does the yearly total government spending *ceteris paribus*. This means, according to the model 4 in the above table, each unit increase in Population (1 person increase) of a block is likely to increase the total Government spending by 85 rupees in that block in a year *ceteris paribus*. It can be seen that the coefficient on the Religion Dummy is positive and statistically significant in regression model 3 and strongly significant in model 4. The following hypothesis test is done to see if there's any discrimination in the yearly government spending allocation among the blocks due to religion.

If $\beta_3 > 0$, there is discrimination, in favor of the Hindu majority blocks. Therefore, the following statistical test is done.

Hypothesis:

Test H_0: $\beta_3 = 0$ (there is no discrimination due to religion)

Against H_1: $\beta_3 > 0$ (there is discrimination in favor of Hindu majority blocks)

Since $\beta_3 > 0$ ($\beta_3 = 3802075.79$) in model 4 in the above table 2.5 and it is statistically strongly significant, the null hypothesis is rejected and therefore, there is evidence of positive discrimination in favor of the Hindu majority blocks in terms of yearly total Government spending on public goods. The coefficient on the Religion Dummy can be interpreted as how much a Hindu majority community development block is likely to get in terms of total government spending more than a Muslim majority block in a year. According to the regression model 4 in the above table, keeping the effect of all other

variables constant, i.e. *ceteris paribus*, a Hindu majority block is estimated to be likely to get 3.8 million rupees more than a Muslim majority block in a year.

Table 2. 6 Effect of Population and Religion on Plan Fund (P&RD) Spending (2010-18)

	(1) PF Payment	(2) PF Payment	(3) PF Payment	(4) PF Payment
PF Receipt	1.02***	1.02***	1.01***	1.01***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
PF Balance	-0.37***	-0.37***	-0.37***	-0.37***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Population	14.00***	13.72***	15.52***	17.18***
	(3.13)	(3.29)	(3.33)	(3.42)
Religion Dummy		-159967.74	872921.78	983448.73
		(570748.97)	(646061.07)	(647856.88)
Literacy Rate			-96575.07***	-63997.81**
			(28491.99)	(32494.34)
Income PC				-10.67**
				(5.13)
_cons	1610451.79**	1797138.53*	7668250.57***	5726096.63***
	(678022.29)	(950540.93)	(1974940.84)	(2183280.71)
Obs.	2799	2799	2799	2799
R-squared	.90	.91	.91	.92

Standard errors are in parenthesis
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The above table (2.6) shows the effect of Population and Religion on yearly Plan Fund Spending among the community development blocks between 2010 and 2018. Similar to the earlier regression results, it can be seen that Population has a positive impact on Plan Fund (P&RD) Spending among the community development blocks. The different regression models show that the coefficient on Population increases as more variables are added. The relationship is positive and statistically strongly significant. The coefficient on the explanatory variable Population can be interpreted in terms of how much yearly Plan

Fund (P&RD) spending increases as the Population of a block increases, keeping the effects of the other variables constant. According to model 4 in the above table, if the Population of a block increases by one, the yearly Plan Fund (P&RD) Spending is likely to increase by around 17 rupees in that block. It is also evident that although the Religion dummy has a positive coefficient, but the relationship is not statistically significant. Therefore, it can be argued that there is no evidence of any discrimination due to religion among the blocks in terms of the yearly Plan Fund (P&RD) spending allocation.

Table 2. 7 Effect of Population and Religion on Plan Fund (Other than P&RD) Spending (2010-18)

	(1) PFO Payment	(2) PFO Payment	(3) PFO Payment	(4) PFO Payment
PFO Receipt	0.87***	0.86***	0.86***	0.86***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
PFO Balance	-0.21***	-0.21***	-0.21***	-0.21***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Population	6.12**	9.07***	9.77***	12.19***
	(2.86)	(3.01)	(3.04)	(3.11)
Religion Dummy		1662144.39***	2104083.47***	2293767.93***
		(532132.07)	(603057.26)	(604066.69)
Literacy Rate			-41172.45	12030.74
			(26458.59)	(30251.11)
Income PC				-17.09***
				(4.74)
_cons	3940842.55***	2063788.62**	4566032.64**	1406393.68
	(653744.43)	(887225.88)	(1836430.44)	(2031543.06)
Obs.	2799	2799	2799	2799
R-squared	.74	.74	.74	.74

Standard errors are in parenthesis
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The above table (2.7) shows the effect of Population and Religion on the yearly Plan Fund (other than P&RD) Spending among the community development blocks during the period 2010-2018. The regression results show a similar trend as observed in the earlier regressions above. Both, the quantitative explanatory variable, i.e. Population and the qualitative explanatory variable, i.e. the Religion Dummy, have positive coefficients and are statistically strongly significant. In all the regression models in the above table (2.7), it can be observed that the coefficient on the explanatory variable Population increases as more control variables and the dummy variable are added. The coefficient on Population in model 4 suggests that the yearly Plan Fund (Other than P&RD) spending is likely to increase by 12 rupees in a block for each person increase in the population in that block *ceteris paribus*. Also, as observed before, the coefficient (positive and statistically significant) on the Religion Dummy shows that there is strong evidence of discrimination in favor of the Hindu majority blocks in terms of the yearly Plan Fund (Other than P&RD) spending allocation.

Table 2. 8 Effect of Population and Religion on Non-Plan Fund (Other than P&RD) Spending (2010-18)

	(1) NPF Payment	(2) NPF Payment	(3) NPF Payment	(4) NPF Payment
NPF Receipt	0.985***	0.985***	0.984***	0.985***
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
NPF Balance	-0.365***	-0.365***	-0.365***	-0.365***
	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.018)
Population	0.719	1.260	1.365	1.292
	(0.938)	(0.987)	(0.997)	(1.020)
Religion Dummy		303139.964*	370167.536*	365142.484*
		(172398.669)	(195506.016)	(196092.709)
Literacy Rate			-6243.934	-7885.730
			(8586.564)	(9848.129)
Income Per Capita				0.525
				(1.540)
_cons	527653.131***	174587.037	551814.770	650969.294
	(203538.935)	(285857.661)	(592315.923)	(660068.713)
Obs.	2799	2799	2799	2799
R-squared	.80	.80	.81	.81

Standard errors are in parenthesis
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The results in the above table (2.8) demonstrate a somewhat different outcome for the explanatory variable population. There seems to be no evidence of any effect of population of a block on the yearly Non-Plan Fund (Other than P&RD) Spending in it as the coefficient is not statistically significant, although the coefficient is positive. This might be due to the nature of the Non-Plan Fund (Other than P&RD) programs, which are often temporary. However, there's a weak evidence of discrimination in favor of the Hindu majority blocks in terms of the yearly Non-Plan Fund (Other than P&RD) Spending allocation. Although the coefficient on the religion dummy is positive in all the models in the above table, yet the relationship is statistically significant only at the 10 percent (* $p < 0.1$) level. Therefore, it can be considered as a weak evidence of discrimination.

Table 2. 9 Effect of Population and Religion on GOI Spending (2010-2018)

	(1) GOI Payment	(2) GOI Payment	(3) GOI Payment	(4) GOI Payment
GOI Receipt	0.97***	0.98***	0.98***	0.97***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
GOI Balance	-0.37***	-0.38***	-0.38***	-0.38***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Population	44.53***	40.53***	43.91***	49.81***
	(4.94)	(5.14)	(5.19)	(5.32)
Religion Dummy		-2350144.33***	-474275.85	-119632.05
		(861935.80)	(971336.56)	(970415.05)
Literacy Rate			-177613.69***	-64028.59
			(42852.88)	(48867.90)
Income Per Capita				-36.59***
				(7.66)
_cons	1667376.66	4408636.21***	15189486.10***	8361280.05**
	(1014799.74)	(1427670.69)	(2965166.78)	(3281659.77)
Obs.	2799	2799	2799	2799
R-squared	.89	.89	.90	.90

Standard errors are in parenthesis
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

As it can be seen in the above table (2.9), there is evidence of the positive effect of Population on the yearly GOI spending among the community development blocks. The coefficient is positive and statistically strongly significant. This means every person increase in the population of a block will likely to raise the yearly GOP spending in that block by 49 rupees *ceteris paribus*. However, there seems to have no evidence of discrimination in the yearly GOI spending allocation due to the religion of a block as the coefficient is statistically not significant. It is observed that in model 2 in the above table, the coefficient on the Religion Dummy is negative and significant (showing a possible discrimination against the Hindu majority blocks) but the significance disappears as more

variables are included. Therefore, in this case, it can be argued that as whole, there is no evidence of discrimination due to the religion of block in terms of the yearly GOI spending provision.

Table 3. 1 Effect of Population and Religion on BEUP Spending (2010-2018)

	(1) BEUP Payment	(2) BEUP Payment	(3) BEUP Payment	(4) BEUP Payment
BEUP Receipt	0.85***	0.84***	0.84***	0.85***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
BEUP Balance	-0.34***	-0.34***	-0.34***	-0.35***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Pop	2.24***	2.86***	2.79***	2.91***
	(0.39)	(0.41)	(0.41)	(0.42)
Religion Dummy		329506.85***	282151.26***	290208.10***
		(71382.80)	(80581.17)	(80802.24)
Literacy Rate			4476.11	7092.85*
			(3535.30)	(4054.53)
Income Per Capita				-0.84
				(0.64)
_cons	423091.55***	44821.14	-225579.74	-382967.93
	(84654.83)	(117600.59)	(243798.47)	(271459.81)
Obs.	2793	2793	2793	2793
R-squared	.60	.60	.60	.60

Standard errors are in parenthesis
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The above regression results (table 3.1) indicate that there exists a strong positive relationship between the Population of a community development block and the BEUP (Bidhayak Elaka Unnayan Prakalpa) fund allocation in it. The relationship is statistically strongly significant in all the regression models. Similarly, it also reveals that the coefficient on the Religion Dummy is positive as well as strongly significant, which shows of strong evidence of discrimination in the distribution of the yearly BEUP fund in favor of the Hindu majority blocks. According to the coefficient on the Religion Dummy (model 4), a Hindu

majority block is likely to receive about 0.3 million rupees more than a Muslim majority block in a year *ceteris paribus*.

Table 3. 2 Effect of Population, and Religion on Total MPLADS Spending (2010-2018)

	(1) MPLADS Payment	(2) MPLADS Payment	(3) MPLADS Payment
MPLAD Receipt	0.98***	0.97***	0.96***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Population	88.22	109.40	211.88***
	(68.24)	(70.33)	(74.30)
Religion Dummy	30756366.52**	35709599.68***	41766614.81***
	(12233995.72)	(12872766.86)	(12682249.78)
Literacy Rate		-620089.98	334934.94
		(506005.93)	(560247.45)
Income Per Capita			-319.63***
			(88.35)
_cons	-33972120.91*	6378987.64	-49166892.78
	(18134150.18)	(37581870.76)	(39783796.51)
Obs.	254	254	254
R-squared	0.98	0.98	0.98

Standard errors are in parenthesis
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The above regression is done based on the MPLADS funds being distributed among blocks as a total in 9 years. It is important to note that each parliamentary constituency (Lok Sabha), where an MP gets elected, is comprised of several community development blocks and an elected MP chooses to distribute MPLADS funds, according his or her preferences on his or her recommended development projects in those chosen blocks. This means, an MP may choose either a Hindu or Muslim majority block and recommend development work in that block. Therefore, this regression analysis, based on block wise fund distribution, is

more suited than a constituency wise analysis to capture any bias due to the religion of a block or his or her own religious identity. The above results show the effect of population and religion on the total MPLADS fund spending. The Coefficient on Population is positive and strongly significant. The results also indicate that the Religion Dummy has a positive coefficient and it's also strongly significant. This means there is evidence of a positive discrimination in favor of the Hindu majority blocks. The coefficient on the Religion Dummy (regression model 3 above) suggests that a Hindu majority block is likely to receive 41.7 million rupees in total MPLADS spending more than a Muslim majority block *ceteris paribus*. Besides this, another regression is done as the block wise MPLADS data for Murshidabad, a Muslim majority district, is not available. Therefore, a constituency (Lok Sabha) wise regression is done below.

Table 3. 3 Effect of Population, Religion and Identity on MPLADS Spending (2009-18) Constituency wise

	(1) MP Fund (₹10 million)	(2) MP Fund (₹10 million)	(3) MP Fund (₹10 million)
Population	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Identity dummy		1.19	-1.10
		(1.05)	(1.24)
Religion Dummy			3.69***
			(1.20)
_cons	17.00***	15.94***	14.76***
	(1.86)	(2.07)	(1.99)
Obs.	84	84	84
R-squared	.61	.64	.64

Standard errors are in parenthesis
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Similarly, the above regression results indicate that there is strong evidence (statistically, the coefficient is strongly significant) of discrimination against the Muslim majority Constituency in terms of MPLADS fund expenditure. The Religion Dummy suggests that a Hindu majority Constituency is likely to get 36.9 million rupees more in each term (5 years) than a Muslim majority Constituency *ceteris paribus*. However, as the Identity Dummy (statistically not significant) suggests that there is no evidence of discrimination due to the religious identity of the MPs.

5.2 Effect of Population and Identity on Economic Development

5.2.1 The Model

One of the three objectives of this paper, is to find out if there's any discrimination among the community development blocks in terms of the yearly government spending on public goods provision due to the religious belief of the elected members of the blocks. Therefore, the following model has been estimated for this purpose.

$$Y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{it} + \beta_2 Z_{it} + \beta_3 M_{it} + \mu_{it} \quad \ldots (3)$$

Where Y_{it} = Yearly government spending on block i for t years, X_{it} = Population of block i for t years, $\mathbf{Z}_{it}$ is the control variable, and M_{it} is the qualitative explanatory variable, i.e. the Identity Dummy,

M_{it} =1 (if majority of the elected members of a block are Hindus i.e. Hindu elected members > 50 percent)

= 0 (if majority of the elected members of a block are Muslims i.e. Muslim elected members > 50 percent)

5.2.2 Regression Results

Table 3. 4 Effect of Population and Identity on Total Government Spending (2010-2018)

	(1) Payment	(2) Payment	(3) Payment	(4) Payment
Receipt	0.98***	0.98***	0.99***	0.98***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Balance	-0.37***	-0.37***	-0.38***	-0.39***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Pop	66.14***	66.10***	71.11***	84.42***
	(7.10)	(7.31)	(7.32)	(7.57)
Identity Dummy		-33271.38	3486479.26**	4677610.76***
		(1387276.35)	(1517744.72)	(1518878.82)
Literacy Rate			-331371.78***	-122748.34*
			(59503.70)	(67638.20)
Income Per Capita				-70.20***
				(11.07)
_cons	8379112.23***	8415981.78***	28966012.61***	16396434.42***
	(1490624.25)	(2141509.11)	(4260790.66)	(4672830.74)
Obs.	2799	2799	2799	2799
R-squared	.88	.89	.90	.90

Standard errors are in parenthesis
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The above table (3.4) shows the effect of population and the religious identity of elected representatives of a community development block on the yearly Total Government Spending (including all the Central and State government schemes) on public goods in that block between 2010 and 2018. It is evident that there's a positive and strongly significant relationship between the population of a block and the yearly total government spending on public goods in that block. The coefficient can be interpreted as follows. If the effects of all the other variables are kept unchanged, the yearly total government spending on public

goods in a block is predicted to increase by about 84 rupees for each person increase in the population of that block. This seems to be in line with the results seen in the earlier regression results (table 2.5). A quick look at the coefficient on the qualitative explanatory variable, i.e. the Identity Dummy reveals that the coefficient is positive and significant in models 3 and 4 in the above table. It suggests that there's strong evidence of discrimination due to the religious identity of the elected members of a block in terms of the distribution of the yearly total government spending on public goods in that block. The coefficient on the Identity Dummy in model 4 suggests that a block with a majority of Hindu elected members ($> 50\%$) is predicted to receive about 4.7 million rupees more in total government spending on public goods in a year than a block with a majority of Muslim elected members *ceteris paribus*.

Table 3. 5 Effect of Population and Identity on Plan Fund (P&RD) Spending (2010-18)

	(1) Payment	(2) Payment	(3) Payment	(4) Payment
Receipt	1.02***	1.01***	1.01***	1.01***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Balance	-0.37***	-0.37***	-0.37***	-0.37***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Pop	14.00***	14.42***	15.69***	17.47***
	(3.13)	(3.23)	(3.24)	(3.33)
Identity Dummy		353276.97	1441218.87**	1619986.00**
		(643835.58)	(706867.00)	(710989.48)
Literacy Rate			-101927.15***	-67697.97**
			(27633.75)	(31659.34)
Income Per Capita				-11.36**
				(5.14)
_cons	1610451.79**	1219027.09	7482301.92***	5387359.21**
	(678022.29)	(984230.48)	(1961567.11)	(2177262.24)
Obs.	2799	2799	2799	2799
R-squared	.88	.90	.92	.92

Standard errors are in parenthesis
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

As usual, the regression results show, the coefficient on the explanatory variable population is positive and strongly significant in all the models in the above table, indicating its positive effect on the yearly Plan Fund P&RD spending in a block. However, the coefficient on the Identity Dummy is positive but statistically significant in models 3 and 4. This indicates of the evidence of existence of discrimination in favor of blocks with a majority Hindu elected members. The coefficient on the Identity Dummy in the regression model 4 in the above table (3.5) shows that a community development block with a majority (> 50%) of Hindu elected members is likely to get 1.6 million rupees more in Plan

Fund (P&RD) spending than a block with majority Muslim elected members *ceteris paribus*.

Table 3. 6 Effect of Population and Identity on Plan Fund (Other than P&RD) Spending (2010-18)

	(1) Payment	(2) Payment	(3) Payment	(4) Payment
Receipt	0.87***	0.86***	0.86***	0.86***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Balance	-0.21***	-0.21***	-0.21***	-0.21***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Pop	6.12**	8.31***	8.67***	11.17***
	(2.86)	(2.94)	(2.96)	(3.03)
Identity Dummy		1829502.87***	2178943.11***	2475922.26***
		(601561.54)	(660882.07)	(664220.15)
Literacy Rate			-32737.03	21511.71
			(25651.39)	(29476.71)
Income Per Capita				-17.66***
				(4.76)
_cons	3940842.55***	1971811.00**	3982132.77**	671920.16
	(653744.43)	(919403.55)	(1823837.65)	(2026717.81)
Obs.	2799	2799	2799	2799
R-squared	.74	.74	.74	.74

Standard errors are in parenthesis
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Evidently, Population of a community development block has a positive effect on the yearly Plan Fund (Other than P&RD) spending in it. The relationship is also strongly significant in all the models above. The Identity Dummy has a positive coefficient (statistically significant) as well, thereby, showing strong evidence of discrimination in favor of blocks with a majority Hindu elected members. The coefficient on the Identity Dummy in model 4 (table 3.6) implies that a community development block with a majority of Hindu elected members is predicted to receive 2.4 million rupees more in Plan Fund (Other than P&RD) spending than a block with a majority of Muslim elected members *ceteris paribus*.

Table 3. 7 Effect of Population and Identity on Non-Plan Fund Other than P&RD Spending (2010-18)

	(1) Payment	(2) Payment	(3) Payment	(4) Payment
Receipt	0.98***	0.99***	0.99***	0.99***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Balance	-0.37***	-0.37***	-0.37***	-0.37***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Pop	0.72	0.98	1.01	0.93
	(0.94)	(0.97)	(0.97)	(0.99)
Identity Dummy		219938.40	247693.90	239363.99
		(194751.92)	(214255.10)	(215535.45)
Literacy Rate			-2591.49	-4306.98
			(8332.66)	(9601.40)
Income Per Capita				0.56
				(1.55)
_cons	527653.13***	284370.36	442634.55	548941.79
	(203538.94)	(296363.09)	(588915.04)	(658956.19)
Obs.	2799	2799	2799	2799
R-squared	.78	.80	.81	.81

Standard errors are in parenthesis
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

In the above table (3.7), the quantitative explanatory variable (population) and qualitative explanatory variable (Identity Dummy) seem to have no effect on the yearly Non-Plan Fund (Other than P&RD) spending among the community development blocks as the coefficients are not statistically significant, although they are positive. Therefore, there seems to be no evidence of discrimination due to the religious identity of elected members in a block.

Table 3. 8 Effect of Population and Identity on GOI Spending (2010-18)

	(1) Payment	(2) Payment	(3) Payment	(4) Payment
Receipt	0.97***	0.98***	0.98***	0.97***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Balance	-0.37***	-0.38***	-0.38***	-0.38***
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Pop	44.53***	41.81***	44.17***	50.14***
	(4.94)	(5.06)	(5.07)	(5.20)
Identity Dummy		-2364155.00**	-475429.58	88794.79
		(974376.22)	(1065024.48)	(1067439.12)
Literacy Rate			-179750.32***	-67437.00
			(41575.55)	(47620.26)
Income PC				-36.73***
				(7.69)
_cons	1667376.66	4287602.84***	15319216.87***	8379546.99**
	(1014799.74)	(1481295.75)	(2948039.59)	(3276147.40)
Obs.	2799	2799	2799	2799
R-squared	.88	.88	.90	.90

Standard errors are in parenthesis
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The above table, showing the effect of Population and Identity of the elected members of a community development block on the yearly GOI spending in it. It indicates that there's evidence of a positive effect of population on the yearly GOI spending in a block. However, there is no evidence of discrimination as the coefficient on the Identity dummy is not statistically significant (model 3 and 4). Although the coefficient is negative and significant in model 2, suggesting a somewhat different outcome, but it disappears once control variables are added. Therefore, it can be argued that overall, there seems to be no evidence of the presence of discrimination due to the religious identity of the elected members of a block in the distribution of the yearly GOI spending.

5.3 Effect of Population and Religion on Political Representation

This section describes the effect of Population and Religion on Political representation in the Panchayat Samiti (PS), i.e. community development block level government.

5.3.1 The Model

The following model has been estimated for this purpose.

$$Y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{it} + \beta_2 D_{it} + \mu_{it} \quad \ldots (4)$$

Where Y_{it} = Number of Elected Panchayat Samiti (PS) Members of block i for t years, X_{it} = Population of block i for t years, and D_{it} is the qualitative explanatory variable, i.e. the Religion Dummy,

D_{it} =1 if a block has a majority of Hindu population, i.e. Hindu population > 50%

= 0 if a block has a majority of Muslim population, i.e. Muslim population > 50%

5.3.2 Regression Results

Table 3. 9 Effect of Population and Religion on the number of Elected PS Members in a CD block

	(1) Hindu PS	(2) Muslim PS
Population	0.0000752***	0.0000324***
	(0.0000043)	(0.0000032)
Religion Dummy	16.1213044***	-11.2397663***
	(0.7605243)	(0.5666264)
_cons	-7.2434627***	8.9664193***
	(1.2612337)	(0.9396785)
Obs.	311	311
R-squared	0.65	0.69

Standard errors are in parenthesis
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The above regression results show the effect of population and religion of a community development block on the number of elected PS members for the Hindus and the Muslims in that block. It is evident that the population has a positive and strongly significant relationship with the number of elected PS members for both the Hindus as well as the Muslims. This means a population increase leads to increasing numbers of elected PS members for both the Hindus and the Muslims. However, the coefficient on the Hindu PS is almost twice the coefficient on the Muslim PS. It implies that a unit increase in population is likely to increase the number of elected Hindu PS members almost twice than the number of elected Muslim PS members *ceteris paribus*. The positive coefficient on the religion dummy suggests that there is evidence of the presence of discrimination in favor of the number of elected Hindu PS members. Intuitively, this means a Hindu majority block is predicted to get 16 more elected PS members than a Muslim majority block, which in turn gets 11 fewer elected PS members due to the religious bias *ceteris paribus*. For example, a community development block with a 51 percent Hindu population, due to the religion bias, is predicted to get 16 more elected Hindu PS members than what it should have gotten due to the population effect and other factors. However, a similar block with a 51 percent Muslim population would get 11 fewer elected Muslim PS members than what it should have got due the population effect and other factors.

6 Discussion

This section discusses the empirical results mentioned in the above sections. Here, according to the objectives of the paper, different types of scenarios are discussed as follows.

6.1 Do Population and Religion affect Rural Economic Development?

One of the objectives of the paper is to see if population and religion affect rural economic development that is induced by government spending on public goods in the rural areas. Does government spending on public goods vary according to the size of the population of an area? Do more populous areas get more government spending on public goods? Does government spending on public goods vary from block to block when the religion of a block changes? Do Muslim majority blocks get more government funds due to minority appeasement as claimed by the mainstream right-wing parties? Or do Hindu majority blocks get more funds as they are the dominant religion in the State? This essay attempts to find answers to these questions. The intention is to find out how does government spending on public goods change as the population and the religion of a community development block change. For this purpose, I used different regression models to estimate various types of government spending on public goods, namely, Total Government Spending, GOI Spending, Plan Fund (P&RD) Spending, Plan Fund (other than P&RD), Non-Plan Fund (Other than P&RD), BEUP and MPLADS spending using panel data from 311 community development blocks. The purpose is to see the patterns in all forms of government spending on public goods. Following the regression results, shown in the above tables, it can be argued that there's plenty of evidence that Population and Religion

certainly affect rural economic development that is induced by government spending on public goods. It is important to note that the evidence is statistically strong in almost all the cases described above. It is found that as the population of a community development block increases, so does the government spending (almost all types of spending) on public goods in that block, while keeping the effects of other factors constant. Therefore, the positive effect of population on government spending can be said to have been established with strong statistical evidence from the regression results. Now, the community development blocks with equal number of people, in principle, should get an equal amount of government spending irrespective of the religion of that block, while keeping the effects of the other factors' constant. However, the empirical data for the total government spending, BEUP and MPLADS fund allocation for at least the top 20 blocks, indicated that there's inequality among the blocks. Therefore, it is important to look at the religion of a block to see if it can explain the disparity. Does it impact government spending on public goods? The effect of religion is captured in the form of the existence of discrimination using the qualitative explanatory variable, i.e. the Religion Dummy. The positive coefficient on the Religion Dummy overwhelmingly points out to the existence of discrimination in favor of the Hindu majority blocks in almost all the cases of government spending on public goods. It is found above, that the Hindu majority blocks are likely to receive more government funds in rural development projects than the Muslim majority blocks. It can be argued that more investment in the form of various types of government spending on public goods, such as roads, education, health, employment generating projects, etc., in the Hindu majority blocks is likely to lead to higher levels of rural economic development in those blocks. As evidenced above, the Muslim majority blocks are at a disadvantage and likely to

receive less government spending on public goods. This would imply that fewer number of development projects being implemented in the Muslim majority blocks, i.e. low level of rural economic development in those blocks. Therefore, it can be argued that one of the reasons for the poor economic development in the Muslim majority blocks could be the less government spending on public goods and fewer development projects due to the religion bias.

6.2 Does Religious Identity of Elected Representatives affect Rural Economic Development?

There is strong statistical evidence of discrimination as found in the above results in favor of the blocks with a majority of Hindu elected Panchayat Samiti (PS) members. This means the religious identity of the elected members positively affects the blocks with a majority of Hindu elected PS members, while it negatively affects the blocks with a majority of Muslim elected PS members. Therefore, it can be argued that due to the positive discrimination, the community development blocks with a majority of Hindu elected PS members are likely to get more government spending on public goods, i.e. more of public goods and thereby, better rural economic development in those blocks keeping the effects of the other factors constant. On the other hand, the community development blocks with a majority of Muslim elected PS members are likely to receive less government spending on public goods, i.e. less of public goods and thereby, low level of rural economic development in those blocks.

6.3 Do Population, Religion and Political Representation affect Rural Economic Development?

In this paper, it is well established with strong statistical evidence that population positively affects government spending on public goods, which in turn impacts rural economic development. As the population of a community development block increases, so does the government spending on public goods in that block. What this means is that many development projects are predicted to be implemented in more populous community development blocks. This is likely to lead to improved rural infrastructure development, health and education facilities, income, etc. i.e. rural economic development. Now, it is evident from the above results that there exists a disparity in terms of government spending on public goods allocation among the blocks. Statistical evidence repeatedly points out to the existence of discrimination in favor of the Hindu majority blocks. It suggests that the Hindu majority blocks are predicted to receive more government spending on public goods than the Muslim majority blocks *ceteris paribus*. It means that the Hindu majority blocks are likely to get more or bigger rural development projects. One of the things that this could possibly do, is to lead to more or higher income for the residents of those Hindu majority blocks. How could this lead to more or higher income? One example would help explain this. If a Hindu majority block gets the MGNREGS program implemented for 100 days for rural road development projects, while another equivalent Muslim majority block gets it for 60 days, the eligible residents of the Hindu majority block who work on that project, are expected to earn more than the residents of the other block for the additional 40 days, keeping other income opportunities constant. Therefore, it can be argued that the income of the Hindu majority block will increase. Moreover, the Hindu

majority block will also have a long road or more rural roads than the other block due to the extra 40 days of the MGNREGS program. Hence, more income and more roads (infrastructure), i.e. higher level of rural economic development of that Hindu majority block. Overall, the Hindu majority blocks are predicted to get a higher level of rural economic development due to the positive discrimination based on religion. On the other hand, the Muslim majority blocks are at a disadvantage due to this discrimination. Religion acts negatively for the Muslim majority blocks as they are likely to get less government spending on public goods than the Hindu majority blocks. Consequently, this is likely to lead to fewer development projects being implemented. Hence, less opportunity for the residents to increase their income on government prompted programs, and also fewer infrastructure, i.e. low level of rural economic development of the Muslim majority blocks.

It is also found that the religious identity of an elected PS member of a block affects the distribution of government spending on public goods. The coefficient on the Identity Dummy is positive and statistically strongly significant. It is observed that the religious identity of an elected PS member acts positively in favor of the blocks with a majority of Hindu elected PS members. As discussed above, the blocks with a majority of Hindu elected PS members are predicted to get more government spending on public goods than the blocks with a majority of Muslim elected PS members. This suggests that more public goods, i.e. more rural infrastructure projects, more schools, sanitation, safe drinking water, etc., and income for the blocks with a majority of Hindu elected PS members. Eventually, this means a higher level of rural economic development for those blocks.

Due to the negative effect of the religious identity of an elected PS member, the blocks with a majority of elected Muslim PS members are likely to receive less government spending on

public goods, i.e. fewer public goods. Therefore, this is likely to lead to low level of rural economic development of the blocks with a majority of Muslim elected PS members.

This leads to the question of political representation. Is there proportionate political representation at all the levels of government in West Bengal? How do population and religion affect the number of elected members of both, the Hindus and the Muslims?

It is seen in the above tables (1.8, 2.1, and 2.2) that political representation of the Muslims is nowhere near to the proportionate level of their population share. Even in the blocks and districts, where the Muslims have a majority, the political representation is not proportional to their population share. It has been indicated by the regression results that the population effect on the number of elected PS members for the Hindus is twice than the Muslims. This means as population increases the number of elected Hindu PS members increases at a rate that is twice the rate of the number of elected Muslim PS members *ceteris paribus*.

The estimate shows that the religion effect on the number of elected PS members is positive for the Blocks with a majority of the Hindu population, while it acts negatively for the Muslim majority blocks. The result points out that the blocks with a majority of Hindu population are likely to get 16 more elected Hindu PS members due to their religion than the number of elected PS members that they could've gotten due to the population effect and other factors. However, the blocks with a Muslim majority population are likely to get 11 fewer numbers of elected Muslim PS members due to their religion than what they could've gotten due to the population effect and other factors. Empirically, the data show that out of the 65 Muslim majority blocks 20 have less than 50 percent elected Muslim PS members. This is a significant disparity in terms of political representation at the PS level,

even for the Muslim majority blocks. The trend is similar in the blocks with a Muslim population between 40-50 percent and 30-40 percent. There are no Hindu majority blocks that have a less than majority political representation in the Panchayat Samiti. This is also true for the Muslim political representation in the State Assembly (MLAs) as well as in the Parliament (MPs), where the number of elected Muslim members is disproportionately low.

What is important here is to see if the Muslim political representation in the Muslim majority areas leads to increasing amount of government spending in those areas. It is observed that the areas with a majority of Hindu population always have a majority of elected Hindu members, which leads to increasing amount of government spending in those areas. However, it is found that the Muslim majority areas do not always have a Muslim majority of elected members. Therefore, it needs to be seen which combination of areas get more government spending on public goods. Do areas with a Muslim majority population and a majority of Muslim elected members get more government spending than the areas with a Muslim majority population but a Hindu majority elected members? If this is found to be true, then we have an argument that increasing the political representation by the Muslims at least in the areas where they are a majority, is necessary to improve government spending on public goods. Which means proportionate political representation as per population share is required. For this purpose, we need to look at the variation of government expending according to political representation in the PS, State Assembly (BEUP funds), and the Parliament (MPLADS). First, I look at the four Muslim majority Parliamentary Constituencies (Lok Sabha), where two are represented by Muslim MPs and another two by Hindu MPs. In the Bashirhat Lok Sabha Constituency, which is a Muslim

majority Constituency and represented by a Muslim MP in the 16th Lok Sabha Election, 245 million out of a statutory 250 million rupees MPLADS were spent during the 5 years in different development projects recommended by the MP. Similarly, in the Muslim majority Raiganj Lok Sabha Constituency, represented by a Muslim MP, the entire statutory amount of 250 million rupees was spent during the MP term period (Mplads.gov.in, 2018). However, in the Muslim majority Berhampore Lok Sabha Constituency, which is represented by a Hindu MP, only 100 million out of 250 million rupees MPLADS were utilized during the 5 years. Similarly, in the Jangipur Lok Sabha Constituency, represented by a Hindu MP, only 125 million rupees were spent in MP recommended development projects. Clearly, in the case of political representation in the Parliament, it can be argued, based on these empirical examples, that the Muslim majority areas represented by the Muslims are found to have an increased level of MPLADs spending. Therefore, a case for proportionate political representation of the Muslims in the Parliament could be made. In this case, however, a regression analysis to find a relationship was not possible as there are only 3 comparable cases available in the data. Now, to find out if there is any difference in government spending on public goods in the Muslim majority blocks either represented by the Hindus or the Muslims, panel data has been used for the 65 Muslim majority blocks, of which 45 are represented by the Muslim PS members and 20 are represented by the Hindu PS members. The qualitative explanatory variable, i.e. the Political Dummy captures discrimination in spending allocation due to the religious identity of the elected members in the Muslim majority blocks. The regression estimate shows that the coefficient on the Political Dummy is positive. What it means is that the Muslim majority blocks represented by the Muslim elected PS members are likely to get more government spending allocation

than the Muslim majority blocks that are represented by the Hindu elected PS members *ceteris paribus*.

Similarly, it is also found that the Muslim majority blocks represented by the Muslim MLAs are likely to get more BEUP spending on public goods than the Muslim majority blocks that are represented by the Hindu MLAs. Therefore, it can be argued that increasing Muslim political representation in the Panchayat Samiti and in the Legislative Assembly will lead to increased level of government spending on public goods in the rural areas, i.e. rural economic development at least in the Muslim majority areas. Thus, a strong case for proportionate Muslim political representation based on empirical evidence can be argued to be made.

7 Conclusion

This dissertation is an attempt to examine the effect of population, religion and political representation on government-induced rural economic development in West Bengal. There are three objectives of this paper. The first objective is to study the patterns of government spending on public goods to see how it deviates as the population and religion of an area change. The second objective is to find out how the religious identity of the elected political representatives change government spending. And the final objective is to examine if minority appeasement exists as the right-wing political discourse would like the people of India to believe. For these purposes, I have used panel data on rural government spending on public goods from 311 community development blocks from 19 districts in West Bengal for 9 years during the period 2010-2018. The time period 2010-18 is chosen as the data on rural government spending on public goods are only available for this time period. Following the lead from a few previous studies that dealt with similar topics, I have used the OLS regression method to estimate the effects of population, religion and religious identity of elected representatives on various types of government spending on public goods. The regression results are positive and statistically significant in most of the cases, which go according to the initial prediction in this paper. The regression results show that population, religion and political representation affect government spending on public goods in rural areas i.e. rural economic development. The above analysis indicates that there is plenty of empirical evidence to suggest that religion positively affects rural economic development in favor of the Hindu majority community development blocks (Hindus $>$ 50 percent), while it affects negatively for the Muslim majority blocks (Muslims $>$ 50 percent). This is because, as discussed above, the Hindu majority blocks due to their

religion are likely to get more government spending on public goods, i.e. more development projects being implemented in those blocks leading to more income, rural infrastructure, health facilities, etc. for the residents, which in turn leads to a higher level of economic development in those blocks. Similarly, the Hindu majority blocks are also likely to get more government spending on public goods due to the religious identity of the elected representatives in those blocks. It is found that the religious identity affects government spending only in favor of the blocks that have a majority of Hindu elected representatives. It is also found that the Hindu majority blocks always have a majority of Hindu elected representatives. Therefore, the Hindu community development blocks are at a double advantage in the form of the Hindu religion of the block and also the Hindu religious identity of the elected representatives. Due to this double advantage, the Hindu blocks are more likely to get more government spending on public goods in their blocks, i.e. better rural economic development. However, the above empirical evidences suggest that the Muslim majority blocks are at a triple disadvantage. First, due to the religion (Islam) of the Muslim majority blocks, they are likely to get less government spending on public goods. Second, for the same reason, they are likely to get less number of elected representatives. And third, the Muslim majority blocks are likely to get less government spending due to the religious identity of the Muslim elected representatives. Overall, what this leads to, is less number of development projects being implemented in the Muslim majority blocks, i.e. less income opportunities, fewer rural infrastructure, primary schools, healthcare facilities for the residents, which in turn leads to low level of rural economic development in those blocks. This indicates that there's enough evidence to refute the claim of minority appeasement in India. In fact, the Muslims are disproportionately

discriminated in terms of allocation of public goods, which led to poor economic development in the Muslim majority community development blocks in West Bengal. It is also found that a number of Muslim majority blocks are represented by the Hindu elected representatives, which leads to even lower government spending in those Muslim majority blocks. On the other hand, Muslim majority blocks that are represented by the Muslim elected representatives are likely to get more government spending than those Muslim majority blocks that are represented by the Hindu elected representatives. This leads to the question of Muslim political representation in the Muslim majority blocks. As it is argued above that increasing the Muslim political representation in the Muslim majority blocks is found to have increased government spending in those blocks, which means improved rural economic development. Therefore, the proportionate Muslim political representation is a necessary requirement for their rural economic development at least in the Muslim majority blocks. This study shows that the empirical results validate the findings of the 2006 Sachar Committee Report, and the 2016 SNAP report 'The Living Reality of Muslims in West Bengal'.

It is important to note that economic development as many economists argue, depends on a multitude of factors. In this paper, various types of government spending on public goods are considered as a proxy for government induced rural economic development. However, this paper, using empirical data and controlling for the effects of the other factors, establishes a connection between population, religion, political representation and rural economic development and argues for the proportionate Muslim political representation in West Bengal. This is an original study in this regard. Therefore, it is more likely to contribute to the literature on the religious identity of elected politicians and public goods

distribution as well as on the relationship between religion and economic development. This study has a topical relevance in India as it attempts to find out the truth behind minority appeasement. Due to the lack of Gram Panchayat (Village Council) level data on government spending on public goods, a comprehensive and, probably, a more appropriate village level analysis couldn't be done, which could have explained the relationships even further. In future, this study could be extended and improved by adding data from all the community development blocks from all the states in India and for a longer time period. It would be more representative as it would cover all of India. There could be institutional discrimination in terms of approving and delivering development projects in the rural areas, because all the rural development projects are approved, implemented, and monitored by the district magistrate's and block development office.

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9 Appendix A

Block-Wise Population, Literacy and Income Per Capita

Block	Population	Literacy (%)	Hindu (%)	Muslim (%)	Income Per Capita (₹)
Bankura District					
Bankura I	107685	68.7	97.6	1.6	61430.0
Bankura II	140864	73.6	73.8	23.9	47073.7
Barjora	202049	71.7	93.2	6.7	47887.9
Bishnupur	156822	66.3	79.2	17.8	31684.4
Chhatna	195038	65.7	82.7	2.6	36046.3
Gangajalghati	180974	68.1	97.3	0.2	48049.7
Hirbandh	83834	64.2	81.0	2.3	31496.1
Indpur	156522	67.4	90.2	5.7	47029.6
Indus	169783	71.7	82.0	17.7	54575.5
Joipur	156920	74.6	84.6	14.9	50526.0
Khatra	117030	72.2	84.1	2.8	42350.4
Kotulpur	188775	78.0	82.3	17.4	62020.7
Mejia	86188	66.8	94.5	3.4	50007.8
Onda	252984	65.8	83.3	13.7	41940.8
Patrasayar	184070	64.8	85.2	12.6	48845.3
Raipur	171377	71.3	70.8	1.3	33297.2
Ranibandh	119089	68.5	58.9	1.3	16373.3
Saltora	135980	61.5	84.5	2.0	36754.9
Sarenga	106808	74.3	78.2	0.5	36622.0
Simlapal	143038	68.4	77.3	7.7	35650.0
Sonamukhi	158697	66.2	85.9	12.1	37013.5
Taldangra	147893	70.9	78.6	10.5	33241.0
Birbhum District					
Bolpur	202553	70.7	73.9	25.5	44738.7
Dubrajpur	181437	68.3	66.5	33.2	34984.8
Ilambazar	168709	74.3	51.7	47.4	33349.6
Khoyrashol	153248	68.8	75.5	24.3	42507.9
Labpur	201901	71.2	69.2	30.5	52136.5
Mayureshwar I	159782	71.5	69.8	29.3	49605.4
Mayureshwar II	127661	70.9	74.1	25.6	60534.2
Mohammed Bazar	164570	65.2	67.1	31.3	34984.9
Murarai I	190802	55.7	40.6	58.9	44137.4
Murarai II	222033	58.3	24.9	75.0	29831.2
Nalhati I	204818	69.8	52.1	46.6	42733.6

Nalhati II	127785	71.7	29.8	70.1	34887.7
Nanoor	218654	69.5	64.7	35.0	45367.4
Rajnagar	77979	68.1	84.7	14.3	29822.6
Rampurhat I	188435	73.3	67.4	30.6	44155.8
Rampurhat II	187823	70.8	51.6	48.2	53382.9
sainthia	195349	72.3	77.7	21.5	49865.7
Suri I	11377	72.8	73.0	26.6	5370.3
Suri II	87405	72.8	67.7	31.6	43570.6
CoochBehar District					
Coochbehar I	284564	76.9	66.0	33.7	51821.7
Coochbehar II	298163	83.3	81.8	17.6	67308.0
Dinhata I	254449	72.2	62.7	37.0	64190.7
Dinhata II	205391	75.5	63.1	36.7	125461.5
Haldibari	93836	66.9	66.5	33.1	41745.3
Mathabhanga I	186683	72.1	80.8	18.6	47961.8
Mathabhanga II	196256	73.4	84.5	15.3	52841.0
Mekhliganj	132859	69.9	80.4	19.3	37007.6
Sitai	96335	61.9	70.6	29.3	44966.9
Sitalkuchi	163802	68.7	64.5	35.3	104060.2
Tufanganj I	222993	72.5	69.9	29.8	81318.9
Tufanganj II	167428	74.8	85.6	14.1	55748.5
East Burdwan District					
Ausgram I	119363	69.4	76.1	23.5	40854.2
Ausgram II	150896	68.0	77.3	21.4	32360.3
Bhatar	263064	71.6	73.2	25.7	46399.6
Burdwan I	215943	76.1	70.8	28.4	61054.9
Burdwan II	152939	74.1	87.4	11.0	70511.5
Galsi I	187588	72.8	71.7	27.7	52259.6
Galsi II	147177	70.1	74.8	24.7	50248.0
Jamalpur	266338	74.1	80.9	16.8	81920.6
Kalna I	206945	75.8	68.6	29.0	83962.8
Kalna II	167335	76.3	80.3	15.3	78045.0
Katwa I	173087	70.4	70.3	29.4	72025.7
Katwa II	136708	69.2	75.4	24.5	63160.4
Ketugram I	165408	68.0	53.0	46.8	45193.4
Ketugram II	118567	66.0	79.7	20.2	59050.1
Khandakosh	189336	77.3	67.2	32.5	47971.1
Manteswar	237398	73.3	57.7	41.8	44883.1
Memari I	218425	74.1	79.0	18.3	92320.2
Memari II	150252	74.6	72.8	24.2	58543.9

Mongolkote	263240	68.0	64.7	34.9	46605.8
Purbosthali I	206977	77.6	74.7	25.0	104157.8
Purbosthali II	212335	70.4	68.1	31.6	75128.7
Raina I	173094	80.2	70.7	28.4	45994.5
Raina II	151401	81.5	82.8	16.9	55156.6
East Midnapore Dist.					
Bhagwanpur I	234432	88.1	86.1	13.8	115843.6
Bhagwanpur II	192162	91.0	97.6	2.2	104078.9
Egra I	167163	82.8	85.2	14.7	72259.2
Egra II	178763	86.5	93.6	6.3	90586.4
Kathi I	170894	89.3	90.8	9.0	99936.7
Kathi III	157793	89.9	96.4	3.5	97808.9
Khejuri I	132992	88.9	91.1	8.7	92832.5
Khejuri II	139463	85.4	92.3	7.5	93645.0
Mahisadal	206277	86.2	80.0	19.7	112658.1
Moyna	226927	86.3	90.7	9.3	133210.0
Nandakumar	262998	85.6	87.6	12.2	139038.2
Nandigram I	207835	84.9	65.8	34.0	75206.5
Nandigram II	123219	89.2	87.7	12.1	102197.0
Panskura	283303	83.7	80.6	19.3	92476.2
Patashpur I	173337	86.6	93.2	6.7	93782.7
Patashpur II	175056	86.5	87.6	12.2	79977.6
Ramnagar I	167330	87.8	86.9	12.9	104288.7
Ramnagar II	156054	89.4	91.9	8.0	87838.3
Sutahata	123784	85.4	72.1	27.8	112205.5
Tamluk	217776	87.1	81.0	18.8	142832.8
Hooghly District					
Arambagh	285207	79.1	78.0	21.7	82604.2
Balagarh	228998	76.9	89.2	8.8	101046.9
Chanditala I	179825	83.8	65.2	34.6	125463.8
Chanditala II	158396	84.8	81.3	18.4	183076.4
Chinsurah Mogra	247055	83.0	87.8	10.4	264982.0
Dhaniakhali	320534	75.7	80.9	16.3	94062.7
Goghat I	140030	78.7	89.7	9.8	67414.6
Goghat II	160585	77.2	83.5	15.5	70561.7
Haripal	261073	78.6	78.4	20.4	110986.5
Jangipara	221578	75.3	76.4	23.1	103078.4
Khanakul I	254434	77.7	76.0	23.9	112476.6
Khanakul II	184734	79.2	84.2	15.7	127674.7
Pandua	316197	75.9	68.6	24.1	78468.7

Polba Dadpur	263555	75.1	77.9	19.3	71864.4
Pursurah	173437	82.1	83.5	16.3	144214.2
Singur	276414	84.0	90.7	8.9	152082.2
Srirampur Uttarpara	152266	87.3	90.1	9.1	306231.4
Tarakeswar	179148	80.0	88.9	10.2	132796.3
Howrah District					
Amta I	223261	81.3	73.0	26.8	129257.3
Amta II	208132	81.5	75.7	24.0	116346.1
Bagnan I	220915	84.1	62.9	36.7	160958.6
Bagnan II	164373	82.6	72.5	27.4	149000.3
Bally Jagachcha	209504	87.8	94.1	4.7	273620.1
Domjur	377588	81.3	62.3	36.8	403287.0
Jagatballabhpur	256403	79.2	69.4	29.4	140566.9
Panchla	251930	79.0	53.2	46.6	250892.5
Shyampur I	205809	79.0	79.7	20.1	143986.8
Shyampur II	196903	80.5	73.6	26.0	143060.8
Udaynarayanpur	190377	81.1	90.8	8.9	138511.5
Uluberia I	215392	77.4	55.9	43.9	105266.8
Uluberia II	191599	78.1	60.5	39.4	160528.2
Jalpaiguri District					
Dhupguri	417519	60.3	79.2	15.5	61777.2
Jalpaiguri Sadar	280446	74.9	83.2	15.0	47179.5
Malbazar	264711	65.3	69.3	19.6	33598.5
Matiali	105861	65.4	78.0	11.1	150458.4
Maynaguri	281554	77.2	90.0	9.8	40155.7
Nagrakata	119556	56.6	79.9	7.8	24061.8
Rajganj	287615	81.6	79.2	19.4	37101.9
Jhargram District					
Binpur I	156153	69.7	77.5	3.9	33840.0
Binpur II	164522	70.5	73.7	0.7	20780.2
Gopiballavpur I	108254	65.4	97.8	0.7	38383.2
Gopiballavpur II	104996	71.4	97.3	1.1	53161.8
Jhargram	170097	72.2	91.0	3.7	30049.6
Nayagram	142199	63.7	85.4	1.2	24217.8
Malda District					
Bamongola	143907	68.1	90.0	8.9	62811.0
Chanchal I	204740	65.1	28.6	71.2	36127.6
Chanchal II	205333	57.4	27.8	71.2	27815.3
Englishbazar	274627	63.0	48.3	51.5	52668.2
Gazole	343830	63.1	74.5	23.6	49861.5

Habibpur	210669	58.8	95.0	1.3	50399.3
Harishchandrapur I	199493	52.5	40.3	59.4	46905.3
Harishchandrapur II	251345	54.3	26.2	73.7	30316.0
Kaliachowk I	392517	65.3	10.6	89.3	39030.8
Kaliachowk II	210105	64.9	33.9	66.0	34051.5
Kaliachowk III	359071	54.2	49.0	50.7	138136.8
Manikchak	269813	57.8	56.0	43.9	47756.0
Old Malda	156365	59.6	70.0	28.6	48006.8
Ratua I	275388	60.1	33.0	66.9	40359.7
Ratua II	202080	56.2	21.2	78.7	42295.3
Murshidabad Dist.					
Beldanga I	319322	70.1	21.4	78.2	40494.8
Beldanga II	250458	67.9	38.1	61.8	45892.6
Berhampore	446887	73.5	45.9	53.6	105368.6
Bhagwangola I	202071	57.2	14.2	85.7	18793.6
Bhagwangola II	158024	53.5	10.5	89.4	11092.0
Bharatpur I	172702	62.9	42.4	57.4	40233.9
Bharatpur II	176368	66.1	42.2	57.7	75377.0
Burwan	257466	69.0	56.8	43.1	53975.3
Domkol	363976	55.9	10.2	89.7	12201.5
Farakka	274111	59.8	32.2	67.2	66493.7
Hariharpara	257571	69.2	19.0	80.7	19358.6
Jalangi	252477	58.7	26.6	73.3	55048.3
Kandi	220145	65.1	38.8	60.7	35807.9
Khargram	273332	63.6	45.5	54.2	32831.6
Lalgola	335831	64.3	19.5	80.2	48870.9
Murshidabad Jiaganj	234565	69.1	44.6	54.5	50146.7
Nabagram	227586	70.8	45.2	52.6	33660.2
Naoda	226859	66.1	28.0	71.9	27535.0
Raghunathganj I	195627	64.5	43.3	56.5	89494.4
Raghunathganj II	265336	61.2	17.9	82.0	47604.6
Raninagar I	189105	57.8	18.2	81.7	20118.7
Raninagar II	190885	54.8	19.0	80.8	18545.8
Sagardighi	310461	65.3	31.6	64.7	28420.0
Samsherganj	284072	55.0	16.4	83.5	50262.0
Suti I	179908	58.4	41.6	58.1	53905.0
Suti II	278922	55.2	27.2	72.5	79977.6
Nadia District					
Chakdah	405719	64.2	83.7	14.7	117544.8
Chapra	310652	68.3	37.1	59.7	37667.7

Hanskhali	293040	80.1	88.0	11.4	104703.9
Haringhata	231068	82.2	71.1	28.2	96459.2
Kaliganj	334881	65.9	41.4	58.5	43322.5
Karimpur I	183556	67.7	67.8	31.9	57674.9
Karimpur II	217136	62.4	39.5	60.4	38224.8
Krishnaganj	146705	72.9	94.0	5.9	90964.8
Krishnanagar I	314833	71.5	82.8	15.2	95421.4
Krishnanagar II	139472	68.5	57.0	42.8	63921.4
Nabadwip	135314	67.7	61.4	38.2	85309.4
Nakashipara	386569	64.9	46.5	53.1	49801.8
Ranaghat I	232282	77.6	93.8	5.7	149715.2
Ranaghat II	368681	79.4	85.6	12.6	113102.9
Santipur	241080	73.1	86.4	11.9	121517.5
Tehatta I	244322	70.7	68.9	29.2	67456.6
Tehatta II	151231	68.5	50.0	49.9	43842.7
North 24 PGS Dist.					
Amdanga	191673	80.7	41.3	58.5	56839.9
Baduria	285319	78.8	34.4	65.5	54612.6
Bagda	242974	75.3	82.0	17.4	85338.0
Bangaon	380903	79.7	78.2	20.8	88466.3
Barasat I	294628	81.5	55.4	44.1	155495.8
Barasat II	200918	77.7	25.9	73.8	45631.1
Barrackpore I	194333	85.9	84.4	14.5	171853.6
Barrackpore II	217171	84.5	77.7	21.5	414192.1
Basirhat I	171613	72.1	31.2	68.5	47874.9
Basirhat II	226130	78.3	29.7	70.1	50672.0
Deganga	319213	79.7	28.8	70.9	45491.3
Gaighata	330287	82.3	93.3	6.4	128238.8
Habra I	225200	83.2	73.5	25.8	141037.8
Habra II	176490	81.1	50.9	48.8	62689.1
Haroa	214401	73.1	38.8	61.1	54467.1
Hasnabad	203262	71.5	43.3	56.5	57498.2
Hingalganj	175545	76.9	88.0	11.8	64689.9
Minakha	199084	71.3	47.8	51.6	59918.2
Rajarhat	189893	83.1	59.4	39.9	154727.6
Sandeshkhali I	164465	71.1	69.2	30.4	62429.9
Sandeshkhali II	160976	71.0	77.2	22.3	63015.8
Swarupnagar	256075	77.6	52.2	47.6	62135.1
North Dinajpur					
Chopra	284403	59.9	33.9	64.0	25317.1

Goalpokhor I	326120	42.3	22.4	77.3	20007.9
Goalpokhor II	291252	46.1	34.5	64.1	33642.0
Hemtabad	142056	67.9	49.2	50.1	36436.0
Kaliaganj	224142	66.5	79.1	20.6	58726.8
Karandighi	368322	53.4	45.7	53.7	43102.3
Raiganj	430221	63.5	65.1	34.1	59321.3
Purulia District					
Arsha	154736	57.5	77.3	6.7	31892.8
Baghmundi	135579	57.2	85.3	2.9	27023.9
Balarampur	137950	60.4	78.9	5.8	36174.7
Bandwan	94929	61.4	55.8	0.6	15080.5
Barabazar	170569	63.3	87.2	4.5	92148.1
Hura	143575	68.8	81.0	6.8	30427.2
Jhalda I	137143	66.2	83.7	8.5	36430.4
Jhalda II	148156	54.8	87.2	4.4	50345.7
Joypur	133349	57.9	74.6	9.6	44554.4
Kashipur	200083	71.1	85.7	5.2	37994.1
Manbazar I	154071	63.8	85.6	3.1	34586.4
Manbazar II	97164	60.3	55.3	1.4	18799.8
Neturia	101427	65.1	85.4	9.6	42533.1
Para	200621	65.6	79.5	18.4	51023.3
Puncha	123855	68.1	82.1	3.6	30803.4
Purulia I	151188	78.4	83.9	7.1	45061.0
Purulia II	169488	63.4	83.6	15.9	45692.3
Raghunathpur I	117760	67.4	85.8	10.0	50063.5
Raghunathpur II	113790	67.3	84.8	11.2	48815.7
Santuri	78515	64.2	70.7	8.0	30892.2
South 24 PGS Dist.					
Baruipur	433119	76.5	60.9	37.0	116629.6
Basanti	336717	68.3	52.5	44.9	43733.8
Bhangar I	249170	72.1	32.4	67.4	52552.5
Bhangar II	246708	74.5	29.3	70.5	44609.6
Bishnupur I	232365	78.3	63.5	31.1	126806.3
Bishnupur II	214531	81.4	61.9	37.6	162519.5
Budge Budge I	112908	80.6	52.4	47.4	222755.2
Budge Budge II	192134	79.1	67.5	32.2	166248.5
Canning I	304724	70.8	62.0	37.5	100563.6
Canning II	252523	66.5	31.1	67.1	36539.6
Diamond Harbor I	156166	75.7	47.7	52.2	106037.3
Diamond Harbor II	190801	76.9	59.8	39.7	120778.0

Falta	249561	77.2	64.9	35.0	123940.2
Gosaba	246598	79.0	88.1	8.6	73215.7
Jaynagar I	263151	73.2	52.6	46.9	105654.1
Jaynagar II	252164	69.7	47.0	52.2	63633.3
Kakdwip	281963	77.9	82.4	17.1	91927.5
Kulpi	283197	75.5	58.9	40.6	79109.8
Kultali	229053	69.4	69.8	29.9	52217.3
Magrahat I	269494	73.8	40.4	57.8	91461.3
Magrahat II	304744	77.4	48.6	50.0	108161.5
Mandirbazar	214050	75.9	62.0	37.7	118122.8
Mathurapur I	195104	73.9	59.4	40.4	78677.4
Mathurapur II	220839	77.8	82.1	15.4	79713.7
Namkhana	182830	85.7	86.0	13.9	42424.5
Patharpratima	331823	82.1	88.9	10.7	60888.1
Sagar	212037	84.2	87.9	11.7	66066.6
Sonarpur	219863	79.1	81.5	15.9	148716.4
Thakurpukur M	176203	83.5	67.3	26.6	187990.8
South Dinajpur Dist.					
Ballurghat	250760	74.0	92.2	5.3	63534.1
Bansihari	141286	68.8	83.1	14.1	59447.4
Gangarampur	237628	71.5	63.5	34.7	47811.7
Harirampur	136853	64.7	50.2	49.0	31971.4
Hilli	83754	76.0	87.6	10.1	83278.7
Kumarganj	169102	74.6	64.2	34.1	37840.2
Kushmandi	198752	65.4	60.3	38.9	38598.2
Tapan	250540	68.6	69.2	28.4	39304.8
West Burdwan Dist.					
Andal	186915	77.3	90.5	8.7	199314.3
Barabani	127542	69.6	88.0	11.1	71785.7
Durgapur Faridpur	115924	74.1	85.3	13.9	63398.8
Kanksa	178125	76.3	91.6	6.8	58389.1
Pandabeswar	161891	73.0	86.4	12.6	143020.3
Salanpur	160357	78.8	94.3	3.6	111970.9
West Midnapore Dist.					
Chandrakona I	136006	78.9	87.1	12.0	61210.8
Chandrakona II	123269	76.0	78.2	20.6	64076.3
Dantan I	172107	73.5	93.1	5.6	62330.0
Dantan II	155017	82.0	82.5	17.1	68920.6
Dashpur I	203987	84.0	93.9	6.0	113810.9
Dashpur II	238529	85.6	92.8	7.0	133789.6

Debra	288619	82.0	88.2	10.3	74344.2
Garbeta I	228513	72.2	75.1	22.2	47424.0
Garbeta II	148410	75.9	75.4	3.8	28506.2
Garbeta III	169528	73.4	67.6	27.3	36634.8
Ghatal	219555	81.1	89.9	9.8	91358.5
Keshiari	149260	76.8	94.1	1.4	48085.7
Keshpur	339258	77.9	71.5	28.0	50205.8
Kharagpur I	258040	77.1	89.1	8.2	73382.2
Kharagpur II	183440	76.1	85.0	14.4	58699.7
Midnapore sadar	191705	70.5	71.7	25.6	42470.8
Mohanpur	111901	80.5	89.7	10.2	73005.5
Narayangarh	302620	78.3	93.8	5.2	56830.6
Pingla	194809	83.6	85.6	14.3	74285.7
Sabang	270490	86.8	93.7	6.1	83098.1
Salboni	188563	74.9	89.5	3.2	30496.4

Source: Census of India, 2011