

## Preface

The Uttar Dinajpur District Human Development Report [UDDHDR], 2010 is presented in the second phase of studies undertaken to document regional human development in the state of West Bengal at district and sub-district level, as part of the project for Strengthening State Plans for Human Development [SSPHD] sponsored by the UNDP, the Planning Commission and the Government of West Bengal. The principal objective in writing this report has been to inform, influence and transform district planning processes in Uttar Dinajpur by reviewing the state of human development attainments in different parts of the district and identifying development issues that will need to be resolved so that human development in the district can become more inclusive and holistic, touching the lives of all residents in Uttar Dinajpur. Despite statutory provisions under which a district and its constituent blocks are defined as basic planning units in India, district planning has so far been handicapped by the lack of planning documentation of adequate spatial and analytical depth. While bridging this gap in the case of Uttar Dinajpur, the UDDHDR, 2010 also lays a foundation for integrated district planning that can ensure that development benefits percolate to all sub-regions and all stake-holders in Uttar Dinajpur.

Uttar Dinajpur is placed among the least developed districts in West Bengal as well as in India, with high levels of illiteracy, low health-care and livelihood access and wide-spread rural poverty. Although it is a predominantly agricultural district, rapid population escalation restricts the absorption of new rural workers into farm-based employment, while low levels of urbanisation restrain the growth of the non-farm sector. Medium and long range district planning strategy must accordingly focus on the diversification of economic activities by leveraging human development variables like education and improved healthcare, so that the district can ascend the development ladder through an alternative path. Identifying persisting roadblocks in different development blocks of Uttar Dinajpur through human development indexing, the UDDHDR, 2010 also outlines core strategies for the road ahead which can be followed fruitfully by the panchayats, the block planning authorities and the District Planning Committee [DPC] in prioritising development interventions while integrating sub-district level plans into a consolidated human development plan for Uttar Dinajpur. By encouraging the visualisation of current development processes and problems in Uttar Dinajpur from village and block level perspectives, the UDDHDR, 2010 also seeks to facilitate the evolution of a bottom-up approach which can strengthen convergence between administrative authorities, Panchayati Raj Institutions [PRIs] and other development stakeholders, thus holding the key to effective decentralised planning.

The Uttar Dinajpur DHDR examines the basic attributes of human development namely, educational attainments, health attainments and livelihood attainments, in the district of Uttar Dinajpur at the level of its constituent blocks, and occasionally also at Gram Panchayat level. This disaggregated exercise was undertaken in order to capture regional disparities within the district, drawing focus to human development issues that assume significance at sub-district level. Having

been reconstituted as a separate district in 1992 after the bifurcation of the erstwhile West Dinajpur district, district planning in Uttar Dinajpur is still in its infancy, although the creation of the new district has a long history behind it, stretching back to the 1947 Partition as well as the 1956 transfer of territories from Bihar to West Bengal. The present human development problems of Uttar Dinajpur thus have an inherited nature, and are rooted in internal development disparities within the district. Besides poor educational, health-care and economic attainments, the district witnesses pervasive poverty which is amplified by agro-climatic constraints, livelihood limitations and population migration, creating a vicious circle where development interventions have also been blunted by the unfinished process of administrative reorganisation. Along with the highly participatory nature of the DHDR process entailing continuous interaction with multiple stakeholders, visual recall of the regional disparities that became evident within Uttar Dinajpur while travelling the length and breadth of the district, aided the initial conceptualisation of these problems.

Delineation of these human development problems in the UDDHDR required the compilation of a strong statistical data-base for the district, drawing from the large online databases of the population Census, the Agricultural Census, the School Education survey, the Rural Household survey and MIS data from the DISE and NREGS systems, as well as the data compilations regularly published by the Bureau of Applied Economics & Statistics [BAE&S], Government of West Bengal. These were supplemented by departmental data drawn from within the Government system, which were made available by the Office of the District Magistrate, the offices of the CMOH and ICDS, the DIC and the Sarva Siksha Mission, etc., as well as the Uttar Dinajpur Zilla Parishad [UDZP]. The responsibility of seeking out and compiling the UDDHDR data-base from these multiple data sources, and of subsequently maintaining, managing and tabulating the data has rested from the outset on Prof. Jeta Sankrityayana. The UDDHDR data-base is a key resource for future human development planning in Uttar Dinajpur and will provide considerable support to the District Administration and the DPC in discharging their statutory planning responsibilities.

The DHDR process was initiated at a lively inception workshop held at Raiganj in early July, 2007, where the focal issues to be addressed by the UDDHDR, 2010, were synthesised through situational analysis and detailed discussion between a cross section of development stakeholders drawn from the District Administration and its departments, the UDZP and its multiple tiers, as well as from civil society groups, community based organisations and academic researchers from local and regional institutions. The workshop was facilitated by the HDRC Centre of the Development & Planning Department, Government of West Bengal, and the West Bengal State Planning Board. Besides, identifying and validating the existing data sources, the workshop provided inputs for formulation of the detailed UDDHDR Concept Note which was discussed and endorsed at a subsequent technical workshop held in early September, 2007, where cross-disciplinary working groups comprising technical experts, elected representatives and administrators, academic researchers and community workers were constituted for each of the DHDR study components delineated in the concept note.

While the working groups undertook the preliminary task of etching out the UDDHDR chapters, overall coordination was maintained by the UDDHDR Core Committee, with the Sabhadhipati of the Uttar Dinajpur Zilla Parishad [UDZP], Smt. Jyotsna Rani Singha, as its Chairperson and Shri Sukumar Bhattacharya, IAS, District Magistrate, Uttar Dinajpur, in overall administrative charge. The DHDR Cell at the Uttar Dinajpur district headquarters and its designated officers coordinated the UDDHDR activities and technical studies at the organisational level, maintaining liaison between working groups and the line departments, which also cooperated wholeheartedly in providing relevant data inputs. The District Administration was responsive at all times to the logistic needs of the UDDHDR exercise, helping the UDDHDR team immensely, while the UDZP and individual DPC members actively supported the working groups and considerably enriched the present report with their participation.

Presentations on the Uttar Dinajpur DHDR at three different stages of the UDDHDR exercise were also made at Kolkata at the Development & Planning Department, Government of West Bengal, in the presence of the Empowered Committee for the SSPHD project, representatives from the UNDP and the Planning Commission, Government of India, and members of the West Bengal State Planning Board. The audience at these presentations which were chaired by Shri Nirupam Sen, Hon'ble MIC, Departments of Commerce & Industries, Industrial Reconstruction & Public Enterprises and Development & Planning, Government of West Bengal, and steered by Smt. Jaya Das Gupta, IAS, Principal Secretary of the Development & Planning Department, also included representatives from other district teams engaged in similar DHDR exercises in the second phase of SSPHD studies. The knowledgeable comments received from discussants at these presentations have aided in refining the analytical focus of the present report.

Smt. Jaya Das Gupta, IAS, Principal Secretary of the Development & Planning Department, Government of West Bengal, has been at the helm of the second phase of DHDR exercises at the State level from start to finish, and has guided and facilitated all activities that have gone into the preparation of the UDDHDR. Her support and appreciation of the pioneering nature of DHDR studies has been invaluable in strengthening the quality of this report. Smt. Kalyani Sarkar, IAS, Director, EMM & Ex officio Special Secretary, Development & Planning Department, Government of West Bengal, and Nodal Officer at the HDRC Centre at the Development & Planning Department, kept the ball rolling through various stages of the exercise, with able organisational and technical support being extended by Smt. Sayantani Ghosal, NUNV, HDRC, Smt. Gargi Ghosh, NUNV, HDRC, and Shri Subhronil Ganguly of the Gender Resource Cell at the HDRC Centre at the Development & Planning Department.

The Uttar Dinajpur DHDR is the outcome of more than a year of consultations between local governance authorities, administrators, development agencies, research institutions, voluntary organisations and civil society, acting as stakeholders in the human development of Uttar Dinajpur. Shri P.K.Sengupta, IAS, the then holding charge as District Magistrate, Uttar Dinajpur, Smt. Jyotsna Rani Singha, the then Sabhadhipati of the Uttar Dinajpur Zilla Parishad, and Shri Manoranjan Das,

Vice-Chairman of the District Planning Committee, Uttar Dinajpur, provided the initial impetus for the initiation of the UDDHDR exercise at district level. Shri Sukumar Bhattacharya, IAS, who subsequently assumed charge as District Magistrate, Uttar Dinajpur, maintained a keen interest in the progress of the exercise and ensured that all administrative support was extended to the studies undertaken by the UDDHDR team. Shri P.K. Dutta, Additional District Magistrate (Development), Uttar Dinajpur, and Shri Enaur Rahman, ADM (Land Revenue), Uttar Dinajpur, were instrumental in maintaining coordination and in evening out the workflows from the start to the completion of the UDDHDR exercise. Shri Manoranjan Das, Vice-Chairperson, DPC, Uttar Dinajpur, drew freely from his uncommonly deep understanding of development processes and problems in Uttar Dinajpur, thus making an important contribution to the medium and long range visioning of regional experiences and latent development potentials in Uttar Dinajpur. The contribution made by Shri Sudip Mukherjee, Coordinator, NREGS, Uttar Dinajpur, in smoothening the UDDHDR exercise also merits special mention because of the high level of capability he constantly demonstrated while organising and supervising liaison activities and providing logistic support to the UDDHDR team.

The UDDHDR working group on Education, which included the DI (Primary Education) and the DI (Secondary Education), the DPO, Sarva Siksha Mission, Smt. Dola Ray, District Nodal Officer, SSK & MSK, and Shri Amitava Dutta, DYO, Uttar Dinajpur, as its members, was led by Shri Prasanta Basak, Headmaster, Chopra High School, who was also responsible for drafting the initial outline of the chapter on Education in Uttar Dinajpur. Additional inputs on the proliferation of education in Uttar Dinajpur, and the status of educational infrastructure and madrasah education were provided subsequently by Prof. Jeta Sankrityayana.

The UDDHDR working group on Health-care was led by Dr. Chandreyee Das of Hijli INSPIRATION, and included the Executive Engineer, PHE, the District Coordinator, TSP, the DPO, ICDS, Shri Arup Sanyal from the Department of Economics, Surendranath College, Raiganj, Shri Jagabandhu and Shri M.N. Ghosh from St. John's Ambulance, Shri Prosenjit Datta from the Red Cross, Shri Jayanta Bhowmik from SRISTEE, and Dr. Prabir Chatterjee from UNICEF, as well as the CMOH, Uttar Dinajpur. The initial outline draft of the chapter on Healthcare in Uttar Dinajpur was prepared by Dr. Chandreyee Das. Several additional inputs from Prof. Jeta Sankrityayana on disease incidence, health service norms and overall health-care performance in Uttar Dinajpur were incorporated subsequently.

The UDDHDR working group on Economic Livelihoods was led by Dr. Nandadulal Banerjee from the Department of Economics of Raiganj University College, assisted by Shri Chandan Ray from the Department of Economics, Kaliaganj College, and included Shri Asim Sarker, ADO, Dr. Sajal Bhunia, Deputy Director, ARD, the District Fisheries Officer, the District Horticultural Officer, the General Manager, DIC, Shri D. Mallick, MD, Milk Union, Shri Manoj Mitra, District Coordinator, SRD, DRDC, and Shri Bhaskar Sarkar from SRISTEE as its members. The outline draft of the chapter on Economic Livelihoods in Uttar Dinajpur was prepared by Dr. Nandadulal Banerjee and Shri

Chandan Ray. Additional inputs were incorporated by Shri Anjan Chakraborty, Lecturer in Economics, St. Joseph's College, Darjeeling, Smt. Panchali Sengupta, Senior Research Fellow at the Department of Economics, North Bengal University, and Shri Jaideep Sengupta and Smt. Debjani Chowdhury, researchers at the Department of Economics, North Bengal University. Dr. Abdul Hannan, who was then with the Centre for Education & Communication [CEC], New Delhi, prepared a status report on the new tea plantations in Uttar Dinajpur. Dr. Sanchari Roy Mukherjee subsequently contributed the analysis of work participation rates, while Prof. Jeta Sankrityayana contributed reviews of the agrarian situation, the proliferation of irrigation and the performance of NREGS in Uttar Dinajpur.

The UDDHDR working group on Women in Uttar Dinajpur was led by Dr. Sanchari Roy Mukherjee, Director, Centre for Women's Studies, North Bengal University, with Smt. Ranjita Chakraborty, Senior Lecturer in Political Science, North Bengal University, and representatives from several Gram Panchayats and women's SHGs in Uttar Dinajpur as its members. The outline draft of the chapter on Women's Situations in Uttar Dinajpur was prepared by Dr. Sanchari Roy Mukherjee, with inputs from Smt. Ranjita Chakraborty and additional contributions from Smt. Sudakshina Ray Dutta, Lecturer (Selection Grade) in Economics, North Bengal University, and Smt. Panchali Sengupta, Senior Research Fellow, Department of Economics, North Bengal University.

The UDDHDR working group on Migration and Resettlement in Uttar Dinajpur was led by Dr. Sanjay Roy, Reader in Sociology, North Bengal University, who prepared the working outline for the chapter, while the detailed study of long-term migration patterns from Census data-bases was contributed by Prof. Jeta Sankrityayana and Dr. Sanchari Roy Mukherjee.

While the introductory regional profile of Uttar Dinajpur district was prepared by Prof. Jeta Sankrityayana, the computation and analysis of HDI and HPI indexes for Uttar Dinajpur district was carried out jointly by Dr. Sanchari Roy Mukherjee and Prof. Jeta Sankrityayana on the basis of the methodology developed earlier for the Malda District Human Development Report, 2007, to maintain parity with index computations for other West Bengal districts. The outline strategy for human development in Uttar Dinajpur was compiled from detailed discussions on the Draft UDDHDR, 2009 with the members of the District Planning Committee and other stakeholder groups in Uttar Dinajpur district.

Compilation of the UDDHDR, 2010 into its present format was accomplished through three consecutive stages. At the initial stage, the UDDHDR working groups undertook the preparation of interim reports on their assigned themes and presented these at an interim workshop where progress was reported, data duplications were identified and removed and persisting data gaps were assessed. Incorporating the feedback from the workshop, the UDDHDR working groups expanded on their work, compiling outline drafts of their assigned chapters which were forwarded to the Lead Coordinator. At the second stage, the outline drafts were structured and assembled into

a working DHDR draft by the UDDHDR Lead Coordinator, Dr. Sanchari Roy Mukherjee, who also vetted the analytical coverage and data accuracy in the light of the concept note, removing anomalies where they occurred and assigning gap areas to the supplementary contributors. These additional inputs were assimilated into the Draft UDDHDR, 2010 which was presented for detailed discussion before the DPC and the SSPHD Empowered Committee. At the third stage, the UDDHDR, 2010 in its final manuscript form was prepared by the Lead Author, Prof. Jeta Sankrityayana, after reediting, restructuring and rewriting the preliminary draft wherever necessary, and adding the graphic and GIS content. Thus the first shape to the chapters was given by the UDDHDR Lead Coordinator, while the Lead Author has reshaped the UDDHDR, 2010 into its final published form.

The UDDHDR exercise marked a period of intensive interaction, consultation and mutual learning within a very large team of development stakeholders, with the objective of synthesising a common vision for future human development in Uttar Dinajpur. The Uttar Dinajpur District Human Development Report, 2010 in its final form documents this synthesis. Each participant in this process contributed uniquely to the final outcome, including those mentioned above, as well as the many citizens of the district whose voices and aspirations are reflected in the report even though their names remain individually unacknowledged. It is hoped that development agencies and district planners alike will draw substance and support from this report, while transforming this vision into practice. The ultimate impact of the report will then be shared by the ordinary people of Uttar Dinajpur.

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