QUALITY OF LIFE OF URBAN BEGGARS IN ALIGARH DISTRICT

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Abstract

In the present study, an attempt has been made to examine the spatial patterns of beggars' social, economic, infrastructural facilities, and their socio-economic status in Aligarh district of Uttar Pradesh. This work is based on primary source of data, collected through the field survey in the Aligarh district carried out during 2009. All the 13 towns of the district were selected for urban survey. Further, the 25 per cent beggars' households were surveyed from the each selected ward of the study area. Altogether, 396 beggars' households were surveyed for the present study. The regional analysis reveals that beggars of the south-eastern and north-western tip of the district experienced the high level of quality of life, while, the western as well as north-eastern parts witnessed the low level of quality of life of urban beggars in the district.

Key Words: *Social, Economic, Household Infrastructural Facilities, Socio-Economic Status, Beggar, Region, Aligarh.*

Introduction

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

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

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

of the people in a region. The development of a region can be identified with an increase in the employment opportunities, availability of infrastructural facilities, amenities and services, proper distribution of resources, increase in production, and investment in consumption and so on. Thus, the development refers to an improvement of all the sectors of economic, social and cultural pursuits (Verma 1993).

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

Objectives of the study

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

i to analyse the regional variations of social, economic and household infrastructural facilities of urban beggars in Aligarh district.

ii to examine the spatial disparities in the quality of life of urban beggars in the study area.

Study area

Aligarh district, a medium sized district, is spreading over an area of 3700.4 square kilometers in the Western part of Uttar Pradesh. It occupies the north-western part of the Uttar Pradesh which is fertile region of Ganga and Yamuna, known as *Doab*. In the world map, the geographical location of this district is in North-Eastern Hemisphere and lying between the parallels of $27^o29'$ and $28^o11'$ north latitudes and meridians of $77^o29'$ and $78^o38'$ east longitudes. Its boundary touches the boundaries of five other districts (Bulandshahr, Badaun, Mathura, Hathras and Etah) of the Uttar Pradesh and one state (Haryana) of India. At present, the district is divided into five Tahsils namely, Koil, Khair, Gabhana, Atrauli and Iglas for the purpose of land record keeping, land revenue collection, judicial administration, etc. These tahsils are further sub-divided into 12 development blocks namely: Atrauli, Gangiri, Bijauli, Jawan, Chandus, Khair, Tappal, Dhanipur, Lodha, Akrabad, Iglas and Gonda.
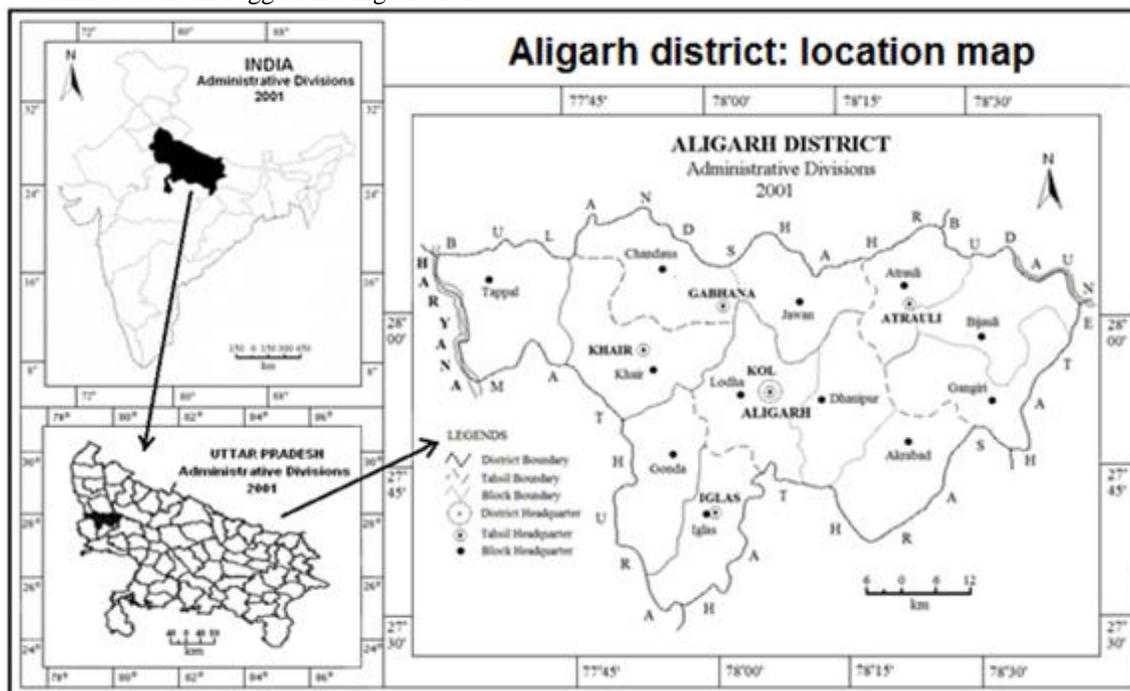
Source: Census of India and Vikas Bhavan, Aligarh, 2008   **Figure 1**

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

Database and methodology

This present study is based on primary source of data that has been collected by the researcher though field survey in the Aligarh district carried out during 2009. All the 13 towns of the district were selected for the survey. The 6 per cent wards from each town were taken out, in which, 396 households were randomly surveyed on the basis of 25 per cent samples of the beggars' household from these towns. However, a block has been considered as the smallest unit of study. The two blocks (i.e. Chandaus and Bijauli) of the district do not have any town or urban unit (means there is no urban population) that is why; they were not included for this present study.

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

Categories	Indicator	Definition
Social	X_1	Percentage of male population to the total selected population
	X_2	Percentage of female population to the total selected population
	X_3	Sex-Ratio
	X_4	Household Size
	X_5	Total Literacy Rate
	X_6	Male Literacy Rate
	X_7	Female Literacy Rate
Economic	X_8	Total Employment Rate
	X_9	Male Employment Rate
	X_{10}	Female Employment Rate
	X_{11}	Per Capita Income
Household Facilities	X_{12}	Percentage of households having own houses
	X_{13}	Percentage of households living in pucca houses
	X_{14}	Percentage of households having the drinking water facility within their premises
	X_{15}	Percentage of households having bathroom facility within their premises
	X_{16}	Percentage of households having latrine facility within their premises
	X_{17}	Percentage of households having electricity facility within their premises

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

variations of demographic characteristics, literacy, employment, income, household infrastructural facilities and their socio-economic status have been computed into standard score.

It is generally known as Z value or Z-score. The score quantify the departure of individual observations, expressed in a comparable form. This means it becomes a linear transformation of the original data (Smith, 1973: 85). It may be expressed as:

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

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

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

X_i = Mean value of variable i in all blocks,

σ_i = Standard deviation of variable i in all blocks.

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

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

Where: *CS* stands composite score,

∑Z_{ij} indicates Z-scores of all variables i in district j,

N refers to the number of variables.

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

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

Results & Discussion

Social Development

The Table 3 shows the regional variations in the social development of urban beggars in the district. It is the composite mean Z score of seven indicators as listed in Table 2. The scores varies from -0.61 score in Gangiri block to 0.71 score in Tappal block. This range of variations may be grouped into three grades namely, high (above 0.18 score) medium (0.18 to -0.18 score) and low (below -18 score) (Table 3). It is clear from the Figure 2 that the high level (above 0.18 score) of social development of urban beggars is found in the three blocks (Tappal, Iglas and Dhanipur) of the district and all the blocks are scattered in the district and do not form any region. Khair, Gonda, Akrabad and Atrauli blocks of the district witnessed the moderate level of social development and all are situated in the peripheral parts of the district, whereas, Khair and Gonda blocks form a noticeable region in the western part of the district. The low level of social development is recorded in the three blocks of the district namely, Lodha, Jawan and Gangiri of which two blocks (Lodha and Jawan) make a remarkable region in the central and northern part of the district (Figure 2). The analysis of the Figure 2 indicates that the central parts   of   the

Table 2: Block-Wise Distribution of Z-score Values of the Selected Indicators of Quality of Life in Aligarh District, 2009

Aligarh	Social Development							Economic Development				Household Facilities Development					
	MP	FP	SR	HS	TLR	MLR	FLR	TER	MER	FER	PCI	OH	PH	DWF	BF	LF	EF
Lodha	1.30	-1.30	-1.28	-0.87	-0.57	-1.36	1.41	0.48	-0.69	0.86	-0.95	-1.53	0.11	0.67	2.21	1.13	-0.32
Dhanipur	0.99	-0.99	-0.99	-0.50	-0.11	1.16	2.03	0.21	0.38	-1.07	2.38	-0.69	0.36	1.41	0.33	-0.44	-0.48
Akrabad	0.13	-0.13	-0.18	-0.14	-0.79	-0.19	0.35	2.35	1.14	2.10	0.96	-0.01	0.73	-0.75	-0.79	-0.44	1.47
Gonda	-0.95	0.95	0.95	0.48	-0.50	0.79	-0.65	-1.30	-1.16	-0.03	-1.07	0.95	-0.85	-0.75	-0.79	-0.44	-0.48
Iglas	-1.36	1.36	1.43	0.06	-0.36	0.89	-0.65	0.05	0.79	-0.48	-0.20	0.95	-0.85	-0.75	-0.79	-0.44	-0.48
Khair	-0.85	0.85	0.85	0.05	0.07	0.79	-0.65	-1.13	-0.82	-0.48	-0.29	0.95	-0.85	-0.75	0.41	-0.44	-0.48
Tappal	-1.01	1.01	1.02	2.52	2.72	-0.65	-0.65	0.01	0.34	0.71	-0.24	-1.60	1.26	-0.75	-0.79	-0.44	-0.48
Chandaus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jawan	0.07	-0.07	-0.12	-1.05	-0.12	0.64	-0.65	0.09	1.61	-1.29	0.00	-0.01	-0.85	0.87	0.19	2.47	-0.48
Atrauli	0.43	-0.43	-0.47	-0.26	0.16	-0.42	0.14	-0.28	-0.26	-0.18	-0.24	0.95	-0.85	-0.75	-0.79	-0.44	-0.48
Bijauli	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gangiri	1.21	-1.21	-1.20	-0.27	-0.48	-1.67	-0.65	-0.47	-1.31	-0.13	-0.35	0.05	1.76	1.54	0.82	-0.44	2.27

Source: Calculation is based on Sample Survey.
Note: ML=Male population to the total selected population, FP= Percentage of female population to the total selected population, SR= Sex-Ratio, HS= Household Size, TLR= Total Literacy Rate, MLR=Male Literacy Rate, FLR= Female Literacy Rate, TER= Total Employment Rate, MER= Male Employment Rate, FER= Female Employment Rate, PCI= Per Capita Income, OH= Percentage of households having own houses, PH= Percentage of households living in pucca houses, DWF= Percentage of households having the drinking water facility within their premises, BF= Percentage of households having bathroom facility within their premises, LF= Percentage of households having latrine facility within their premises and EF= Percentage of households having electricity facility within their premises.

Table3: Block-Wise Distribution of Z-score of Social, Economic, Household Infrastructural Facilities and Quality of Life of Urban Beggar Population in Aligarh District, 2009

Aligarh	Social Development	Economic Development	Household Infrastructural Facilities Development	Quality of Life
Lodha	-0.38	-0.08	0.38	**-0.03**
Dhanipur	0.23	0.48	0.08	**0.26**
Akrabad	-0.14	1.64	0.04	**0.51**
Gonda	0.15	-0.89	-0.40	**-0.38**
Iglas	0.19	0.04	-0.40	**-0.05**
Khair	0.16	-0.68	-0.19	**-0.24**
Tappal	0.71	0.20	-0.47	**0.15**
Chandaus	-	-	-	**-**
Jawan	-0.19	0.10	0.36	**0.09**
Atrauli	-0.12	-0.24	-0.40	**-0.25**
Bijauli	-	-	-	**-**
Gangiri	-0.61	-0.57	1.00	**-0.06**

Source: Calculation is based on Sample Survey.

Table 4: Category-Wise Levels of Selected Variables in Aligarh district, 2009

Category	Z-Score	No. of Blocks	Name of the Blocks
Social Development			
High	Above 0.18	3	Dhanipur, Iglas and Tappal
Medium	0.18 to -0.18	4	Akrabad, Gonda, Khair and Atrauli
Low	Below -0.18	3	Lodha, Jawan and Gangiri
Economic Development			
High	Above 0.36	2	Dhanipur and Akrabad
Medium	0.36 to -0.36	5	Lodha, Iglas, Tappal, Jawan and Atrauli
Low	Below -0.36	3	Gonda, Khair and Gangiri
Household Infrastructural Facilities Development			
High	Above 0.24	3	Lodha, Jawan and Gangiri
Medium	0.24 to -0.24	3	Dhanipur, Akrabad and Khair
Low	Below -0.24	4	Gonda, Iglas, Tappal and Atrauli
Quality of Life			
High	Above 0.13	3	Dhanipur, Akrabad and Tappal

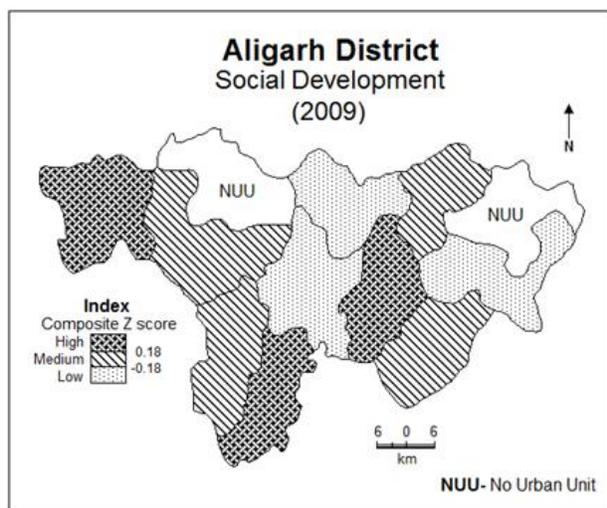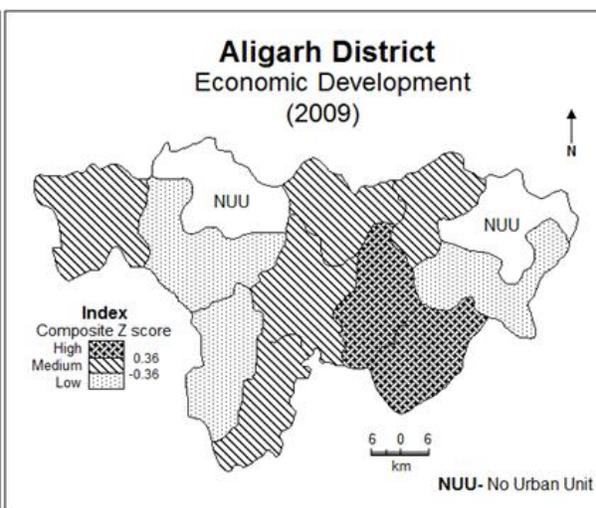| Medium	0.13 to -0.13	4	Lodha, Iglas, Jawan and Gangiri
Low	Below -0.13	3	Gonda, Khair and Atrauli

Source: Based on Table 3.
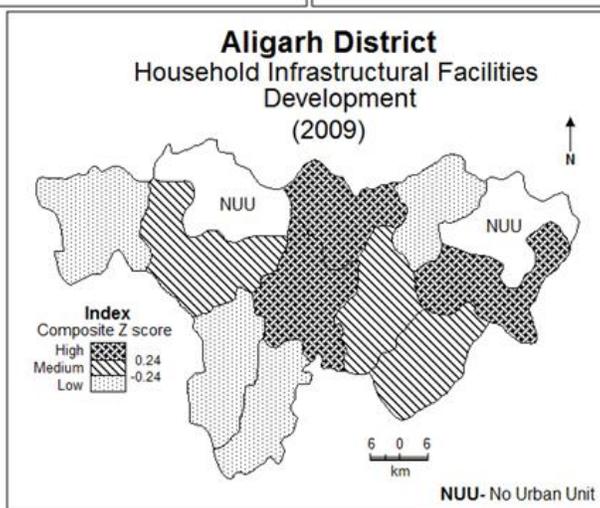

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

district have the low level of social development of urban beggars and the peripheral parts witnessed the high as well as medium level of their social development in the district.

Economic Development

In the present study economic development of beggars' is an outcome of four indicators as mentioned in Table 2. The Table 3 depicts that the z-score values of economic development of beggars vary from the lowest -0.89 in Gonda block to the highest 1.64 in Akrabad block. This range of variations may be grouped into three categories namely, high (above 0.36 score), medium (0.36 to -0.36 score) and low (below -0.36 score) as given in Table 3. It is clear from Table 4 that two blocks

(Dhanipur and Akrabad) of the district have high level of economic development, lies in the south-eastern part of the district. Five blocks namely, Tappal, Iglas, Lodha, Jawan and Atrauli of the district come under the category of medium grade (0.36 to -0.36 score) of economic development and four blocks (Iglas, Lodha, Jawan and Atrauli) of these blocks constitute a big identifiable region in the longitudinally central part of the district. Three blocks of the district witnessed the low level of economic development of which two blocks namely, Khair and Gonda make a small region in the western part leaving one isolated block i.e., Gangiri of the same grade. The Analysis of Figure 3 shows that the majority of the central blocks of the district record medium level of economic development of beggars. Western and eastern parts of the district exhibit low level of their economic development, while, high level economic development of beggars is found in the south-eastern part of the district.

Household Infrastructural Facilities

To measure the level of household infrastructural facilities, six variables have been chosen in this study as mentioned in Table 2. The level of household infrastructural facilities varies from the lowest -0.47 score in Tappal block to the highest 1.00 score in Gangiri block of the district (Table 2). This whole range may be arranged into three grades i.e. high (above 0.24 score), medium (0.24 to -0.24 score) and low (below -0.24). It can be revealed from the Table 4 that three blocks of the district fall under high level (above 0.24 score) of household infrastructural facilities and two blocks (Lodha and Jawan) of them constitute a region in the central part of the district. However, three blocks of the district show medium level (0.24 to -0.24 score) of household infrastructural facilities, of which, two blocks (Dhanipur and Akrabad) form a distinct region in the south-eastern part of the district. Four blocks namely Tappal, Gonda, Iglas and Atrauli of the district record low level (below -0.24 score) of household infrastructural facilities

Plate 1

Places of Residence of Beggars in Aligarh District

and two of them (Gonda and Iglas) make an identifiable region in the southern and south-western part of the district. The spatial analysis of household infrastructural facilities reveals that the central part of the district fall under high level of household infrastructural facilities and these facilities decreases with increasing distance in both east and west directions.

Quality of Life of Urban Beggars

The level of quality of life of beggars' is the aggregate output of the attainment of only few crude

selected indicators of their social, economic and household development because beggars are the persons who are considered as poorest of the poor and do not have so much facilities available within their lives. Table 3 shows that the z-score values of quality of life of urban beggars which varies from lowest -0.38 in Gonda block to highest 0.51 in Akrabad block. This string of variations may be arranged into three groups i.e. high (above 0.13 score), medium (0.13 to -0.13
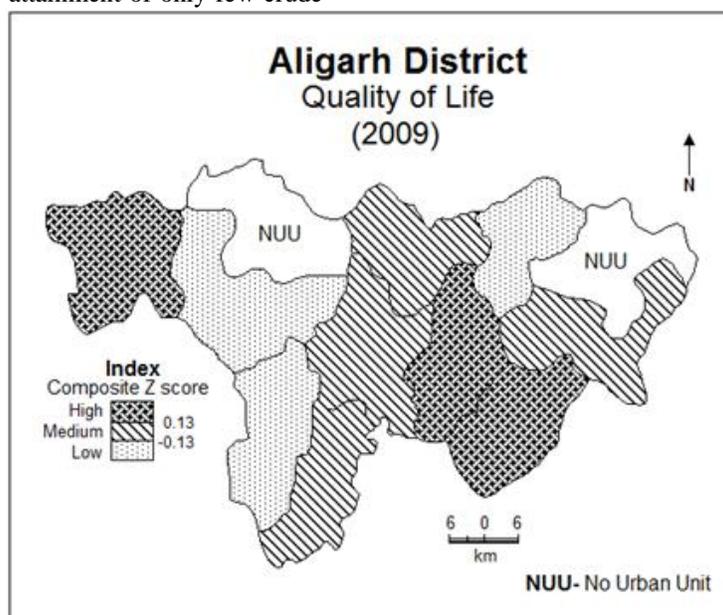

Figure 5

score) and low (below -0.13). Table 4 exhibits that the three blocks of the district namely, Dhanipur, Akrabad and Tappal have high score (above 0.13 score) of quality of life of urban beggars, whereas, two blocks (Dhanipur and Akrabad) constitute an identifiable region which lies in the south-eastern part of the district. Four blocks namely, Lodha, Iglas, Jawan and Gangiri witnessed the medium level (0.13 to -0.13 score) of quality of life of urban beggars, whereas, Lodha, Iglas and Jawan form a dominant region, that is located in the central part of district. Rest of the three blocks in the district come under the low grade (below -0.13 score) of quality of life of

urban beggars and two of them (Khair and Gonda) make an identifiable region in the western part of the district. The regional analysis of the Figure 5 reveals that beggars of the western part of the district experienced the low level of quality of life, while, the south-eastern part witnessed high level of quality of life of urban beggars in the district.

Conclusion

The overall analysis of the study reveals that the central parts of the district have the low level of social development of beggars, the north-western, central and southern parts witnessed the high level of

their social development, while, the medium level of social development of beggars is observed in the peripheral parts of the district. In case of spatial analysis of economic development of beggars, majority of the central blocks of the district record medium level of economic development of beggars. Western parts of the district exhibit low level of their economic development, while, high level economic development of beggars is found in the south-eastern part of the district. The spatial analysis of household infrastructural facilities of beggars reveals that the central part oriented from north to central of the district fall under high level of household infrastructural facilities and these facilities decreases with increasing distance in the west direction. The regional analysis of quality of life of urban beggars reveals that beggars of the south-eastern and north-western parts of the district experienced high level of quality of life, while, the western and north-eastern parts witnessed the low level of quality of life of urban beggars in the district.

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