



**CHAPTER 5**  
**AN OVERVIEW OF**  
**MEDINIPUR DISTRICT**

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#### **5.1 BACKGROUND**

Undivided Medinipur was the biggest district in the area ( $22^{\circ}57'10''N$  to  $21^{\circ}36'35''N$  and  $88^{\circ}12'40''E$  to  $86^{\circ}33'50''E$ ) of West Bengal (“Brief Industrial”). Census report 2011, reveals Medinipur district as having an area of 9,368 sq. km. and the population is 59,13,457 where 3,007,885 males and 2,905,572 females (“Paschim Medinipur”). The famous Chinese traveller Fa-hien and Hiuen Tsang visited Tamralipta (modern Tamluk). Midnapore town became the headquarters of Medinipur district which became famous for the struggle of independence against the British Administration (“District Census” 9).

The district was divided into Paschim Medinipur and Purba Medinipur on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2002 (“Brief Industrial”). The district of Paschim Medinipur is situated in the extension of Chota Nagpur plateau gradually sloping towards East and South (“District Human” 5). South-eastern railway track from Howrah to Adra runs through this district and also state highway no. 60 runs parallel to the railway track. The national highway no. 6 (Bombay road) also runs through this district. The western part of this south-eastern railway track in Paschim Medinipur is infertile laterite rocks and mostly laterite soil whereas the eastern part is fertile alluvial. The district of Paschim Medinipur has 3 Subdivisions, namely i) Ghatal ii) Kharagpur iii) Midnapore Sadar (“District Census” 20), 21 Blocks, 21 Panchayat Samity, 1 Zilla Parishad, 15 Members of the Legislative Assembly and 2 Members of Parliament (“Panchayat and R. D.”).

## **5.2 LOCATION**

The district of Paschim Medinipur is situated in the south-western part of West Bengal. It has a common border with the districts of Bankura and Purulia in the north; districts of Mayurbhanj and Balasore of Odisha in the south; districts of Hooghly and Purba Medinipur in the east and district of Singbhum in Jharkhand and district of Purulia of West Bengal in the west. The boundary of the district marks between 21°47''- 23° north latitude and 86°40''- 87°52'' east longitude. It is over 25 meters above sea level. The headquarters of this district is Medinipur, about 135 kilometers from Kolkata and 13 kilometers from Kharagpur ("Paschim Medinipur").

## **5.3 ORIGIN**

The district of Paschim Medinipur has great historical values. Great influences of Jainism (0.01%) and Buddhism (0.03%) has been traced out here along with Hinduism (82.61%). Islamism (16.09%) has also played a great role in this district. Jora Masjid and Dargas of Pirbabas have their importance till date. Urush festival of Mirja Bazar of Midnapore town attracts many people from different parts of West Bengal and also from Bangladesh. Sikhism (0.03%) and Christianity (0.92%) also plays a great role in this district. The famous fair of Nirmal Hriday Ashram Catholic Church attracts many people on Christmas Eve. Some glorious persons of Medinipur are Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Kabi Kankan Mukundaram Chakraborty, Kabi Kashiram Das, Rajnarayan Basu, Sangit Nayok Khetramohan Goswami, Surawardi and many others. Medinipur played an important part in the freedom movement of India (Mandal 323). Many freedom fighters like Martyr Khudiram Bose, Mrigan Dutta, Braja Kishore, Anath Bandhu Panja, Nirmal Jiban Ghosh, Ramkrishna Roy, Hemchandra Kanungo and many others from Medinipur laid their lives in the struggle for independence ("Medinipur city").

## **5.4 LITERACY AND EDUCATION**

As per Census 2011, the rate of literacy of Paschim Medinipur is 78% among which the male and female literacy rates are 85.26% and 70.50% respectively (“Paschim Medinipur”).

Important educational institutions in this district include IIT, Kharagpur; Vidyasagar University and its affiliated colleges; Medinipur Medical College; Medinipur Paramedical College; Medinipur Law College and many private engineering colleges and polytechnic and ITI College. There are many famous schools in this district.

## **5.5 CLIMATE**

### **5.5.1 TEMPERATURE**

Temperature is extreme tropical in this district and varies from 10°C in winter to 39°C in summer (“District Human” 7). During summer heatwave called ‘Loo’ blows over this area.

### **5.5.2 HUMIDITY**

Humidity ranges from 1450 mm. to 1560 mm. per year (Mandal 323).

### **5.5.3 SEASONS**

The district has mainly four seasons i) Summer (March - June); ii) Rainy Season (July - September); iii) Autumn (October - November); iv) Winter (December - February).

### **5.5.4 RAINFALL**

Normal rainfall is 1400 mm. and average rainfall is 1500 mm. The district is often affected by cyclone when it hits Odisha or Bengal Coast (“District Human” 7).

## **5.6 RIVERS**

A large number of rivers flow through this district but most of them are rain-fed and for that reason, the water level increases during the monsoon sometimes causing

flood. Some important rivers of this district are Kangsabati, Shilabati, Subarnarekha, Darakeswar, Keleghai, Dulung and Kusmi (Mandal 323).

## **5.7 LAND**

The land is mainly used for shelter, production of paddy, recreation, and processing material.

### **5.7.1 SOIL**

The soil in the western and northern part of this district is mostly hard laterite. The soil in the southern and eastern parts of the district is mostly alluvial and brown in colour. The soil is good for the production of oilseeds, millets, and maize. In low land, plain region paddy is being cultivated. The sandy soil in the upper region of the district is unproductive and the natural forest grows there (Mandal 322).

## **5.8 OCCUPATION**

Agriculture is the main occupation of the people of Paschim Medinipur. Organized industry is very rare in this district. South-eastern railway workshop in Kharagpur, Tata metaliks and Tata bearings are the main employers. This district has more than 35000 small scale industries like garments making, cement pipe making, lade machine works, furniture making, brick and tallies making, loaves making, mat making etc. (Mandal 323).

## **5.9 AGRICULTURE**

Agriculture is the main source of occupation of Paschim Medinipur. Aman is an important variety of paddy in this district. In some parts, Boro and Aus paddy are also cultivated considering the availability of water sources. The district of Paschim Medinipur produces a large amount of Potatoes (“Brief Industrial”).

### **5.9.1 IRRIGATION**

Medinipur Canal plays a vital role in irrigation in the district of Paschim Medinipur. Besides that, a large number of deep tube wells, river lift water, and shallow tube wells are also used for irrigation (“Irrigation and Waterways”).

### **5.9.2 FLORA**

The flora of the district Paschim Medinipur comprises of green forests and plantation, shrub jungles and bushes. The deeper forests of this district fall under Northern Tropical Dry Forests and Tropical Deciduous Forests category. The trees mostly found in this area are Sal (*Shorea robusta*), Peasal (*Pterocarpus marsupium*), Kend (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), Mahul (*Madhuka latifolia*), Kusum (*Schleichera trijuga*), Karam (*Adina cordifolia*), Asan (*Terminalia tomentosa*), Bahera (*Terminalia bellerica*), Rahara (*Soymida febrifuga*), Dhaw (*Anogeissus latifolia*) etc. The lesser forests include Eucalyptus, Akashmoni, Bamboo groves, Cashew nut trees, and many others. In the decade of sixties, forest department in this district took a new venture to protect forest resources with the help of the local people living nearby the forest. In 1970-1972 ‘Arabari Forest’ was developed as the model for the protection of forest. Again in 1980, Joint Forest Management Scheme (forest department + local beneficiaries) brought about a revolution in this respect. This success brought ‘Indira Priyadarshini Puraskar’ for Forest Department and in 1994 forest protection committee won the ‘Getty Wildlife Conservation Prize’ for protecting the forest from destruction and its revival. This prize is equivalent to Nobel Prize for forest (Mandal 322).

### **5.9.3 FAUNA**

Birds like ducks, storks, teals, etc. are found in the district of Paschim Medinipur. Jungle fowls are not many in numbers. Besides many non-venomous varieties, venomous snakes like Cobra, Kraits, Banded Kraits, Russel Vipers, etc. are common

habitants of the jungles. In recent years jungle cats, baboons, pythons, wild boar, deers, chitals and many variants of avifauna are increasingly being reported. Wild elephants from Dumka and nearby forest enter Garhbeta and Jamboni blocks in search of food. They often visit the nearby human habitations in search of crops and other foods. People from those areas often complain against the Forest Department for destroying their crops and houses. However, human-animal conflicts are rare due to the scattered location of the jungles (Mandal 322).

### **5.10 COMMUNICATION SYSTEM**

Road transportation is the most important in this district. National Highway 6 and State Highway 60 connect the various parts of the district with the state. The major roads connect the towns like Chandrakona, Garhbeta, Ghatal, Binpur, Keshpur, Kharagpur, Dantan, Egra, Kanthi, Khajuri and many more. Kharagpur is one of the most important railway stations of the south-eastern railway in this district (“Paschim Medinipur”).

Railway stations of south-eastern railway help people of those areas to reach the city of Kolkata and many trains from Kharagpur connect various parts of India with this district. Water transportation is also available in the district. In recent times many roads have been constructed and connect the villages with the nearby towns or urban agglomeration by means of matador van, auto and toto, etc.

### **5.11 INDUSTRY AND BANKING**

The main economical source of this district is agriculture. No such big industries have been established till date. Railway workshop at Kharagpur is the biggest industry in this district employing a large number of people. Besides West Bengal State Industrial Development Corporation (WBSIDC) is setting up a cement industry at Godapiasal

Industrial Park. Tata metaliks and Tata bearings industry have been developed in Kharagpur. Some ancillaries industries have also been developed. A large number of small scale industries like making cement pipes, shutters and doors and windows from iron, readymade garments, wooden and steel furniture, electronic goods, printing press, brickfields, candlesticks, cakes, and loaves are found in different parts of this district. The handicrafts of Medinipur are very popular from the ancient period. Some famous handicraft works are stonework, dokra, etc. The workers use soft stone to make household materials. Most industries of Sabang, Pingla and Ramnagar block is very famous. Some fashionable goods made of wood, bamboo, conch, and horns are available in the district (Mandal 323).

This district has branches of almost all the public sector bank like SBI, UBI, UCO, PNB, Allahabad Bank, BOI, BOB etc. and also private sector bank like ICICI, Axis Bank, IDBI, Bandhan Bank, etc. Along with the number of branches of the bank, the numbers of accounts have also been multiplied due to the Jandhan Yojana of Government of India. Besides, we have many bank branches in the co-operative sectors like Vidyasagar Central Co-operative, Tamluk-Ghatal Central Co-operative, and People's Co-operative Bank of Medinipur, etc.

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