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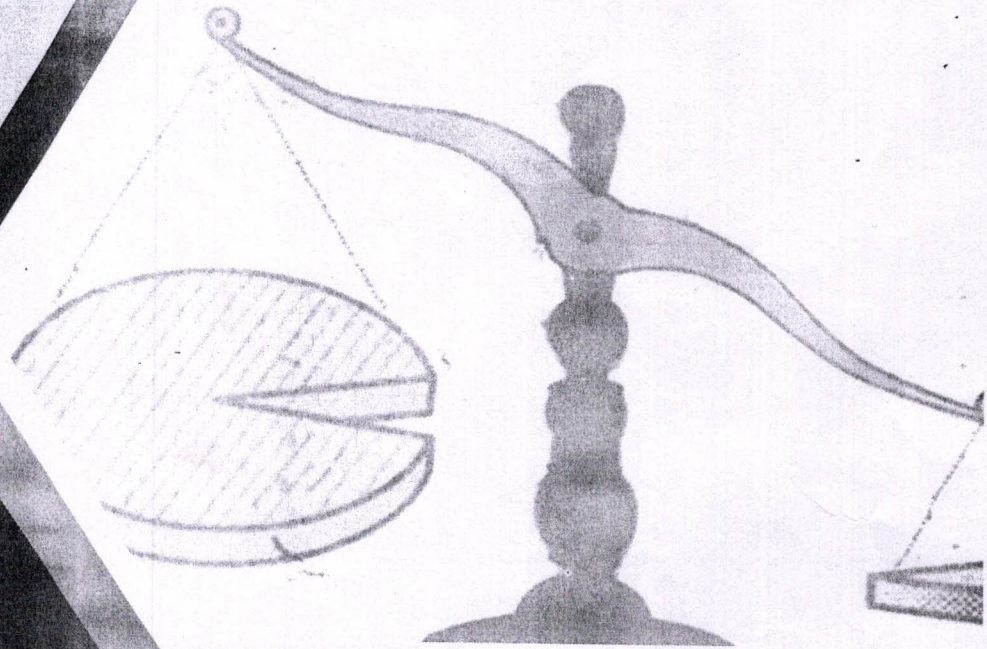
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Economical Study of Regional Disparity in India

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196	पुर्व विदर्भात गोंड राजवटीचा ऐतिहासिक प्रभाव प्रा. आर. पी. झनके	672-673
197	नोटबंदी व कॅशलेस प्रणालीचा युवकांच्या आर्थिक व्यवहारावर झालेला परिणाम प्रा. डॉ. गणेश शामराव बोरकर	674-676
✓ 198	A study of the indicators of Regional disparities in India <i>Dr. Satish Baburao Donge</i>	677-680
199	Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's View on States Recognition of Maharashtra <i>Ashwinkumar R. Rathod</i>	681-683

A study of the indicators of Regional disparities in India**Dr.Satish Baburao Donge***Arts, Commerce & Science College, Gangakhed, Dist: Parbhani.*

Introduction : India is developing country. In all states in India there are many problem faced by people. Major problem faced by country that is disparities in India. Some states are having good position of development and some states and the districted which are situated in this state's faced too much problems like poverty, literacy, development. To represent various dimensions of development encompassing the economic, social and other parameters, it was essential to make a judicious and appropriate selection of indicators. These indicators should capture the spirit of the theme under study in a comprehensive manner. They should be quantifiable, and not overlap. Considering these, the present study selected four indicators to identify spatial patterns and trends of regional disparities in India. These are population above poverty line, female literacy rate, population of non-agricultural rural workers, and degree of urbanization. While data on percentage of population above the poverty line was worked out by reversing the data on the population below poverty line, as given in the book, District Level Deprivation in the New Millennium (Debroy, B. and Bhandari, L. 2003), for the other three indicators, the data was taken from the Census of India.

Population above poverty line represents the economic well being of the people. Female literacy reflects the status of women in society and its level of social development. The proportion of rural non-agricultural workers represents the diversification of rural economy and indicates the level of rural development. Percentage of urban population is a proxy for the modernization of a society. These indicators were selected to represent the economic, social and rural as well as modernization dimensions of development in India at the district level.

The indicators of Regional disparities:

The following indicators show the regional disparities in India.

Population above poverty line : The World Bank and other agencies of the UN system define the 'poor' as *'those who do not have access to clean drinking water, easy access to facilities for curative and preventive health care and suffer, therefore, from various epidemic diseases. Furthermore, they are ignorant and illiterate for lack of access to or unwillingness to use facilities for education of their children and literacy for adults'*. In India, the poor are *'those who do not get enough calories from cereals, cookery oil, sugar and other foods to maintain themselves in health'*. There is an official poverty line. It is essentially the cost of a basket of commodities (in which share of expenditure on food items is over 80 per cent and the remaining 20 per cent goes to other essential items like housing and clothing) that could provide 2400 calories to an individual in the rural areas and 2100 calories in an urban place. In 1979, the Planning Commission of India worked this out as Rs. 49.09 per person per day for the rural population and Rs. 56.64 for the urban population, at 1973-74 prices.

The indicator of *population below poverty line* represents the backwardness of a region. Thus, *population above poverty line* can be taken as an indicator of development. In 2001, 342 districts of the 593 districts in India recorded at least 74.01 per cent (national average) of their population to be above the poverty line.

Most of these are located in the Northwest India, the Western Coastal region, parts of Eastern Coastal region, the Ganga delta, and parts of the Northeastern region.

Comparatively most districts located in the Ganga plain, North-eastern peninsula and Assam recorded the figure below the national average. About 48 per cent of India's poor are concentrated in three states i.e. Uttar Pradesh (including Uttaranchal), Bihar (including Jharkhand) and Madhya Pradesh (including Chhatisgarh). Maharashtra, West Bengal and Orissa account for another 22.5 per cent. Collectively, more than 70 per cent of India's poor belong to these six states (Mehta, A.K. and Shah, A. 2004).

Female literacy : The role of education in the development process is an established fact. Classical economists like Adam Smith, Alfred Marshall, Engles, John Stuart Mills and Karl Marx, highlighted this association. Many of the modern scholars, including Dreze, J. and Sen, A. (1995) reconfirmed this relationship. Apart from the economic and social benefits of education, female literacy, in particular, greatly improved the ability of a household to manage basic child care, regulate nutrition, and ensure health care. According to a Chinese proverb, "*If you plan for a few years, earn money; for ten years, then plant trees; but if you plan for a hundred years, educate the women*".

Kerala is a case in point showing how female literacy was impacting on poverty reduction while states like Bihar, low on female literacy, stagnated in poverty. A close link between female education and family planning is also observed and it is being considered as a positive population management indicator (Government of India, 1993). *Female literacy* is indeed a reliable indicator of the social development of any region.

The Census of India 2001 recorded 65.40 per cent of the country's population in the 7+ age group as literate. A wide gap (about 20 % points) between the male literacy rate (75.65 per cent) and female literacy rate (54.16 per cent) was observed. This pattern is typical of all societies having a strong patriarchal base where progress of the female is a more sensitive index of social change.

All districts along the western coast, covering large parts of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka and Kerala, and its extension in Tamil Nadu make a compact zone of high female literacy rates. High female literacy rate is also observed in the Christian majority states of Mizoram, Nagaland, and Meghalaya in the North-East Region. In the East, Calcutta (Kolkata) conurbation and the Orissa Coastal plain also display high female literacy rates.

In contrast, the whole of Bihar, Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Eastern Uttar Pradesh, Western Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir (except Jammu district), Arunachal Pradesh and Assam recorded low levels of female literacy. Extreme poverty, non-Christian tribal concentrations, desert conditions or hilly terrain were constraints to the progress of literacy, especially of the female. Most of these areas are commonly identified as lagging behind the rest of the country in terms of demographic transition, are low on economic development, and slow on diversification of rural economy. Central India noted for low female literacy rates, has some relatively urbanized districts like Bhopal, Indore, Ujjain, Jabalpur, and Hoshangabad display comparatively high literacy rates.

Rural non-agricultural workers : In a developing country like India, rural areas and agriculture are synonymous to each other. Agricultural development, promotes diversification of the rural economy toward secondary and tertiary sectors. Further, diversification of the rural economy leads to an overall rural development, economically and socially. It is for this reason that the percentage of rural non-agricultural workers, which represents diversification of rural economy, has been taken as an indicator of rural development in the present research.

In 2001, 28.76 per cent of India's rural workforce was engaged in non-agricultural pursuits. There were, of course, vast variations in this proportion, from cent per cent in the case of Lakshdweep to zero in entirely urban districts.

In all, 272 districts among 593 recorded a percentage of rural non-agricultural workers higher than the national average. Most of these districts are located in Northwest India, Western Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal. The districts along the Delhi- Jaipur-Mumbai National highway (NH 8) display high levels of diversification of rural economy.

Rural economy persists through subsistence agriculture, with a degree of diversification. Most extensive areas defining this feature include the Middle Ganga Plain, large parts of Central India, Rajasthan desert and interior peninsula. Most represent difficult terrain or arid conditions or concentration of tribal population, and in the case of favorable physical conditions, there is dense concentration of rural slums.

Urbanization : Among different indicators of modernization and socio-economic change, urbanization holds a prime position. It represents the transformation of a society from agricultural to an industrial and a service one. Practically every developed country.

The Census of India designates any settlement having a municipal status, such as municipal committee, municipal corporation or the cantonment board as a town. In addition any settlement, without such a statutory status, is also defined as town if it has a population of at least 5000, carries a population density of at least 400 persons per square kilometer, and has at least 75 per cent of male work force outside agriculture.

As per the Census of India 2001, 27.78 per cent of India's population is urban, distributed among 5161 urban settlements. This gives an absolute figure of no less than 286 million. Over two-thirds of urban population is concentrated in 393 cities, each with a population of at least 100,000. Among these, 35 are metropolitan cities, having a population of at least one million each.

There are wide variations in the urbanization level of different parts of India. The districts of Delhi, Kolkatta, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai, Yanam and Mahe are entirely urban while the districts of Lahaul & Spiti, Kinnaur, Upper Siang, Senapati, Tamenglong, Churachandpur, Ukhrul, Lawangtlai, The Dangs and Nicobars are entirely rural.

Goa is the most urbanized state, with virtually one half of its population living in towns. Himachal Pradesh is least urbanized at 9.79 per cent only. A large segment of the urban population is concentrated in six of the most urbanized states of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Punjab and West Bengal.

Only 170 districts among 593 are noted for an urbanization level higher than national average. There is a distinct West-East divide on the urbanization map of India. If a rough line is drawn straight from the Coromandal Coast joining up to the eastern border of Uttaranchal, a large majority of such districts find a location to the west of it.

Two corridors of urbanization can be observed along the western coastal districts of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu and the other along the national highways joining Ahmadabad and Mumbai with Kolkata. Apart from these, million city districts of Kanpur, Lucknow, Patna, Hyderabad, Vishakhapatnam and other regional centres also represent high levels of urbanization. Most districts of Mizoram, the Imphal valley in Manipur, Kamrup and North Cachar Hills districts of Assam, Papum pare and Upper Subansari districts of Arunachal Pradesh and the East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya in the Northeastern hill states are also relatively urbanized.

Using the four indicators of population above poverty line, female literacy rate, population of non-agricultural rural workers, and degree of urbanization, the development level of each district was identified.

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