

Review of
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Articles:

M. Govinda Rao,

Member, Fourteenth Finance Commission, New Delhi

Founder's Day lecture delivered on 17 April 2014 at MIDS, Chennai.

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Dynamics of Human Development in Bihar: An Inter-District Analysis

Abhijit Ghosh,

Assistant Professor of Economics, A N Sinha Institute of Social Studies, Patna, Bihar.

Abstract:

Bihar is considered one of the backward states of India. The recent high growth recorded by the Bihar economy has drawn nationwide attention. This study attempts to examine the trend of human development of the districts of Bihar in the two periods, 2001–03 and 2009–11. The former period is recognised as the stagnation period of the Bihar economy whereas the latter is considered a high-growth period. To study human development, a composite District Human Development Index (DHDI) has been constructed following the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) methodology. DHDI is a combination of three indices: an index of health outcome, an educational attainment index and an income index. The relevant data are gathered from different government reports. The temporal movement of this DHDI is studied. An attempt has been made to ascertain the proximate determinants of DHDI, for which a set of socio-economic indicators are taken into consideration. Three important results emerge from this study. First, significant inequality exists among the districts in terms of the different indicators. Second, some districts have witnessed consistent development compared to other districts. Third, some of the determinants of DHDI have no influencing role on fostering human development. This calls for immediate policy action.

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**Strategies and Policies for Alleviation of Rural Poverty in India:
Experience of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Generation Scheme**

Pulak Mishra and Saswat Kishore Mishra

Associate Professor and Doctoral Research Scholar, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences,

Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur 721302

Abstract:

Eradication of rural poverty has been a continuing quest of the planning-led development process in India. A plethora of development delivery institutions has emerged over the years to

benefit the poor and the disadvantaged groups of the society, and thereby to promote inclusive growth of the economy. The Central government and different state governments have introduced a number of such development delivery institutions to alleviate rural poverty in the country. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), conceptualised and enacted as an Act of Parliament by the Government of India in September 2005, is one of such development delivery institutions which aims at promoting inclusive and pro-poor economic growth by enhancing sustainable livelihood opportunities for the rural households along with conservation of natural resources. While most of the earlier poverty alleviation programmes have failed, it is expected that the MGNREGS will deliver the desired outcomes. Given that success of any developmental scheme depends on how it is implemented, the present paper is an attempt to identify the factors that have influenced execution of the MGNREGS and understand the socio-economic changes across the Indian states following its implementation. It is found that implementation of the MGNREGS has varied widely across the states and has been influenced significantly by the caste composition, literacy and economic conditions of rural population and structure of rural workforce. It is also found that there has been considerable increase in monthly per capita consumption expenditure and decline in rural poverty after introduction of the scheme, but the extent of rural poverty is still very high in poorer states of the country. The sectoral composition of rural workforce engagement has also recorded greater tertiarisation. In addition, there has been a marked increase in rural literacy rate, in general, and that of female, in particular. However, it is not very clear to what extent these changes have been caused by the MGNREGS and any conclusion in this regard requires further scrutiny.

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**State of Finances of Autonomous Councils in Northeast India:
A Study of Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council**

Sumarbin Umdor and Bashemphang R. Syiem

Associate Professor, Department of Economics, North Eastern Hill University and Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Lady Keane College, Shillong.

Abstract:

The Sixth Schedule was incorporated in the Constitution to protect and promote the rights, interests and traditions of the tribals by allowing them some measures of autonomy and self-governance through the institution of autonomous councils. The institution of ADCs is unique to the Sixth Schedule area of the northeast India and they represent the lowest tier of government in the Schedule area. At present, there are 10 ADCs in four states of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura. This paper examines the financial position of the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council, which is one of the three autonomous councils in Meghalaya, highlighting the composition and trends of the sources of finance and expenditure of the Council during the period 2001-02 to 2012-13. Our study shows the poor own revenue generation capacity of the Council and its dependent on transfers from state government in the form of Shared Revenue and Grants. On the expenditure front, we see that bulk of the expenditure of the Council going towards salaries and administrative expenses.

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The Status of Rural Livelihood Assets in Dry Lands of India

P. Aparna

*Assistant Professor, Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Nizamiah Observatory Campus,
Begumpet, Hyderabad 500 016*

Abstract:

People in dry land areas lag behind the other areas in human well-being and development. In this paper, livelihood index for dry lands of India has been developed using secondary data generated by the National Sample Survey Organisation. Twenty-five indicators have been identified for five livelihood assets and a composite livelihood index has been constructed. The livelihood index is low in dry land areas due to low status of social and financial capitals. Out of 211 dry land districts belonging to 11 major states in India, 94 have been identified as low-developed districts. They are concentrated in Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. The low level of livelihood assets is associated with low agricultural productivity and high incidence of poverty in some districts. While in some districts livelihood index is low in spite of having of high agricultural productivity and low incidence of poverty. The study has revealed that the human well-being depends more on socio-economic drivers than on the water constraint and resultant low provision of ecosystem services.

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