



Government of Tamilnadu

Department of Employment and Training

Course : TNPSC Group I Mains Material
Subject : Social Issues in India and Tamil Nadu
Topic : Religious Disparities

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REGIONAL DISPARITIES

Introduction:

‘Unity in diversity’ is a fundamental characteristic of India. The growth pattern of Indian Economy has reflected in various dimensions of social, economic, political, geographical, religious, cultural and linguistic diversities.

It refers to difference in economic development and uneven economic achievement in different geographical regions. It is reflected by the indicators like per capita income, the proportion of population living below the poverty line, the percentage of urban population, percentage of population engaged in agriculture vis-à-vis engaged in industries, infrastructural development of different states.

Causes of Regional Disparity:

Historical Factors:

The British government and industrialists developed only those regions of the country which possessed rich potential for prosperous manufacturing and trading activities. Thus, port cities like Bombay, and strategically important areas like Calcutta and Madras received initial development.

In the absence of proper land reform measures and proper industrial policy, the country could not attain economic growth to a satisfactory level.

Geographical Factors:

The difficult terrain surrounded by flood prone areas, hilly terrain, rivers and dense forests leads to increase in the cost of administration, cost of developmental projects, besides making mobilization of resources particularly difficult.

Himalayan states like Himachal Pradesh, Northern Kashmir, Uttarakhand, North-Eastern states remained mostly backward due to its inaccessibility and other inherent difficulties.



Location Specific Advantages

Due to some locational advantages like availability of irrigation, raw materials, market, port facilities etc. some regions are getting special favour in respect of site selections of various developmental projects e.g. oil refineries are mostly located in close to sea.

Early Mover Advantage

1. New investment in the private sector has a general tendency to concentrate much on those regions having basic infrastructural facilities.
2. Term-lending institutions and commercial banks tend to concentrate investments in the relatively more developed States.

Failure of Planning Mechanism

Local needs; one size fits all approach, lack of adequate resources, poor implementation of plans, lack of planning capacity at state level reduced capacity of Planning Commission to ensure balanced development.

Restricted Success of Green Revolution:

Green revolution improved the agricultural sector to a considerable extent through the adoption of new agricultural strategy of high yielding variety seeds, assured irrigation, provision of technical knowhow etc.

However, the benefit of green revolution was restricted to Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh as this belt had advantage of irrigation facilities, were traditionally wheat growing states, with adequate policy support from State Governments which other areas lacked and couldn't reap benefits of Green Revolution.

Law and Order Problem:

Extremist violence, law and order problem etc. have been obstructing the flow of investments into backward regions besides making flight of capital from backward states.

The government's development policies adopted during successive plan periods have stressed the need to develop backward regions of the country.

In promoting regional balanced development, public sector enterprises were located in backward areas of the country during the early phase of economic planning.



Disparity in other parameters:

Apart from the disparities in GSDP and Incomes, there are wide variations between the states even on other parameters such as health (IMR, MMR, expectancy of life at birth, access to safe drinking water, etc.), education (Adult literacy, Gross enrolment ratio at elementary, intermediate and higher education level) and infrastructure indicators.

Intra-state disparity

Various economic and social indicators confirm the higher level of inter-state disparities in India. Almost the same picture emerges among the different districts and regions within the states.

Even in highly developed states such as Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Haryana, there are districts and regions whose indicators are comparable to those of the poorest districts in most backward states.

Maharashtra is one of the most developed states in India but maximum numbers of farmers have committed suicides over there. This proves to the hypothesis that the benefits of the economic growth have not percolated downward.

Government Interventions to Reduce Regional Disparities

Higher resource transfers from the Centre to the Backward States via; Planning Commission (before 2014) mainly in the form of plan transfers, and Finance Commission in the form of non-plan transfers.

Since 1969 a Special Category status was introduced which was in operation till 13th Finance commission to provide greater percentage of grants to such states from Centre.

The large weight given to "Income Distance" by 14th Finance commission is an important step towards plugging the gaps in per-capita income between states.

Development Programmes:

1. Programmes of agriculture, community development programme, Drought Prone Areas Programme, irrigation and power, transport and communications and social services aimed at providing basic facilities and services to people in all the regions.

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2. Provision of Facilities in Areas which Lag Behind Industrially River valley projects and multi-purpose projects e.g. Narmada Dam for dry parts of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, proposed Ken-Betwa inter river link project for Bundelkhand region etc.
 3. Programmes for the Expansion of Village and Small Industries.
 4. Village and small industries are spread all over the country and various forms of assistance provided by the Central and State Governments are made available in the areas according to programmes undertaken.
 5. Industrial estates have been set up in all States, and increasingly, they are being located in smaller towns and rural areas.
 6. Diffusion of industrial activity and infrastructure
 7. In the location of public sector projects, the claims of relatively backward areas have been kept in view wherever this could be done without giving up essential technical and economic criteria.
 8. For North east region East West Corridor project, Special Accelerated Road Development Project (SARDP-NE) and Trans Arunachal Highway for increasing connectivity.

Competitive Federalism

Competitive federalism means spirit of competition among two or more states in the matters of trade, investment and commerce.

States compete with each other to attract funds and investment, which facilitates efficiency in administration and enhances developmental activities.

Weaknesses of Regional Planning in India:

It is being pointed out that in spite of adopting a long-standing approach to remove regional imbalances in the country; the regional planning in India could not meet the desired rate of success due to its following weaknesses:

- a) Refusal of richer states to transfer some of their surplus resources to the poorer states.
- b) Lack of self-reliance on the part of poorer states and thereby too much dependence on the transfer of resources from richer states.

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- c) Area development programmes for the backward areas are lacking an integrated approach.
 - d) Failure of large central projects located in the backward areas to improve their economies.
 - e) Non-approaching attitude of the entrepreneurs to seek concessional finance from the public sector financial institutions.
 - f) Too much concentration of Central Government investment subsidy meant for specific backward areas into a few areas of some districts and too much of such investment subsidy on capital related investments leading to creation of lesser employment opportunities.
 - g) Lack of infrastructural facilities like power transport communication etc. and lack of adequate fiscal and monetary incentives from state Government have led to no development of ancillary industries, secondary and territory industries is and around those major central industrial undertakings.
 - h) Lack of proper incentives offered by the state Government for tackling the problem of intra-state imbalances existing within a state.
 - i) Inadequacy of funds allotted by the State Government for the development of backward and other special problem areas.

Questions:

1. Write a note on causes of regional disparities in India?
2. Explain the weakness of regional disparity.
3. Write an Essay about Regional Disparities.