

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN NORTH-EAST INDIA: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract: In the 21st century, the crucial challenge of North-Eastern states will be how to strike a balance of the economy of the region with that of rest of India and also to ensure ecological balance. The real wealth of a nation is the human resource of the country. The basic aim of development of a country is to create environment for the people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives. But we often forgot this real truth in the pursuit of material and financial gain. The result is the destruction and diminishing of our natural resources, which must be combated. With the present paradigm, Human Development is the only alternative to have sustainable development. Sustainable development is a pattern of resource use that aims to human development without damaging environment and without disturbing the rights of future generations. Since the objective of development for a nation is to improve the welfare of its people, every nation strives hard not only to increase her wealth and productive

resources but also to ensure a better standard of living for her citizens by providing them with adequate food, clothing, housing, medical facilities, education, etc. Manpower planning indicates planning of human resources for meeting development needs of the country. Just for the proper utilization of manpower resources, a country should impart proper education to its population and train its labour force in technology, engineering, management, medicine and in many other fields connected with the development of various aspects of the economy.

Key words: Human development, Indices, Index in NER, Human capital, Manpower planning.

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, the crucial challenge of North-Eastern states will be how to strike a balance of the economy of the region with that of rest of India and also to ensure ecological balance. The real wealth of a nation is the human resource of the country. The basic aim of development of a country is to create environment for the people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives. But we often forgot this real truth in the pursuit of material and financial gain. The result is the destruction and diminishing of

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Hunan resources mean the size of population of a country along with its efficiency, educational qualities, abilities and skills. People becomes human resource (human capital) when investments are made in the form of education and health. The process of improvements in human resources (or human capital) is called human capital formation.

METHODOLOGY

The study is of descriptive type based on both primary and secondary sources. The data obtained from various published and unpublished books, records, reports and journals of the government of North-East States, internet surfing and visiting and collecting facts and information from different departments of North-East States.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ◆ To achieve sustainable development in North-East region.
- ◆ To improve the quality of human resource in North-East region.
- ◆ To identify the problems of human resource development in NE region.
- ◆ To avoid imbalances in the supply and demand for labour in NE states.
- ◆ To create more employment opportunity and to increase the utilization of the manpower resources.
- ◆ To facilitate greater equality of income distribution by including in the plan programmes of education and training.

The real wealth of a nation is its people. The main aim of economic development of a nation is to create environment for the people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives. But we often forget this powerful truth in the pursuit of material and financial gain. The result is destruction and diminishing of our natural resources, which must be combated. The liberalization process in our country has helped to reach a higher growth rate in 1990s and it is through the development process of agriculture and industry where maximum of our manpower are engaged. But this has not developed equitably in our country.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) introduced the Human Development Index (HDI) in 1990 and since then it is observed that the (Gross Domestic Product) GDP and HDI is having a positive correlation in India. Perhaps it is true for North –East India too but due to lack of any report or estimate of HDI for North-East Region is difficult to make critical assessment. With the present paradigm, Human Development is the only alternative to have sustainable development.

Sustainable development is a pattern of resource use that aims to meet human needs while preserving the environment so that needs can be met only in the present, but also in the indefinite future. It implies using renewable natural resources in a manner which does not eliminate or degrade

them or otherwise diminish their usefulness for future generations. It further implies using non-renewable mineral resources in a manner which does not unnecessarily deprive future generations from easy access to them. There are divergent views on the meaning of sustainable development but widely acceptable concept is “Human development” without damaging environment and without disturbing the rights of future generations. Hence this needs an analysis of Human Development parameters. [1]

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Nowadays, human development is an important area of study which provides information on the standard of living and quality of life of people. However, human development differs significantly from human resource development. The former is a wider term, as it includes all the sections of the society and does not treat human beings simply as a factor of production, whereas the human resource development approach emphasizes the need for the development of human capital through education, in-service training, health care, nutrition, and housing in order to raise productivity. The human development approach, on the other hand, concentrates mainly on the provision for basic means of well-being, which includes food, education, and health care for the people.

Since the publication of the first human development report in the year 1990, human development has emerged as an important area of research. It has its own influence on the social policies to bring dynamic changes in development. Human development is now globally recognized as a crucial aid in measuring, monitoring, and managing socio-economic development. Most social scientists agree that Gross National Product (GNP) per capita is a crude and incomplete measure of quality of life, and yet such a measure continues to be widely used while public policy is formulated. Human development approach embraces all aspects of human lives. [2]

ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

The role of human capital such as education, health, in-service training, information on employment market, migration in search of higher salary jobs etc. in economic development are- Education and training raises productive capacity- Education, training and skill formation increases a person’s capacity to supply work effort. Such increase in labour capacity raises production and profit level.

Good health raises productive capacity- A healthy person can work for longer hours. Since he can sell more labour, his earning capacity is larger than an unhealthy worker.

Large contribution of human capital to national income- The productivity and earnings of educated and healthy people in totality are very large. Since economic growth means increase of real national income, the share of human capital in economic growth is considerably high.

Human capital improves technology- Human capital not only increases the productive capacity of labour, but it also can create new technology and supply the same to achieve increased production at lower cost. It also encourages innovation of newer goods and services which can capture larger market.

Human capital raises standard of living- The factors of human capital formation, like education, health, training, skill, specialization etc. raise the standard of living of people. Education helps removing ignorance, narrowness of outlook, social superstition etc. and raises earning capacity. [3]

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDICES

The most comprehensive measure of human development is the Human Development Index (HDI). It is a composite index measuring average achievement in three basic dimensions of human development—a long and healthy life, knowledge, and a decent standard of living. It combines measures of life expectancy at birth, school enrolment, adult literacy, and income to provide a broader view of development. It is, thus, a summary measure to evaluate progress, focusing both on income and human welfare. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been constructing indices of human development for various countries since it started publishing Human Development Report (HDR) in 1990.

The HDI for the state of Assam and her districts were estimated and presented in Assam Human Development Report (AHDR) 2003. The HDI for the state was 0.407 and the corresponding figures in different districts ranged from the lowest figures of 0.214 in Dhubri district to the highest of 0.650 in Jorhat district (AHDR2003). Most of the eastern districts in Assam and the districts of Kamrup and Karbi Anglong have had HDI higher than the state average. All the western districts except Kamrup district had HDI lower than the state average. The districts of Nagaon, Hailakandi, Lakhimpur, Karimganj, Dhemaji, and Darrang also had HDI below the state average.

Table 1.1

Districts with Lower and Higher HDI than the State Average:

HDI Below State Average		HDI Above State Average	
District	HDI	District	HDI
Tinsukia	0.377	Jorhat	0.650
N.C.Hills	0.363	Kamrup	0.574
Sonitpur	0.357	Golaghat	0.540
Nagaon	0.356	Morigaon	0.494
Kokrajhar	0.354	Karbi Anglong	0.494
Nalbari	0.343	Dibrugarh	0.843
Lakhimpur	0.337	Sibasagar	0.469
Goalpara	0.308		
Karimganj	0.301		
Dhemaji	0.277		
Bongaigaon	0.263		
	0.259		
Dhubri	0.214		
Cachar	0.402		
Barpeta	0.396		
Hailakandi	0.363		

Source: Assam Human Development Report, 2003.

The table shows the districts having lower and higher HDI values as compared to that of the state average. It is revealed that Jorhat, Kamrup, Golaghat, Morigaon, Karbi Anglong, Dibrugarh, and Sibasagar were having higher HDI than the state average. All other districts of Assam were having HDI below the state average. The reason for low HDI in West Assam districts could be attributed to factors like lower attainment in the field of education, health, services, and limited economic opportunities to earn sufficient livelihoods. The dearth of employment opportunities for educated people was borne out by the increasing number of people with high educational and professional qualifications as revealed

from live registers of different employment exchanges. Unemployment continued to be a serious problem, especially among educated youths. Within the state there were considerable inter-district disparities. [4]

MANPOWER PLANNING

Manpower planning implies the process of planning in general to the preparation and employment of people for productive purposes. The utilization of manpower is the process of matching men and work in accordance with their level of development.

Manpower planning is primarily concerned with balancing the demand for labour with its supply. It is concerned with the estimation of human resource requirements of the state and matching them with its supply.

It is concerned with the programmes of education and formal training, as well as on the job training. It is also concerned with the greater utilization of the manpower resources. Manpower planning is concerned with the development of human resources. [5]

ROLE OF EDUCATION

Expenditure on education by the individuals is similar to the expenditure incurred by companies or producers on capital goods. Education gives them additional skills to do useful things and earn more. The role of education in economic development-

- ◆ It produces skilled and trained workers, helps in creating a more productive labour force and endowing it with increased knowledge and skills.
- ◆ It increases labour productivity. Primary education causes an increase of 40%, secondary education 100% and higher education 300% in labour productivity.
- ◆ It helps in providing widespread employment and income-earning opportunities for teachers, construction workers, text book and paper printers, school uniform manufacturer etc.
- ◆ It helps in reduction of income inequality. UDCs have launched upon programmes of universal education in the hope that they will improve the family earnings of the poor people.
- ◆ It enables the rural people to overcome ignorance and superstitions. Educated farmers can easily adopt new agricultural techniques and new methods of farming. It can also help rural people in acquiring skills to set up small and cottage industries.
- ◆ It helps in modernizing and revolutionizing the ways of thinking of the people. With the increase in literacy, the proportion of people below poverty line falls. Moreover, as female literacy rate rises, birth rate falls.

CONCLUSION

The progress and status of human development in North-East India is far from satisfactory. There has been high degree of disparity across the NE Regions as reflected in the levels of attainment in various dimensions of human development. This analysis has shown that poverty in the NE Regions is not only an outcome of lower income but also due to deprivation in health, education, shelter, water supply, and sanitation for the people. Therefore, there is an urgent need to set priorities and target for relatively backward regions of the NE States and groups of disadvantaged people. A development

strategy which is decentralized and seeks to involve a large community needs to be adopted by the government.

The findings of this study have important implications in identifying the poor regions of NE States and call for target oriented and region-specific poverty reduction programmes. More importantly, by way of policy implications, it also calls for good governance of the delivery system and strong political commitment. Furthermore, this also helps in identifying the area/states where poverty still exists significantly and reduction in poverty is not as much as in other better performing regions.

The Indian economy, in spite of being a faster growing developing economy and pursuing the policy of liberalization and globalization, has not been able to achieve much on account of human development and welfare. HDI in 2001 was as low as 0.56 for the country. while some states in the NE Regions have performed better than India, some other lagged behind. The disturbing trend of increasing gender disparity in Nagaland escalating rural-urban gap, particularly in the States of Assam and Meghalaya, is a matter of concern. Therefore, there is an urgent need for taking appropriate action in this regard.

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