

Regional Variations of Social Sector Development: District Level Study of West Bengal State

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The study makes an attempt to examine the inter-district disparities in social sector and their impact on social development through cross-sectional data and inter-temporal analysis of 18 districts in West Bengal. Social sector development is directly related to broader enhancement of human well-being and quality of life. This includes not only an adequate level of consumption of food and other consumer goods but also access to basic social services, especially education, health, drinking water facilities and basic sanitation. The study reveals that two dimensions come out to be meaningful, namely, quantitative and qualitative dimensional development. The study finds that there are sharp disparities among the districts in the State of West Bengal.

I Introduction

Social sector development acquires a very important role in a developing economy as it performs the task of development of human resources through education and health. Social sector development is directly related with broader enhancement of human well-being and quality of life. This includes not only adequate level of consumption of food and other consumer goods but also access to basic social services, especially education, health, drinking water facilities and basic sanitation. Social development programmes and their implementation fall largely under the jurisdiction of the State Government. Nevertheless, the Central Government supports the State Government's efforts by making additional resources available for specific programmes through centrally, sponsored schemes, additional central assistance and special central assistance.

In the development perspective, particularly in the context of sustainable development, the strategic policy issues related to population in association with the quantitative problems of population pressure as well as with the qualitative aspect of social development, i.e., improvement in the standard of living of the people in their aggregate socio-economic development.

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