

Human Development in Uttar Pradesh: Politics and Policies

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Public policies for human development in India are politically contested for many reasons like diverse political interests and commitment to specific social bases by political regimes. These aspects have rendered human development policies and programmes ploys for political bargaining and building support base. There has been an ongoing and implicit bargaining between the political regimes in power and their social bases which is reflected prominently in human development-related policies, schemes and programmes. This paper attempts to illustrate this viewpoint, taking the case of Uttar Pradesh by analyzing the basis and priorities of two political regimes in power, i.e., Samajvadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party.

I Introduction

The term human development in post-colonial world came to be used frequently in the early 1990s. Till then the official policy pronouncements on development were either in terms of growth rates or growth plus sectoral change, often combined with some combination of market and state interventions. The post-colonial state in general was an interventionist state and took lead in the development process. It took nearly four decades for the development discourse to change from that of growth rates to that of human development. United Nations agencies, especially the United Nations Development Programme, played a substantive role in this regard.

Two points that are central to this paper may be noted at the outset. First, ever since the focus was placed on human development, the states have attempted to transform their policy discourses in terms of human development. Secondly, we contend that this was done rather with certain naivety. The economists and social scientists who propounded the concept may not have been that naïve in terms of operationalisation of their concepts. But the states and enthusiastic economists that incorporated the concept into the policy pronouncements have underplayed or underestimated the nature and role of the state and politics in the entire policy enunciation, formulation and implementation. Our central argument is that public policies in general and those for human development in particular, have politics both as guiding and operationalising forces. Politics is central to the policy enunciation, formulation and implementation. Experience of developing countries in general and

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