

Development Disparities in Himachal Pradesh, 1991-2001: A District Level Analysis

Virender Kumar*

During the past six decades, perceptible development has taken place across various regions in India. Notwithstanding all these achievements, issue of uneven development has reared its ugly head more often than expected. This disparate development achievement has led to serious socio-economic and political ramifications. Himachal Pradesh has become a quintessence of success of development planning for the mountain areas of the Indian subcontinent. This article attempts to sketch out different levels of development at a disaggregated level of districts during 1991-2001. The findings clearly brought out that the process of development has been more favourable to high hill districts as compared to mid and low hill districts. The tribal districts have witnessed spectacular development during this period. While the overall disparities in development across the districts appear to be on a 'converging mode', those with respect to some of the individual indicators were found to be 'diverging'. For instance, while the disparities in development with respect to industrialization, health facilities, sex ratio, etc. appear to have grown, those for education, per capita income, etc. have come down during the study period. Thus, there is a need to apply corrective policy interventions with respect to these indicators so as to have equitable development across districts.

I Introduction

There exist divergent theoretical perspectives on the issue of regionalism and uneven development such as those evolved by neo-classical regional school, institutionalists, political economists and modern geographers. These theories have their own strengths and weaknesses (Das 2004). In simplest terms the spatial disparities in development may be defined as the inequalities in economic and social indicators of human well-being across geographical units within a region, state or a country. These spatial

* Associate Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics, CSK, Himachal Pradesh Agricultural University, Palampur, District Kangra, Himachal Pradesh- 176 062, Email: vkumar@hillagric.ernet.in