

STATE DEVELOPMENT REPORT: ITS RELEVANCE

The development process, created during the past four decades to respond to a global commitment to alleviating poverty, is in a state of disarray. The fruits of development efforts have not yet reached the poor segment of society. Many multilateral and bilateral assistance agencies are focusing on the poverty-reduction strategy as a tool for accelerating economic growth. They argue that if adequate growth rates are sustained, the poor will be swept along with the tide of rising incomes. The argument is reassuring, but reflects more a hopeful myth than a pragmatic reality. Dominated by professional finances and technocrats, the development process seeks to maintain an apolitical and value-free stance in dealing with what are, more than anything else, problems of power and values.

The real challenge of development thus lies in bridging the gap between the rich and poor through poverty-reduction programmes. The preparation of State Development Reports assumes importance in this context.

The State Development Report (SDR) is about the well-being of people, widening of their choices, measuring deprivation, highlighting the shortcomings of the present development strategy, areas of concern of the people, and identification of new resources and partnerships for more effective action. It suggests an alternative policy framework for designing and recalibrating the development process that addresses intra-state diversities and disparities in people-centered development. Therefore, the objective of development should not only be an increase in the level of income to measure social progress, but should comprise a much larger basket of choices and entitlements, including a longer and healthier life and an expansion of social and political freedom. This in turn requires deepening the scope of peoples' participation in all spheres.

WHY JAMMU & KASHMIR SDR

The fabled Vale of Kashmir, the front porch of the Himalayas, a valley of apple orchards and almond groves, willow forests and saffron fields, an exotic destination for tourists and trekkers, a refuge so wondrously endowed that it might fairly be called paradise, has been caught in militant activities for the past few years.

As the political turmoil of the state has divided the region politically, culturally and socially, human development is severely retarded. At this stage of human development when all the nations in the world are preparing ambitious programmes of development, this area is unable to identify the objectives for its future.

We cannot deny the fact that the situation on all fronts has shown marked improvement over the years, though one may differ on the matter of degree. The political dispensation has given much-needed stability and filled the political vacuum in the state putting it on road to development, reconstruction and peace. While the goal is still distant, a firm foundation has been laid and the state has traversed a long way, crossing many milestones. At this point, the State Development Report will renew the vigour and commitment of the people of the state.

The Jammu & Kashmir State Development Report advocates governance for sustainable development. It focuses on people, their capabilities, and the various opportunities the state provides, as the goal of developmental efforts. Its objectives are:

- ❑ To provide a comprehensive picture of development in Jammu & Kashmir.
- ❑ To highlight the concerns and issues
- ❑ To examine the challenges and opportunities
- ❑ To advocate a people-centered policy.

Since this is the first State Development Report, it is designed to be comprehensive in terms of sectoral coverage. This report covers important themes such as population and employment, education and health, access to safe drinking water, women's status, etc which are integral parts of the analysis. The potential areas with the capacity of enhancement of income and employment opportunities have also been critically analysed. This has been done primarily to achieve the real goals of development. In the State Development Report both social and economic issues have been addressed.

A sympathetic understanding of the challenges and opportunities will leverage greater resources and partnership with national and international development bodies especially the government and donor agencies. Changing perceptions about the problems faced by the state and designing appropriate policy instruments are the main thrust of this report.

METHODOLOGY

The State Development Report uses both primary and secondary data to analyse various social, economic and related issues. The sources of secondary data have been given at the end of the report. The most important aspect regarding data is its non-availability and/or its inconsistencies, in terms of different figures for the same indicator being quoted differently in different published sources.

As the 1991 census was not conducted in the state, comparison for some major areas was difficult. The limitations due to lack of secondary data and inconsistency were to a certain extent, overcome by the collection of primary data from the field survey through a structured questionnaire by Department of Management Studies, Kashmir University. Inputs for the SDR were also, to a limited extent, elicited from discussions held with government officials, academicians and other professionals.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The detailed age sex structure was not available for the 2001 census; hence a sub section in 'Demography' has discussed only the age structure on the basis of the 1971 and 1981 census.

In the section on 'Roads', analysis on deficiency in road network vis-a-vis the desirable connectivity norms is not attempted. The state has three topographically different regions $\frac{3}{4}$ Kashmir Valley, Jammu and Ladakh $\frac{3}{4}$ to which norms would be different and its detailed analysis is time consuming and beyond the scope of the present study.

In the section on 'Power', updating the data beyond 2000 is not possible since the power department (PDC) itself has not compiled the data beyond 2000, covered till the completion of field visit.

In the section on 'Education', data availability was a constraint. The 1991 census did not take place in the state due to militancy. At times either data was not available or was in the process of being compiled. Attempt was made to collect information from as many sources as possible but data has not been classified on various categories such as gender, religion and community. No independent evaluation has been undertaken on the impact of centrally-sponsored schemes as well. The Directorate of Economics and Statistics has done some evaluation studies but the time period for those studies was the 1970s although they were published only

recently. Due to time constraint, an evaluation study was not undertaken to assess the same.

In the section on 'Border Area Development Programme', secondary data was found inadequate for the purpose of the study and it was available only for a few border blocks. Owing to the sensitivity of the border areas, a field study could not be undertaken to assess the impact of the BADP on the people. Hence the analysis of the programme was heavily dependent on the views given by a few bureaucrats, and which varied from person to person.