

**REGIONAL VARIATIONS IN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND
LEVELS OF LIVING – A STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF
PLAN PROGRAMMES VOL-II, 1968**

1. The Study

One of the objectives of the planned economic development was the balanced regional growth of the economy. A knowledge of the inter-state and inter-regional differences with regard to various Socio-economic indicators was necessary to devise appropriate measures for balanced development in successive plan periods. Keeping this in view, a study of this nature was proposed by Prof. V.K.R.V.Rao in the meeting of National Development Council held in November, 1963. The main features of the study were to present data on diverse fields of economy such as agriculture, education, health, consumption, adoption of improved agricultural practices etc. and to throw light on the regional variations in these fields through a set appropriate indicators.

The study was envisaged as a co-operative effort between the Bureaux of Economic and Statistics of the State Govts. and the Central Agencies. The Programme Evaluation Organisation was entrusted with the implementation of this project and the preparation of consolidated report.

The study was organized in three parts and the report thereof was brought out in two volumes. Volume I contained the first and second parts of the study dealing with the analysis of the administrative statistics on agriculture, education, health and roads and re-tabulated data on consumption, employment and land holdings from the National Sample Survey and on debt and investment from the Rural Debt and Investment Survey 1961-62 conducted by the Reserve Bank of India. The Volume II dealt with the four surveys conducted by the State Bureaux of Economics and Statistics i.e on (i) adoption of improved agricultural practices, kharif and Rabi, 1964-65 (ii) extent of utilization of irrigation facilities and potential, (iii) Soil conservation and (iv) education, drinking water and other village facilities.

2. Objectives

To attempt an analysis of differences in improvements made in agriculture and similar field and on levels of consumption and employment among different regions and different sections of population in each state and as also to understand the changes that had taken place in the recent past.

3. Geographical Coverage

As the study was to provide regional analysis, it was decided to adopt the National Sample Survey Classification of regions. The regions were formed by dividing the country into a number of agricultural regions by grouping contiguous districts within each state having similar crop patterns and population densities. For the purpose of the Study there were however, deviations in some States like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir and West-Bengal where due to certain administrative and other conveniences, the classification did not conform to that of the National Sample Survey. Among the regions, the Union territories of Delhi and Himachal Pradesh formed one region and Manipur and Tripura another.

4. Reference Period

The study was conducted in 1964-65 and the relevant data were collected for the year 1964-65 in case of study on Adoption of Improved Agricultural Practices and Education, 1963-64 for the study on 'Utilisation of Minor Irrigation Facilities and since 1955-56 for study on Soils Conservation.'

5. Main Findings

I Adoption of Improved Agricultural Practices

1. The high rate of adoption of improved practices synchronized with higher growth rates in a few States only viz. Punjab, Gujarat, Madras, Mysore and Maharashtra. Though the states like Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh ranked high in terms of the proportion of cultivators adopting improved practices, their growth in agricultural production lagged behind.
2. By and large, the data on the proportion of cultivators using improved seed and chemical fertilizers together indicated significant divergence from the data on adoption of each of the practices separately. Even in the progressive States like Punjab and Madras, there was marked difference in the proportion of cultivators reporting combined use and those reporting separate use. While 64 per cent and 59 per cent of cultivators in Punjab had reported the adoption of improved seed and chemical fertilizers respectively during kharif, the use of both was reported by 42 per cent of the cultivators. In Madras, whereas only one-eighth of the cultivators had used both improved seed and chemical fertilizers, 30 and 56 per cent of cultivators had used improved seed and chemical fertilizers respectively in kharif season. The situation in Rabi season in these states in this respect did not differ much from that of the kharif season.

II. Major Irrigation Facilities

4. The proportion of wells without pumpsets was highest in all the states except in West Bengal and Kerala where tanks constituted the highest proportion. Tubewell as a source of irrigation was mainly available in Punjab and Andhra Pradesh.
5. The number of minor irrigation works per village was as high as 58 in Madras against only 5 in West Bengal. Madras had 5.9 minor irrigation works per 100 acres of cultivated area as against 0.8 in Mysore.
6. In the nine reporting states the estimated number of pumpsets worked out to about 5.9 lakhs. Out of these sets 45 per cent were located in the state of Madras. Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra had 18 to 19 per cent of the total number of pumpsets and Mysore had about 11 per cent. The proportion of pumpsets in each of the remaining states was less than 3 per cent. The electric operated pumpsets accounted for about 58 per cent of the total.
7. The utilization of irrigation potential appeared to be uniformly good in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Mysore, Punjab and West Bengal. In the remaining States the extent of utilization varied considerably between the two seasons Kharif and Rabi.

III. Bunding for Conservation of Soil

8. The condition of bunds was worst in Madras and best in Andhra Pradesh.
9. The data on the planting of trees on the bunds for the sake of stability showed that this aspect of the programme had not received the desired attention in any of the reporting states.
10. The entire bunded land in the respective reporting States excepting Mysore was not under cultivation in 1963-64. The proportion of gross cropped area to bunded area varied from 72 per cent in Kerala to about 10 per cent in Madhya Pradesh.
11. The disposition of the crops in bunded areas in different states pointed out that the crops which were generally preferred in the bunded areas were not those which prevent erosion of soil. In fact the cultivators generally preferred those crops which were more remunerative and generally grown in the neighbourhood.

IV. School Facilities in Rural Areas

12. Almost all the States had a high proportion of villages with primary schools. The States where this proportion was relatively low were Uttar Pradesh and Tripura.
13. In all the States excepting Andhra Pradesh and Mysore more than four fifths of the villages without primary schools had nearest primary schools located within a distance of 5 km.
14. In most of the States, over 50 per cent of villages had either a secondary school located in them or within a distance of 8 kms. The states where the availability of this facility within 8 kms. was relatively low were Madhya Pradesh, Mysore and Rajasthan.
15. On the whole, there had been considerable improvement in the availability of school facilities in the rural areas of the country. In Madras, Mysore and Orissa, the proportion of primary schools located in buildings was 90 per cent or more. More than four fifths of the primary schools had buildings in Punjab and West Bengal. It was significant that in five states namely Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, M.P., Maharashtra, and U.P. nearly one third or more of the primary schools were not located in structured buildings.
16. Leaving apart Kerala, on the whole, a vast majority of the Primary schools were provided with Black Boards.
17. Amongst the reporting states the percentage of trained teachers varied from 40 in West Bengal to 96 in Madras, while in the Union Territory of Manipur it was only 30 per cent.
18. Almost in all the States, the SC/ST population were not well represented in the teaching profession. The position in Gujarat and Manipur was, however, favourable. In Maharashtra, their representation was one and a half times of their due share. The position was depressing in other States specifically in Madhya Pradesh.
19. Out of 7 reporting States, Punjab, reported the maximum percentage (95) of schools where the students of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribe were having general education along with the children of other communities. This was followed in order by Kerala, A.P., West Bengal & Madras.

VI. Village Facilities

On the basis of availability of the six facilities, (Bus stop, Railway Station, Market centre, Post Office, Radio and doctors), the 11 reporting States were grouped into three categories i.e. having good facilities, poor facilities and average facilities. Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Madras were having villages with good facilities; Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh had poor facilities in the villages while the villages in the remaining States i.e. Assam, Maharashtra, Mysore, Orissa, Punjab and West Bengal had average facilities.

As regards availability of six facilities in states, facility-wise details are as under :

Bus Stop

The data collected in this respect indicated the existence of bus stop in maximum proportion of villages (54%) in Kerala. This was followed by Madras (40.7%) and Mysore (38%). Other states reported a much lower proportion and it ranged from 5 per cent in Uttar Pradesh to 25.6 per cent in Andhra Pradesh.

Railway Station

Among the various reporting States the percentage of villages having this facility ranged from 0.5 in Madhya Pradesh to 4.2 in Andhra Pradesh. The highest proportion of villages had this facility at a distance of 8 kms or above. Whereas 60 per cent of the villages had no railway station within 8 kms. In Punjab, similar figure in the case of Maharashtra was 83 per cent. The position in other states lay between these two extremes.

Market Centre

Kerala had the highest proportion of villages (27%) with market centres, located within 5 kms of them. Among the remaining reporting states, the percentage ranged between 2 and 10. The least proportion of villages with market centres was in Punjab.

Post Office

About half the villages in Andhra Pradesh and Madras were equipped with post office facility followed by Kerala where 44 per cent of the villages had such facility. The least proportion, about 8 per cent was reported in the States of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. In the case of the villages without post offices a large percentage had this facility within a distance of 5 kms.

Radio

The percentage of villages having radios ranged from 4 in West Bengal to 74 in Madras.

Doctor

Only a few small percentage of villages in reporting States had doctors. Among the States, Kerala came at the top in this respect with nearly 21 per cent of villages having doctors. In other States, this facility covered less than 12 per cent of the villages in each, the least being less than 2 per cent in Madhya Pradesh. Among those villages having not a single doctor, 64 per cent had doctors within a distance of 5 kms.

Primary Health Centre

Only 7 per cent of the villages in Mysore had primary health centres followed by Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab each having about 5 per cent of the villages with the facility of Primary Health Centres. In Madhya Pradesh and Madras, the proportion was one per cent or less while in Assam & Uttar Pradesh percentages of villages covered with this facility were negligible. In Kerala also the coverage in the rural areas was not satisfactory.