



ISSN: 2230-9926

Available online at <http://www.journalijdr.com>

IJDR

International Journal of
DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

International Journal of Development Research
Vol. 3, Issue, 8, pp.030-033, August, 2013

Full Length Research Article

DEVELOPMENT POLICIES FOR REDUCING REGIONAL IMBALANCE IN J AND K: A STUDY OF JAMMU AND SRINAGAR DISTRICT¹

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 28th May, 2013
Received in revised form
19th June, 2013
Accepted 21st July, 2013
Published online 23rd August, 2013

Key words:

Development,
Imbalance,
Srinagar,
Jammu,
Regional.

ABSTRACT

The state of Jammu and Kashmir is India's northernmost state. According to the census of 2011, the state has a population of 1.25 crores with 66, 65,561 males and 58, 83,365 females. The state has three geographical cum administrative regions namely, Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. The three regions of the state differ widely with regard to physical, socio-economic and cultural characteristics and are roughly divided on religious lines. However, the state has a majority of Muslim population. The three regions have a sense of alienation and deprivation in respect to each other in terms of developmental policies implemented by the state. It is worthwhile to mention here that the imbalance in term of development may be natural due to unequal natural endowments or man-made in the sense of neglect of some regions and preferences of others for investment and development. One cannot deny the fact that various factors play their part while preferring one region over the other. This phenomenon directly or indirectly creates a sense of alienation and deprivation among the population, without considering the possible reasons for this. This paper will look into various reasons for regional imbalance in the state and will analyze the role of development policies for reducing regional imbalance. It shall also make an attempt to present a set of workable recommendations to reduce regional imbalance in the state.

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INTRODUCTION

The state of Jammu and Kashmir is India's northernmost state lies in the Himalayas and borders Pakistan, Tibet, and China. The state has three geographical regions i) Jammu ii) Kashmir iii) Ladakh (Sehgal, 2011). The total population of J and K stands at about 1.25 Crore with male 6,665,561 and female 5,883,365 (Census 2011). JandK's three regions differ widely with regards to physical, socio – economic and cultural characteristics and are also roughly divided on religious lines (Sehgal R, 2011). Jammu Hindu dominated region, Ladakh Buddhist dominated region and Kashmir Muslim dominated region overall JandK is a Muslim majority state, but all the three regions have sense of alienation and deprivation in respect to each other. Various issues lead to regionalism, religious aggression and non tolerances towards each other. These regions feel developmental bias policies are implemented against them. The co-existence of relatively developed and underdeveloped regions within the same state is known as regional imbalance. Regional imbalance may be natural due to

unequal natural endowments or man-made in the sense of neglect of some regions and preference of others for investment and development (Sangwan and Kiran, 2012). This phenomenon is a natural outcome of the development process itself, wherein certain regions develop faster than others due to a number of factors. Regional inequalities are generally an outcome of numerous factors such as variations in natural and physical endowments, differences in social and attitudinal parameters, institutional structures and, to some extent, the discriminatory policies of the State. As per Census (2011) Jammu and Kashmir State has a population of 1, 2541,302 of which male and female were 6640662 and 5900640 respectively. Average literacy rate of the state is 67.16 percent. If things are looked out at gender wise, male and female literacy is 76.75 and 49.12 percent respectively. While looking at the important demographic features of both the regions under study, it is found that according to the Census (2011) India, population of Srinagar district is 1,236,829. Male population constitutes 651,124 and female population constitutes 585,705. The literacy rate of 70.98 percent of which male and female literacy was 77.61 and 63.52 percent respectively. While Jammu district has a total population of 1,529,958. Male population constitutes 813,821 and female population constitutes 716,137.

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Literature Review

The argument put forward in the present study is discussed in light of the few studies carried out on the related topic. To mention a few of them are given below:

Mohiuddin and Hashia (2012) mentions in their study that due to developmental strategies in JandK, many tehsils remained backward and have multi sectoral backwardness. It points towards the failure of the overall socio-economic dispersion mechanism from the developed to the backward regions, further points out the developmental imbalance within the region and in state. Sudesh Sangwa and Kiran (2012) in their study argued that economical imbalance between two regions leads to the regional imbalance. Noel Smith (2010) mention in his study economic inequality and poverty leads to imbalance in the society. Maria Amparo and Gruz- Saco (2008), in their paper suggests social integration and regional balance is a highly desirable outcome that reflects the existence of social cohesion, a strong institution foundation and a culture of acceptance. M. Sharon Jeannotte (2008), in his paper suggests the multidimensional, systemic, democratic, economic, social and cultural factors contribute to regional balance. Khan (2006) suggested that the dispersed pattern and small size of settlements, poor means of transport and communication in mountainous areas, pose a serious problem to the development of education, the outcome of which is the unequal development in the overall development. Kurian (2000) revealed that there are considerable disparities in socio-economic development across the Indian states which lead to regional imbalance. M.C Singhi (u.d) in a study conducted for Ministry of Commerce and Industry Government of India suggests that Industrial development can reduce backwardness of States / UTs and will help in building balanced India. Amitabh Kunda and K. Varghese (2010) mentioned in their study that patterns in economic inequality across the Indian states leads to the regional imbalance.

Hypothesis

Jammu and Kashmir's given demography and regional imbalance will be improved by pointing out and mending the limitations present in past formulation of policies, especially the ones based on enhancement of the regions social integration and development.

Research Questions

S. No.	Research Questions
1	Does developmental activities in J&K encourage regional imbalance?
2	Does regional imbalance via development exist between Jammu and Srinagar districts of Jammu and Kashmir state?

RESULTS

The researchers studied the secondary material available which included both official and un – official records. The aim was to understand different developmental sub – sectors coming mainly under Infrastructure and Finance sectors. The secondary data used to justify this study was obtained from Digest of Statistics 2010 -2011, Directorate of Economic and Statistics Government of Jammu and Kashmir. Analysis of various fields within these two sectors viz, Infrastructure and

Finance researchers were able to draw some conclusion. The analysis of various tables is given as under:

Table 1

Infrastructure:	Small Scale industrial Units	2010 – 2011
<i>District</i>	<i>Units</i>	<i>Employment</i>
Srinagar	10021	48403
Jammu	10357	68853
Difference	336	20450

Source: Digest of Statistics 2010 -2011, Directorate of Economic and Statistics Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

The data in Table 1 clearly shows that there is a visible difference in the number of employments generated in small scale industrial units set up in both the regions. This difference is indicative of the fact that the number of units is more in Jammu as compared to Srinagar district. This clearly points out the emphasis that is being given to the industrial sector in Jammu district, which is already having a good number of industrial units under private sector.

Table 2

Infrastructure:	Handicraft/ Handloom Cooperatives	2010 – 2011
<i>Districts</i>	<i>No. of Cooperative Societies</i>	<i>Membership (Unit Numbers)</i>
Srinagar	665	7687
Jammu	240	2273
Difference	425	5414

Source: Digest of Statistics 2010 -2011, Directorate of Economic and Statistics Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

In the above Table 2, it is clearly revealed that the number of cooperative societies is more in Srinagar district as compared to Jammu. This can be mainly attributed to the handicraft industry for which Kashmir is known worldwide. This table also clearly shows that in this particular field there is huge difference between two districts of JandK State, wherein Jammu district is lacking behind Srinagar district. However, one needs to look at the number of persons associated with these societies which clearly indicates that these societies are no match as far as the employment provided by the small scale industrial units.

Table 3

Infrastructure:	Roads and Buildings (Kms)			2010 – 2011		
	Surfaced			Un – Surfaced		
District	Black Topped	Metalled	Shingled	Fair Weather	Jeepable	Total
Srinagar	1131.89	359.34	0.10	30.22	-----	1521.55
Jammu	2232.01	23.20	11.96	108.40	10.05	2385.62
Difference						864.00

Source: Digest of Statistics 2010 -2011, Directorate of Economic and Statistics Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

There is no denying the fact that the road connectivity one of the major indicator of human development. Accessibility ensures proper delivery of services to the people. The above Table 3 shows that there is difference between two districts; the Jammu has been made more connectable in terms of Roads as comparison to Srinagar district. The difference is so much that one is compelled to question the very intentions of the government as far as the balanced regional development is concerned. Similarly the difference in the road development is bound to have an impact on the connectivity of various villages. It can be seen in the Table 4 that Srinagar district

which till recently also included Gander bal area is far behind Jammu in terms of number of villages connected through road.

Table 4

Infrastructure:	Road Connectivity to Villages	2010 – 2011
District	No. of Villages connected through Roads	No. of villages Un – Connected
Srinagar and Ganderbal *	246	154
Jammu	725	138

*Most of the villages of Srinagar fall in Ganderbal which was earlier part of District Srinagar

Table 5

Infrastructure:	Water Supply	2010 – 2011
District	Villages covered	Population Benefited (in Lakhs)
Srinagar	457	3.68
Jammu	1360	13.81
Difference	903	10.13

Source: Digest of Statistics 2010 -2011, Directorate of Economic and Statistics Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

The above Table 5 shows that basic facilities like provision of safe drinking water has been satisfactory in Srinagar district. One cannot deny the fact that the safe drinking water has to be provided to all the inhabitants of these two districts, but unfortunately there is a marked difference which can be seen in the above table. The figures are reflecting upon the callous and somewhat biased approach of planners towards the Srinagar district.

Table 6

Finance:	Planning and expenditure		2010 – 2011			
District	Annual Plan Outlay		Expenditure			
	Rev.	Cap.	Total	Rev.	Cap.	Total
Srinagar	1022.30	3524.94	4547.24	936.63	4087.23	5023.86
Jammu	3405.97	5799.60	9265.57	3081.70	7372.58	10454.28
Difference			4718.33			5430.42

Source: Digest of Statistics 2010 -2011, Directorate of Economic and Statistics Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

Finance is one of the major sectors which if provided adequately and judiciously can bring about change in any part. If one looks at the figures in Table 6 it can be seen that the Jammu district has been getting a major share of state finances. This clearly shows that the government has been insensitive to the financial needs of the Srinagar district which has resulted in the less financial provisions for the district. This table clearly shows the financial imbalance between two districts Srinagar and Jammu, Jammu gets more than double amount for its progress whereas Srinagar seems neglected.

Table 7

Finance:	Rural Employment Generation Program				2010 – 2011
District	No. of Units	Project Cost	Bank Loans	Margin Money	Employment Generation
Srinagar	6	24.0	22.80	8.40	62
Jammu	85	474.49	448.01	158.106	552
Difference	79	450.49	425.21	149.706	490

Source: Digest of Statistics 2010 -2011, Directorate of Economic and Statistics Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Table 7 shows that there is a visible difference between two districts when it comes to As far as the implementing of employment generating programmes and schemes is concerned again one can see that the Jammu district has been given a major share as a far as double than the Srinagar. The disparity has resulted in less number of employment

generations in Srinagar district and is visible in the above table.

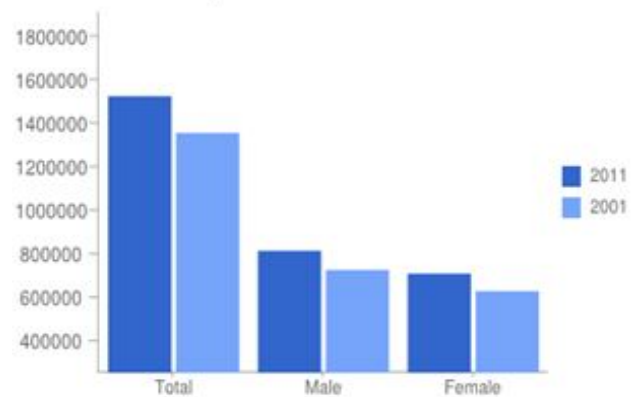
Table 8

Finance:	Cooperative Societies		2010 – 2011	
District	Number of Societies	Membership (Lack No.)	Owned funds (Rs. In lacks)	Working Capital (Rs. In lacks)
Srinagar	193	0.190	109.37	50.24
Jammu	213	0.710	139.69	1718.00
Difference	20	0.520	30.32	1667.76

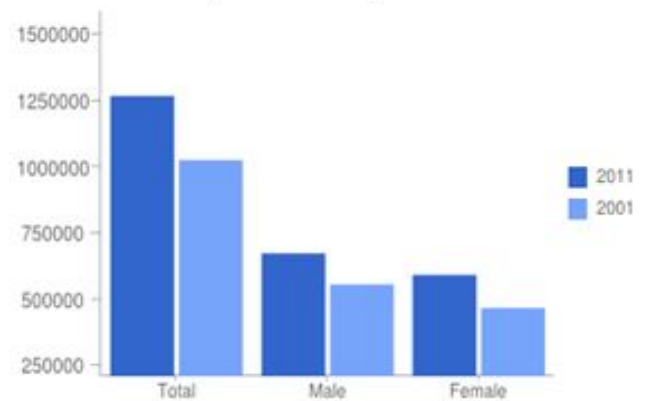
Source: Digest of Statistics 2010 -2011, Directorate of Economic and Statistics Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

The table given above shows the difference between two districts in terms of cooperative societies and its benefits in terms of finance and human resource development. The data clearly shows Srinagar district in behind Jammu district.

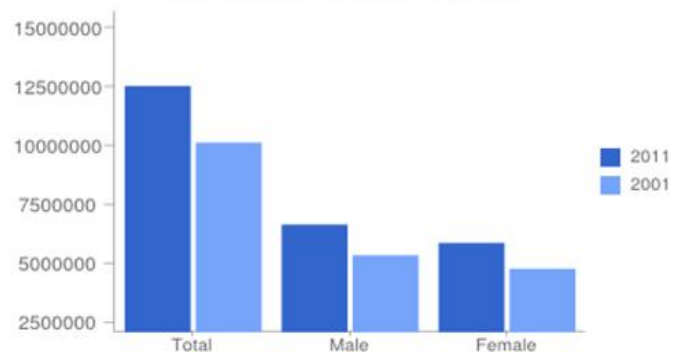
Population of Jammu District



Population of Srinagar District



Population of Jammu and Kashmir



DISCUSSION

This study also more or less agrees with all the previous researches conducted by these social scientists and shows that both economic via financial activities and infrastructure development has close relationship with the balance and imbalance of regions with in the country or in state. The state government has been creating regional imbalance by way of developing and implementing policy programmes which in no way are apt and satisfactory to the needs of the two districts, at least it can be said for the district of Srinagar. The insensitive approach and politically motivated implementation of programmes is harming the very nature of society which is reflective of our age old ethos and culture. It is unfortunate to accept that the state has been mainly through its developmental policies been instrumental in developing regional imbalance in the state.

Recommendations

- Developmental strategies should be formulated and implemented in such a way that development in one sector could induce development in other sectors as well.
- The appropriate policy, institutional and legal strategic interventions need to be put in place to effectively address the imbalances. Otherwise, these disparities have the potential of undermining the socioeconomic transformation envisaged in the Constitution and national development frameworks.
- There is a need to involve people right from the formulation of the policies. They cannot be treated as mute observers or objects or passive input receivers as they are powerless. They are supposed to be the prime movers of development at any given point of time. Similarly, people should also made aware of this fact that development if at all is done, is no longer a favor or a privilege to the people. This feeling would develop a sense of involvement and belongingness among the people for deveplemetal programmes which in turn will encourage them to be effective partners in the process.
- The state government can always ask for NGOs involvement in developing a consensus on the prioritization of needs of a particular area. The NGOs can make best use of PRA Participatory approach (PRA Techniques) so as to ascertain the needs of the people.
- To achieve inclusive and participatory growth, public policies should focus on substantial investment in human capital, ensure their efficient delivery through good governance and create opportunities for economic participation by all sections.

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