

Physical and Cultural Environment of the Bundelkhand Region

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Abstract – Uttar Pradesh with a population of 16.62 Crores is India's most populist State. The economy of Uttar Pradesh is mostly dominated by agriculture and allied activities. UP-Bundelkhand region having 12.21% of the State's area is under-populated with population density of 280 when compared to 690 in the State and 325 as National average. Little less than 5% of the State's population lives there. The increasing size of population affects the growth in every sector of an economy. Every development programme is badly affected by massive increase in population. The increase in population in any region is not always in proportion to the increase in infrastructure.

Key Words – Physical, Population, Economy, Cultural Environment, Bundelkhand Region

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INTRODUCTION

Reduction in imbalances between various regions and between various sections of society has become the foremost objectives of planned development in the State. Due to large variations in geophysical conditions of the State such as land, soil, rainfall, climate and some other historical reasons, remarkable differences in levels of development are existing within the State. The same policy has also been included in the Twelfth Plan. The State is divided into four economic regions viz. Western, Eastern, Central and Bundelkhand with more or less similar conditions and easily distinguishable from each other. Out of these regions, Eastern and Bundelkhand are chronically backward in almost every critical area. There are several reasons for this backwardness, but the most significant among them are deficiency in some natural resources or exposure to natural calamities, both of these are largely beyond human control and have been great barriers to their growth and development.

As per census 2011, the population of the State is 1998.12 lakhs. Its share in the total population of the country is 16.51 percent where as in terms of area; its share is only 7.33 percent. Regional analysis indicates that 39.98 percent of the total population of State resides in Eastern region followed by Western (37.17 percent), Central (18.00 percent) and Bundelkhand region (4.85 percent). In terms of geographical area, the corresponding share of these regions is 35.63, 33.13, 19.03 and 12.21 percent respectively.

Urbanization is an important indicator which plays a crucial role in the process of economic development. There is considerable unevenness in degree of urbanization across the regions and districts in the State. The Census data 2011 reveals that the Western region is most urbanized region of the State with an urbanization of 31.38 percent followed by Central (25.73 percent) and Bundelkhand region (22.67 percent). Urbanization is extremely low (12.19 percent) in the Eastern region of the State. The size of land holding is an important factor which affects the growth of agriculture. The percentage of holdings of less than 1.0 hectare in the state is highest in Eastern region (84.95 percent) and lowest in Bundelkhand (54.55 percent). This shows that majority of the farmers in Eastern region come under the category of marginal farmers. Majority of people in the State depends on agriculture. Census data 2011 indicates that 56.74 percent of main workers are engaged in agriculture sector in the State.

Regional analysis reveals that the percentage of main worker engaged in agriculture to total main workers is highest in Bundelkhand region (69.44 percent) followed by Central region (59.51 percent) and Eastern (59.42 percent). The economy of State is dominated by agricultural activities. The role of Credit-deposit ratio is very crucial in overall development of the State. The higher C D ratio provides improved credit facilities for agriculture development and financial support to small and medium entrepreneurs. As per data of the year 2012-13, the Western region having credit-deposit ratio (54.19 percent) is at highest position followed by

Bundelkhand region (52.08) and Central region (46.17). The Eastern region having credit-deposit ratio (25.88 percent) is at lowest position. Net Domestic Product as compared to other three regions in the State. The Eastern region occupies the lowest position in this respect. The Bundelkhand region has higher per capita Net Domestic Product than Eastern and Central region. It may be due to the lower population size in the Bundelkhand region.

INTER DISTRICT DISPARITIES IN UTTAR PRADESH

The level of development of districts in the State is identified on the basis of 36 development indicators. These indicators include 10 indicators of agriculture and allied activities, 6 indicators of industrial infrastructure, 10 indicators of economic infrastructure and 10 indicators of social infrastructure. On the basis of these 36 development indicators, Composite Index of Development has been calculated to identify the position of districts in terms of development. These districts have been arranged in the following five ranges.

The above analysis shows that 14 districts viz. Sant Kabir Nagar, Kushi Nagar, Maharajganj, Azamgarh, Deoria, Balrampur, Bahraich, Jaunpur, Gonda, Rae Bareilly, Shravasti, Pratapgarh, Siddhartha Nagar and Mau have very low Composite Index of Development as compared to other districts in the State.

INTER-BLOCK WISE DISPARITIES IN DISTRICTS OF UTTAR PRADESH

The disparities among the development blocks of each district are also identified on the basis of block wise development Indicators. On the basis of these indicators Composite index of development is calculated which indicates that out of 821 development blocks of the State, 399 blocks are backward with respect to their districts. A brief analysis of various schemes launched by State Government and Government of India to overcome the regional disparities is given below.

Poorvanchal Vikas Nidhi and Bundelkhand Vikas Nidhi

In order to ensure the twin objectives of balanced development and reducing inter-regional disparities and backwardness, the State Government had created Poorvanchal Vikas Nidhi for Eastern region and Bundelkhand Vikas Nidhi for Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh in the year 1990-91. The schemes funded by Nidhis are as an additional to the development efforts of the State Government. The objectives of the Nidhis are mentioned,

- (i) To fund those schemes/studies which are mainly based on local felt needs of the area so as to provide infrastructural facilities to the local people in the areas of construction of

roads, minor bridges, drinking water facility, construction of Govt. educational buildings, installation of power sub - stations, which, due to any reason, could not be funded either from State or District Plans.

- (ii) Under the Nidhis, those studies can only be sanctioned which can be implemented and completed immediately, at the most within two years.
- (iii) Those studies are given top priority in which two or more districts are likely to be benefitted.

Bundelkhand Package

The Bundelkhand Special Package for drought mitigation is being implemented from 2009-10 in seven districts of Bundelkhand region of U.P. These districts are Jhansi, Jalaun, Hamirpur, Lalitpur, Mahoba, Banda and Chitrakoot. Initially the share in this package for the State was Rs 3606 cr of which the Additional Central Assistance (ACA) was Rs 1695.76 cr. Up to the end of Eleventh Five Year, the ACA released by GoI was Rs 1005.51 cr. The package has now been extended in the Twelfth Five Year Plan with admissible ACA of Rs 2515.50 cr.

The package is being implemented with a multi-Sectoral approach giving primary focus for water resource sector and livelihood improvement. Highest Priority has been accorded to water management especially for completion of ongoing and incomplete irrigation studies for speedy accrual of benefits to farmers. Convergence of various flagship schemes like MGNREGA, IWMP, RKVY etc. are effectively being achieved in implementation of the package.

BORDER AREA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Border Area Development Programme is a 100 percent centrally funded programme and special central assistance (SCA) is provided for execution of approved scheme. The main objective of BADP is to meet the special needs of the people living in remote and inaccessible areas situated near the border.

The Border Area Development Programme (BADP) covers seven districts of Uttar Pradesh which are situated at Nepal border. These districts are Maharajganj, Siddharthnagar, Pilibhit, Balrampur, Bahraich, Shravasti and Kheri. The State Govt. has undertaken schemes in order to fulfill the critical gaps in the following sectors-Medical & Public Health, Irrigation, Animal Husbandry, Forests, Solar Energy, Construction (Building & Residential Accommodation for Panchayati), Rural Development, Roads & Bridges, Dairy Development, Soil Conservation & Education.

Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF)

The Backward Regions Grant Fund is designed to redress regional imbalances in development. The fund will provide resources for supplementing and converging existing developmental inflows into identified districts, so as to:

- Bridge critical gaps in local infrastructure and other development requirements that are not being adequately met through existing inflows;
- Strengthen, to this end Panchayat and Municipality level governance with more appropriate capacity to facilitate participatory Planning, decision making, implementation and monitoring, to reflect local felt needs,
- Provide professional support to local bodies for Planning, implementation and monitoring their Plans.

Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)

IMR of the state was at the level of 61 by the end of Eleventh Plan. The State government has fixed a target to bring down this rate at the level of 32 by the end of Twelfth Plan (2012-17). However, it is a ambitious task but it is felt that with the effective implementation of NRHM, RCH programmes and Comprehensive child survival programmes these level can be achieved.

The latest available data of Sample Registration Bulletin Sept. 2013 reveals that the IMR of Uttar Pradesh for the year 2012 is at the level of 53 against all India average of 42. The States of West Bengal (32), Maharashtra (25) Tamilnadu (21) and Kerala (12) are far ahead than us. The inter-district data of Uttar Pradesh as given in Annual Health Survey 2012-13 shows large variations. Across the State The data reveals that in Uttar Pradesh this rate is highest in Shrawasti (96) followed by Faizabad (88), Siddhartha Nagar and Balrampur (87) and Budaun (84), This rate is lowest in Kanpur Nagar (37), Jhansi (41), Luck now (44) and Mathura (44).

Maternal Mortality Ratio

Maternal mortality ratio (MMR) is the ratio of the number of maternal deaths per lakh live births. This ratio was at the level of 359 by the end of Eleventh Plan. The State Government has fixed a target to bring down this ratio up to the level of 200 by the end of Twelfth Plan (2012-17) In order to reach these levels the main focus should be on the effective implementation of NRHM and Janani Suraksha Yojna. As per Annual Health survey, baseline data 2010-11 this ratio for the State was 345 which improved to 300 in 2011-12 and further to the level 258 in the year 2012-13. Latest available data for the year 2012-13

reveals that this ratio is highest in Devipatan Division (366) and Faizabad Division (364). The lower MMR is found in Agra (153) and Meerut division (151)

Literacy Rate

As per Census 2011 literacy rate of the State is at the level of 69.72 percent. The target is to increase it up to the level of 85% by the end of Twelfth Plan. It is pertinent to mention that after the launch of Sarv Siksha Abhiyan significant achievements have been made in education sector and the gaps started closing but still, there are large variations among the regions.

The Census data 2011 indicates that Bundelkhand region has highest literacy rate (69.26 percent) followed by Central region (68.31 percent). The literacy rate of Western region and Eastern region is almost similar. In terms of female literacy, the Central region has highest female literacy rate (59.33 percent) against the State average (57.18) it is lowest in Eastern region (56.23percent). It is remarkable to note that the gender gap in literacy rate in the State is continuously decreasing. It has decreased from 26.60 percent in 2001 to 20.10 percent in 2011. The target is to reduce gender gap up to the level of 10 percentage point for which more emphasis is to be laid on female education.

Agriculture

- Rapid growth in Agriculture sector. Concentration will be more on other foods, and on animal husbandry, dairying, poultry and fisheries where feasible
- Technology will focus on land productivity and water use efficiency
- MGNREGS will be redesigned to increase contribution to land productivity and rain fed agriculture
- Higher priority to watershed management

Industries

- Need to grow at 11 to 12 percent per year
- Tune-up FDI and trade policies to attract quality investment in critical areas
- Improve business regulatory frame work "cost of doing business", transparency, incentives for R&D innovation etc.
- Clusters' need to be supported to enhance productivity of MSMEs

Education

- Universalisation of Secondary education by 2017
- Reducing dropout rates in primary and secondary education
- Raising the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in primary and Secondary education
- New focus has been shifted to improve the quality of education
- To invest in faculty development and teachers' training

Health and Nutrition

- Better health is not only about curative care, but about better prevention
- Clean drinking water, sanitation and better nutrition, child care, etc.
- Increase in the expenditure on health sector to around 2-3 percent of GDP
- Desperate shortage of medical personnel. Targeted approach to increase seats in medical colleges, nursing colleges and other licensed health professionals
- Role of PPP in secondary and tertiary healthcare will be expended
- Health insurance cover will be expanded to all disadvantaged groups
- Effective implementation of Janani Suraksha Yojna

CONCLUSION

State of Uttar Pradesh is gifted with plentiful water resources but because of rising population and thereby increasing demand of water for various purposes; its dearth is becoming evident and getting more pronounced day by day. Besides, there are regional imbalances on account of spatial and temporal distributions. Conspicuous to frequent climatic and hydrological droughts, the Bundelkhand region in Uttar Pradesh (and also in Madhya Pradesh) experiences severe agricultural droughts. With majority of population living below poverty line and their livelihood dependant on agriculture and livestock rearing, severe scarcity of food grains and fodder has hit hard on their lives. Administratively, Uttar Pradesh portion of Bundelkhand region comprises of 48 blocks under the jurisdiction of 7 districts.

Natural and other resources are distinct and abundant in case of western, central and eastern regions;

southern region, i.e., UP Bundelkhand has only 4.96% of the State's Population, low population density of 280. This region is prone to frequent floods and droughts; only recently, a severe continuous four year cycle drought (2004-08) has been witnessed in the region. The central state of India is one of the leading states of the country with respect to climate change. Mainstreaming climate change adaptation at the design stage can revolutionize the scenario of climate resilient development in the country.

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