
UNIT 2 DEVELOPMENT AND DISPARITIES

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2.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit discusses the basic concepts of development, as well as disparity. Despite development, disparity remains a grave concern. For example, in the community where you live, you will find that some households have high quality material possessions such as cars, refrigerators, microwaves, and furniture, while many others might not have even sufficient accommodation for living. This is an example of economic disparity. Besides covering a few important indicators of development, this unit also covers, in detail, the meaning of the term disparity, and the types of disparity. It examines the types of disparity in the global and the regional context, and also examines disparity in the interstate and the intrastate contexts. It also discusses the rural-urban disparity. In addition, it discusses the contexts, social, as well as economic, in which disparities take place. Finally, the unit discusses the causes of disparity, and the measures to overcome disparity.

After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the indicators of development;
- describe types of disparities, and their meaning; and
- discuss the causes of disparities, and the measures to overcome them.

2.2 DEVELOPMENT AND ITS INDICATORS

The concept of development and its indicators, as a reminder to you, the meaning of development has been already covered in Unit: 1, Block 1 of Course 1. Here, in this section, we discuss some important indicators of development, specifically.

Development has no precise definition. There are, however, a few identified indicators: economic, social, psychological, cultural, and political, on the basis of which development is said to have taken place. Among the economic indicators of development are: income, expenditure, growth – industrial as well as agricultural. Some indicators of social development are literacy, health. Among

the psychological indicators are, the feeling of wellbeing (satisfaction), change in attitude. The cultural indicators include modern and traditional cultures which tend to influence other cultures. Lastly, the political indicators also play an important role in defining development because political situations within a country may influence the policies of other countries.

Let us begin with the economic indicators. It is said that development of a country, state or a region has taken place if the per capita income or per capita expenditure has increased. This means that people have more income, as a result of which, their purchasing power has gone up, and their expenditure patterns have gone up. This is an indicator that development has taken place. If the annual growth rate in the industrial sector, or in the agricultural sector has increased, or even if the overall growth rate has increased, then, again, it can be said that the country has moved from one stage of development to the other.

The social indicators of development include, among others, literacy and health. If the percentage of literates in a country has increased from, say, 65 per cent to 90 per cent, it can be said that the country has developed. Similarly, if the per capita expenditure on health has increased, or the infant mortality rate (i.e., the number of children who have died before completing one year, per one thousand live births) has declined from, say, 65 per 1000 live births, to, 45 per 1000 live births, it can be said that the country has moved from one stage of development to the next. Similarly, if malnutrition has been reduced from, say, 30 per cent, to 15 per cent, this, also, indicates that the country has developed.

The psychological indicators of development include a behavioural change in people's attitude, or a feeling of satisfaction, or wellbeing among people. If the country experiences a behavioural change in the attitude of people in matters of health, hygiene, cleanliness, etc., then we can easily conclude that the country is developing.

Similarly, if people are happy about things and express their satisfaction about the state of affairs in the country, then, again, it can be said the country has moved from one stage of development to another.

The cultural indicators of development include the practices of modern and traditional cultures that tend to influence other cultures. If India is able to influence the world through its cultures, then India can be said to be moving from one stage of development to the other. Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of life, which has had a major impact on the world, was based on certain Indian traditions, customs, and values to which he strictly adhered, and which helped him bring about changes in the world's thinking on several issues pertaining to life. This is an aspect of cultural development.

2.3 THE MEANING OF DISPARITY

After studying the indicators of development, you will know the meaning of disparities.

Disparity means the condition, or fact, of being unequal, as in age, rank, or degree

- Age disparity: young, middle-aged, old
- Rank disparity: *chaprasi*, clerk, officer

- Degree: poor, average, excellent (as in the condition of a car) or developed, developing, underdeveloped (as in status of a country)

We talk of disparity for the simple reason that we have to make comparisons between equals, and if there is a disparity in a group among which comparisons are made, such comparisons are not justifiable. Let us take the example of a school which has conducted an essay competition on the importance of Independence Day for children belonging to class VII to class XII. Children from these classes would belong to ages ranging from eleven years to eighteen years. It is natural that children in the lower age group will have less knowledge about Independence Day, compared to children in the upper age group. Even if their knowledge levels are the same, the level of comprehension would differ among children belonging to different age groups. Older children would be able to perform better, based on their experiences, compared to younger children. Such a competition would not be fair from the point of view of younger children.

Similarly, it is not justifiable to evaluate the performance of a *chaprasi*, a clerk and an officer serving in an organization, with the same yardstick, as their levels of understanding, their levels of intelligence, their knowledge base, etc., differs from each other. An officer’s performance would be judged on the basis of certain yardsticks which would be different from that of a clerk, or, a *chaprasi*.

Countries may not be new and old, but they are at different levels of development. Some countries like the U.S.A., Norway, and Sweden are at a much higher stage of development compared to countries such as Bangladesh, Nepal or some African countries. Comparisons between such countries may not be justifiable. So, if disparity between the status of various countries exist, they cannot be compared in terms of their levels of development.

Disparity and development are two sides of a coin. Disparity creates bottlenecks to development. The less the disparity, the greater will be the chances of development; and, the greater the disparity, the less will be the chances that development takes place. Countries such as the U.S.A., Norway, and Sweden have fewer disparities in terms of per capita income, per capita consumption and the availability of resources for the rich and the poor, compared to countries like India, Bangladesh, and Nepal, where disparities are higher between the rich and the poor.

Now, you have some idea of the meaning of development and disparities. Do the exercises given in *Check Your Progress 1*.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

b) Check your answers with possible answers given at the end of the unit.

1) What do you mean by development? Is it a multidimensional concept? Explain?

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2) Disparities are of different types. Illustrate, with examples.

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2.4 TYPES OF DISPARITIES

Having explained disparities, it is time to examine various types of disparities. A few important types of disparities are as follow

- Global Disparity
- Interstate Disparity (Disparity between States)
- Intrastate Disparity (Disparity within States)
- Rural-Urban Disparity

i) Global Disparity

The term global disparity describes the disparities that exist between the nations. Commonly, one hears that America is much more developed than India.

For example, socioeconomic disparity exists at the global level, and that is why countries are classified into two categories: developed and underdeveloped. There are countries which are in the process of developing, and such countries are referred to as developing countries. Each country is at a different level of development, which causes disparity between countries. Some countries have been endowed with resources in abundance, while there are countries that are extremely poor in resources.

Resources are of various types: material resources, manpower resources, natural resources, and financial resources. Differences in the availability of resources, by and large, cause disparity between countries, and put them at different levels of development.

Table 1 shows the level of global socio-economic disparity that exists between a group of developed, as well as a group of underdeveloped and developing countries.

Table 1: Socio-economic Indicators of a Few Countries

Countries	Socio-Economic Indicators Reflecting Global Disparity				
	Gross Domestic Product per Capita in US Dollars (2006)	Human Poverty Index (2006)	Life Expectancy at birth in years (2006)	Infant Mortality Rate (2006)	Adult Literacy %, 15 year & above (2006)
Group A					
Bangladesh	1,155	36.9	63.5	52	52.5
India	2,489	28.5	64.1	57	65.2
Nepal	999	33.3	63.0	46	55.2
Pakistan	2361	33.6	64.9	78	54.2
Sri Lanka	3896	16.9	71.9	11	90.8
Group B					
Japan	31,951	-	82.4	3	-
Norway	51,862	-	79.9	3	-
Sweden	34,059	-	80.7	3	-
UK	32,654	-	79.2	5	-
USA	43,968	-	78.0	6	-

Sources: Human Development Report, UNDP, 2008 and State of the World's Children, UNICEF, 2008

It is quite evident from the Table-1 that global disparity exists, and that some countries are much more developed compared to others. If we look at the Human Development Index (HDI) of each of the countries in this table, we find that the rank ranges from no.2 for Norway to no. 147 for Bangladesh. If we look at the second column which gives figures for the Gross Domestic Product per Capita, the figures vary widely between the two groups of countries.

In the first group (Group A) are those which have GDP per capita as low as 999 USD for Nepal, and as high as 3896 USD for Sri Lanka. On the hand, we have countries in Group B where the GDP per capita is as low as 31,951 USD for Japan, and as high as 51,862 USD for Norway, for the year 2006.

Column 3 of the table gives figures for the Human Poverty Index (HPI). As we can see, the countries of Group B are all highly developed, and the figures for these countries for the Human Poverty Index have not been calculated. However, for countries belonging to Group A, the Human Poverty Index have been calculated as poverty exists in all these countries. Even within the Group A countries, we find differences in values of HPI, ranging from as low as 104 for Sri Lanka to as high as 147 for Bangladesh.

The Life Expectancy at Birth, given in the next column of the table shows a difference of up to 20 years between the Group A and Group B countries. The table shows that life expectancy at birth is the lowest in Nepal (63 years) belonging to Group A, compared to the highest in Japan (82.4 years), belonging to Group B. The average difference in life expectancy at birth between the two groups of countries would be about 15 years, which is a huge difference.

There is a marked difference in Infant Mortality Rates (number of deaths occurring in the age group of up to one year, per thousand live births) between countries belonging to the two groups. In group A, the average IMR is 48.8, while in Group B, the average is 4. If we exclude Sri Lanka from Group A, which has a low IMR of 11, the average IMR in Group A would go up to 58.2.

In Group B, the literacy figures have not been calculated, as there is hardly any illiteracy in countries belonging to this group. However, in Group A, the literacy rate is around 57-58%, except for Sri Lanka, where the literacy rate is over 90%.

ii) Interstate Disparity

Like global disparities, there are also exists disparities between the states in India. In conversations with people around you, some people will say that Punjab and Haryana are more developed than Orissa and Bihar. If you check, the statistics will confirm that the percentages of people living below the poverty line in the latter two states are higher than the former two States.

Widening socioeconomic disparities across the Indian states exist even today, as they existed even 50 years ago. One of the principal justifications for the introduction of the Five Year Plans, and the establishment of the Planning Commission was to ensure a process of regionally balanced and socially equitable development. Through public and directed private investments, as well as various other interventions and public policies, balanced development across regions was pursued during the first four decades of planning. As such policies were not completely successful, a measure of regional balance in development was maintained.

The role of government in general, and the central government in particular, in the economic activities of the nation changed substantially after the economic reforms in 1991. The private sector, which was controlled and contained in various ways, has since then been encouraged to play a more important role. Market forces, rather than government directions, would decide the investment decisions – where to invest, what to produce, whom to sell to, and so on. The locations and priorities were to be market-determined rather than government-determined. The government would have to be a facilitator for private initiatives, and would be expected to restrict its economic activities to areas that are purely in the domain of the government.

The experience of a decade of economic reforms clearly indicates that one of its major victims has been balanced regional growth. Private investments have increasingly gone to relatively developed regions that have better social, economic and physical infrastructure and better governance, especially in terms of speedy decision-making processes. Five major states, namely, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka which, together, account for less than one-third of the population of the country, accounted for almost two-thirds

of the private investment proposals over the last 10 years, since August 1991. The same set of states benefited from over 60% of the commercial bank credit and financial flows from national level financial institutions such as the Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI), and the Industrial Finance Corporation of India (IFCI). In contrast, another set of seven major states, namely, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Orissa, and Assam, together accounting for 55% of the population, received less than 30% of the private investment proposals, and a similar share of bank credit and other institutional finances during the last decade.

A recent ranking of all districts in the country by the National Population Commission (NCP), on the basis of a composite index of socio demographic progress clearly brings out the wide socioeconomic disparities among major Indian states. Out of the 569 districts covered by the report, 190 belonged to the forward group of states consisting of eight major ones, which included the five economically better performing states, plus Punjab, Haryana, and Kerala. Another 299 districts belonged to the group of backward states, which consisted of the seven economically backward states. A reflection of interstate disparity can also be noticed through the Planning Commission data on poverty (Uniform Reference Period), and the Economic Survey data on literacy. Table 2 gives an account of states which are below the national average, in terms of percentage of people below the poverty line, and states which are above the national average.

Table 2: Percentage of Population Living below the Poverty Line

Inter-State Disparity in Terms of Percentage of People below the Poverty Line	
States Poverty Line (2004-05)	Percentage of people below the
States with less than 15% population below the poverty line	
Haryana	14.0
Himachal Pradesh	10.0
Jammu and Kashmir	5.4
Mizoram	12.6
Punjab	8.4
Chandigarh	7.1
Daman & Diu	10.5
ALL INDIA	27.5

States with more than 30% population below the poverty line	
Bihar	41.4
Chhatisgarh	40.9
Jharkhand	40.3
Madhya Pradesh	38.3
Orissa	46.4
Uttarakhand	39.6
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	33.2

Source: Planning Commission, Government of India;
Website: <http://www.planningcommission.nic.in>

This table shows that seven states have a poverty ratio of less than 15 per cent, and seven with poverty ratios of more than 30 per cent. The table reflects the wide interstate disparity in poverty ratios. Table 3 gives data on the literacy rates for states, showing disparity between states. Six states above the national average and six states below the national average have been identified in the table.

Table 3: Percentage of Literacy in Different States

Inter-State Disparity in Terms of Percentage of Literates (Census 2001)	
States	Percentage of Literates
States with literacy percentage above all India literacy rate	
Delhi	81.67
Goa	82.01
Kerala	90.86
Lakshadweep	86.66
Mizoram	88.80
Puducherry	81.24
ALL INDIA	64.84
States with literacy percentage below all India literacy rate	
Arunachal Pradesh	54.34
Bihar	47.00
Jammu & Kashmir	55.52
Jharkhand	53.56
Rajasthan	60.41
Uttar Pradesh	56.27

Source: Economic Survey, 2007-08

The table shows that there is acute interstate disparity in terms of literacy rates, with the first group of states having an average literacy rate of around 85 per cent compared to the second group of states where the literacy rate happens to be around 55 per cent.

iii) Intra-state Disparity

As with the interstate disparities, you can recall that in your state some of the districts are better developed as compared to other districts. For example, if you are a student from Orissa and Madhya Pradesh, then you may know that in Orissa, Kalahandi district is less developed as compared to Cuttack district, and Bastar district in Madhya Pradesh, is less developed than Bhopal.

Intrastate disparity refers to disparity within the state. Let us take the example of intrastate disparity in rural poverty in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Table 4 shows that districts within the state have various levels of disparity, ranging from the high of 74.65 per cent in Kaushambi district, to the low 6.6 per cent in Bagpat district, in terms of percentage of people below the poverty line in the rural areas of Uttar Pradesh.

Table 4: BPL (rural) in different Districts of Uttar Pradesh

Intrastate Disparity Reflected through the Proportion of Rural Population Below Poverty Line (%)							
Very High (Above 50%)		High (40% To 50 %)		Moderate (20% To 40%)		Low (Below 20%)	
District	%	District	%	District	%	District	%
Kaushambi	74.65	Kanpur (Nagar)	49.93	Gonda	36.95	Moradabad	19.77
Hardoi	74.00	Pratapgarh	49.09	Kannauj	35.85	Agra	19.43
Bahraich	72.11	Lucknow	49.06	Balrampur	35.69	Gautam Budh Nagar	19.00
Mirzapur	68.38	Ghazipur	48.50	Azamgarh	32.87	Hathras	17.91
Sonbhadra	64.53	Jalaun (Orai)	48.34	Farukhabad	32.64	Etah	17.26
Kanpur Dehat	60.87	Faizabad	48.22	Rampur	31.83	Mathura	16.24
Shravasti	60.53	Basti	47.64	Maharajganj	30.76	Aligarh	14.64
Unnao	59.51	Etawah	46.34	Lalitpur	30.47	Firozabad	13.61
Ambedkar Nagar	59.15	Barabanki	46.15	Jhansi	29.19	Budaun	12.24
Rae Bareli Nagar	57.78	Sant Kabir	45.99	Gorakhpur	28.24	Muzaffar Nagar	11.68
Sitapur	57.46	Hamirpur	45.32	Allahabad	28.17	Deoria	11.67
Chitrakoot	55.13	Pilibhit	45.23	Bareilly	27.50	Bulandshahar	10.34
Sultanpur	54.62	Jaunpur	43.65	Saharanpur	24.56	Meerut	8.38
Shahjahanpur	54.11	Mau	43.34	Jyotiba Phulle Nagar	24.45	Ghaziabad	7.12

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Ballia	51.55	Orraiya	43.23	Varanasi	24.24	Baghpat	6.66
Lakhimpur Kheri	51.01	Chandauli	43.10	Bijnor Sant Ravidas Nagar	23.67		
		Fatehpur	42.77		22.74		
		Siddharth Nagar	42.74	Mahoba	21.33		
		Kushi Nagar	42.66				
		Mainpuri	42.52				
		Banda	40.85				

Source: Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, BPL Survey 2002

As with poverty, disparities in terms of literacy and health indicators also prevail across the districts of different states.

iv) Rural-urban disparity

You have studied the disparities among the districts, but you are well aware of disparities exists between rural and urban areas.

Rural-urban disparity has been prevalent in India for ages. Rural areas are considered to be backward areas in terms of availability of basic infrastructure – roads, electricity, water and sanitation facilities, schools and hospitals, etc.

In contrast, these facilities are mostly available in urban areas. It is because of the absence of such facilities that rural areas lag behind urban areas in terms of the basic indicators of development – poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, etc. Table 5 gives an indication of the extent of rural-urban disparity prevalent in the country.

Table 5: Disparities indicators in Rural and Urban areas of India

Rural-Urban Disparity in Selected Socio- Economic Indicators		
Indicators	Areas	
	Rural	Urban
Percentage of people below the poverty line	28.3	25.7
Percentage of literates	53.0	74.0
Percentage of regular wage-employers	7.0	41.0
Average earning per day in Rs.	48.63	62.64
Percentage of self-employed	59.5	43.0
Unemployment rates* (usual status**)	23.0	53.0

*No. of persons (or person days) unemployed per 1000 persons (or person days)

** Usual status means unemployed on an average in the reference year

Source: Planning Commission, Government of India;

Website: <http://www.planningcommission.nic.in>

National Sample Survey Organization, 60th Round (2004-05)

National Sample Survey Organization, 62nd Round (2005-06)

Table 5 shows that both poverty and illiteracy are higher in rural areas compared to urban areas. The percentage of regular wage employers is also lower in rural areas, vis-à-vis the urban areas. There is marked difference between the average earnings per day in rural areas compared to urban areas. It is for this reason that more people in urban areas are self-employed (59.5 per cent in rural areas compared to 43 per cent in urban areas). The higher degree of self employment also results in low unemployment rates in rural areas (23.0 per cent) compared to those in urban areas (53.0 per cent).

Now you have some idea about the various types of disparities. Do the exercises given in *Check Your Progress 2*.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

b) Check your answers with possible answers given at the end of the unit.

1) What is global disparity? Explain, with examples.

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2) What are the various types of disparity?

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2.5 CAUSES OF DISPARITY

Up to now, you have studied the meaning and types of disparities, now in this section, we will explain to you the causes of disparities. Some of the root causes of disparity are as follow

- The attitude of the government: for example, people who belong to scheduled castes and tribes (SC/ST categories) are given less attention in development compared to the most other people.
- The attitude of people: for example, living in urban areas is considered superior compared to living in rural areas; girls are considered less deserving than boys, and are given less attention.
- Historically some areas or regions have been endowed with better resources. For example, irrigation facilities were available in Punjab during pre-British times, making the state agriculturally more prosperous, compared to other states.

- Preferential treatment for a few states, in terms of private sector investments, for example, Gujarat and Karnataka are given more attention compared to backward states like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan.

i) The Attitude of the Government

There is a gap between the people belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and the rest of the population with respect to the availability of basic civic amenities, such as electricity, housing, water supply, and toilet facilities. Access to, and benefits from the public health system have been uneven between the general population and those who belong to the SC/ST categories. The cumulative impact of the disparities is reflected in high levels of poverty - about 36 per cent among SCs in rural areas, and 39.2 per cent in urban areas. The STs fare even worse than the SCs with 47.3 per cent of them living in poverty in rural areas, and 33.3 per cent in urban areas.

The National Sample Survey data, 2004-2005, revealed that the literacy rate was the lowest (52 per cent) among the STs, followed by 57 per cent among the SCs, and 64 per cent among other backward classes (OBCs). The health status of both SCs and STs was far worse compared to the general population. The National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-3 found that children from the SC and ST category were at a greater risk of dying compared to other children. The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) for STs was 62; for SCs it was 66, and for the general population it was much lower (57). The under-five mortality rate was higher among STs (96) than among SCs (88) as against 74 for the general population. Overall, the under five mortality rate was 23 per cent higher among the Other Backward Castes (OBCs), compared to the population in the general category.

Although the enrolment trends among SC and ST children are encouraging, compared to 2005, their pace of progress is much slower compared to the general population because teachers pay less attention to them, especially in government schools. The *anganwadi* workers are also reported to be ill-treating children belonging to the SC and ST categories.

Despite all this evidence, the government's attitude towards the SC and ST population has not changed. The resources allocated for the welfare of the SCs and STs are not in proportion to their needs. The policies and programmes specifically formulated for these categories of population have also not been effectively implemented. Thus, discrimination against the SC and ST population continues, even after six decades of independence.

ii) The Attitude of People

The attitude of people, in general, reflects their preference for urban living compared to life in the rural areas. Serving the village population is a difficult proposition for doctors, teachers and other civil servants. Since life is more comfortable in urban areas, people have a liking for things that are urban. The development of cities and towns are considered are given a higher priority compared to development of villages, by most people.

The attitude of people towards the girls has always been one of indifference. A girl is considered a liability, as her marriage, in India, is an expensive affair, carrying with it the unlawful tradition of dowry. Girls are not sent to school by many families beyond a certain age as they are supposed to manage household

chores, and are also supposed to take care of their younger siblings. Girls are discriminated against in matters of food, clothes, schooling, and provision of basic health services. This is the general attitude of people towards the girls. This attitude and preference leads to disparities.

iii) Resource Rich States

Certain states are endowed with abundant natural resources, which has placed them at a preferred level compared to others. For example, Gujarat is better endowed with resources that are used in textile industries, and Punjab has better irrigation facilities making it agriculturally more advanced compared to other states. However, there are states extremely rich in mineral resources like Jharkhand, or extremely rich in forest resources like Chhattisgarh, but they have not been able to make optimal use of their resources, because of the government's neglect, or because of poor of capital formation.

iv) Private Sector Investments

Some states receive more attention in the form of repeated investment from private companies since they see a lot of growth potential in these states. Karnataka, and Gujarat, for example, receive preferential treatment from private companies, compared to many other states like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan. Since the government's control, after liberalization, has markedly declined, private sector investments largely governed by market forces are coming up in a big way in some states. This will further increase interstate disparity.

2.6 MEASURES TO OVERCOME DISPARITY

Now that we have discussed the causes of disparities, it is time to see about the measures that can be taken to overcome disparities. Some of these important measures are

- Change the attitudes of people, to get rid of caste and class prejudice.
- Give preferential treatment to backward regions, states, areas, etc.
- Provide good governance to remove interregional, interstate, and intrastate disparity.
- Provide transparency in governance –the Right to Information Act, legal literacy, etc.
- Promote people's participation in development starting at the *panchayat* level.
- Being accountable to people.

i) Changed Attitudes of People

If disparity is to be removed, there needs to be a transformation in the attitudes of people. People who consider factors like class, caste, gender, age, etc., important for development are actually creating hindrances in development by perpetuating disparity. It is very important for the people to realize that factors like these create serious bottlenecks in the development process, and are factors that affect certain sections of society. If development is to take place, it is important that all sections of society participate in the development process, and reap the fruits of development.

ii) Preferential Treatment to Backward Areas and Regions

It is important for the government and the private sector to realise that disparity can be removed only if greater attention is given to areas which are backward, which means more investments need to be made in backward regions by private companies, and increased allocations need to be made by the government in backward regions. It is also important to formulate special policies and programmes for the backward regions, like the ones that presently exists for the North- Eastern region. These investments may not give adequate returns initially, but may, in the long run remove disparities.

iii) Good Governance

Good governance is an art .Governance means managing the affairs of a country, a state, or even a block, or, a village. Good governance refers to effective planning, management and monitoring of activities in order to bring about effective improvement in the affairs of the country, or, a state, and making equitable distribution of the gains of development. It also refers to providing equal access to basic services to all sections of the population, and equal opportunities for individual growth. Thus, the better the governance, the less would be the disparity.

iv) Transparency

Transparency is absolutely essential to check disparity and to ensure that development takes place. Transparency can be ensured if people have access to information. This is possible through the provision of information about various legislations to citizens, such as the Right to Information Act, legal literacy, etc. If systems are not working in an organisation, it is because of lack of accountability and transparency. Since people are not aware of their right to information, they are not able acquire knowledge about the system's failure within an organization, and to raise their voice against non-functioning systems within an organization. The more the transparency in an organization, the greater would be the growth of the organization. If all organizations in a country, for example, have adequate systems in place, there would be no disparity.

v) People's Participation in Development

It is very important that people's participation is ensured at all stages of development, and at all levels, right from the top level to the grassroots level. When people are participating in the development process, it is in their interest to ensure that all sections of the society benefit equally from the process. If only a small section of the population benefits from the development process, it means that over a period of time disparity would crop up. In villages, where discrimination, on the basis of caste and class and gender, is extremely pronounced, the Panchayati Raj system can play a major role through people's involvement in the development process.

vi) Accountability

It is also important to ensure that people are made accountable for the non-functioning of systems within the government. This can be done if people are involved at every stage of development, right from the stage of planning a programme, to its execution, monitoring and evaluation. It is important for the

people to realise that programmes are meant for people and that they need to be executed, and monitored by them. The concept of ownership of a programme, or scheme should vest with the people, and only then would they feel accountable. If a road, for example, is in a bad shape, making life difficult for commuters, it is the people, the road users, themselves, who need to be accountable. That is why we have good roads and bad roads in the same city, causing disparity in the availability of services. Good roads are for those road users who are willing to take the onus of accountability. Bad roads are for those road users who are not.

vii) Programmes for Overcoming Disparities in India

In this part, you will read about the measures that the government of India has taken to reduce disparities in India. Since Independence, the government has identified several constituency and policy measures to reduce in interstate, intercaste, and gender disparities.

2.7 PROGRAMMES FOR OVERCOMING DISPARITIES IN INDIA

Here in this section you will read about the measures that government of India has taken for reduction of disparities in India. Since Independence, Government of India has taken several policy and programme measures to reduce disparities. Customarily, they are for reduction of inter-state, rural urban, inter-caste and gender disparities. Let us now discuss them one by one.

Some of the measures undertaken for the reduction of inter-state disparities are as follows

i) Programmes for the Development of Backward Areas

Programmes targeting disadvantaged areas, comprising the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, etc., to counter rising inter-state disparity in development were mainly initiated during the 4th Five Year Plan (1969-74). With the exception of the hill area development programme, identified towards the later half of the 3rd Five year plan, most of the other such programmes were identified during the fourth Plan. The Indo-China war in 1962 made our planners and policy makers sensitive to the development of hill areas in North and North eastern India with an eye on national security.

Industrially backward areas in the country were identified in 1969. Areas characterised as 'structurally impoverished', such as drought prone areas were identified in 1972. Areas dominantly inhabited by the socially backward tribal communities were identified in 1974 for the Tribal Sub Plan projects.

Chronology of the Backward Area Development Programme

Plan period	Name of the programme	Year of starting
Fourth Plan (1969-74)	Industrially Backward Area	1970
	North East	1972
	Drought Prone area	1973
Fifth Plan (1974-79)	Tribal areas	1974
	Hill Area Development including the Western Ghats	1974
	Desert Development	1977
Seventh Plan (1985-90)	Border Area Development	1987
Tenth Five Year Plan	Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana	2002-03
Eleventh Five Year Plan	Backward Region Grant Fund	2005-06

Source: Planning Commission and Central Ministries, Government of India.

The Planning Commission of India implements the area programmes such as the Hill Area Development Programme, including the Western Ghats, the Border Area Development, the North East and the Desert Development Programmes. Tribal Development Programme is with the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. The Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) is the responsibility of the Ministry of Rural Development. The Desert Development Programme is now the dual responsibility of the Planning Commission and Ministry of Rural Development. The Ministry of Industry is assigned the responsibility of the Industrially Backward Area Development Programme.

Some of schemes launched to overcome disparities are narrated before.

1) Accelerated Development of Western Ghats

The Western Ghats Development Programme (WGDP), comprising the states of Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, has got two key components namely, improved natural resources management and improved access to tribal hamlets through footbridges. The management of natural resources will be carried out in a participatory mode with the involvement of Village Panchayats and NGOs with appropriate support from Research & Development institutions. The main focus of the WGDP has been integrated development of watersheds keeping in view the overriding priorities of eco-restoration and eco-preservation. In addition to the projects on natural resource management, the schemes for livelihood support system and productive system management are also included.

2) Special Area Development

The objective of the scheme of special area development, comprising the states of Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram, is to develop the coastal regions of the country in an integrated manner. In order to prepare an action plan for the coastal areas, it is necessary to bring together resources and services of departments like fisheries, harbour engineering, ports, health, education, and civil society organisations as well as local

governments together, so that convergence happens. The projects will be implemented with the support of local governments, Government of India, National Coastal Development Centre, financial institutions and state governments.

3) Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF)

The Backward Region Grant Fund is a new initiative of the Government of India. It primarily covers the states of Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. The scheme was launched in 2005-06, by merging the Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana, which was initiated in 2002-03 by the Planning Commission in Mizoram. The scheme is monitored by the state level steering committee chaired by the Vice Chairman, State Planning Board and at the district level, District Collectors are coordinating the project.

4) Programmes for the Development of the North Eastern Region

In order to implement programmes for the development of the North Eastern region, and reduce inter-state disparity, a Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DONER) was set up in September 2001, to act as the nodal department of the Central Government to deal with matters pertaining to the socio-economic development of the eight States of North East, i.e. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim.

ii) Measures to Overcome Rural-Urban Disparity

Some of the important measures aimed at reducing rural-urban disparities are as follows

1) Primary Self-Employment Programme for Rural Areas

The Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), the primary self-employment programme for rural areas, has the objective of bringing assisted poor rural families above the poverty line by providing them income generating assets through a mix of bank credit and Governmental subsidy. A certain percentage of the physical and financial targets under the SGSY will be earmarked for beneficiaries belonging to the minority communities living below the poverty line in rural areas.

2) The Sampurna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY)

The Sampurna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) is aimed at providing additional wage employment in rural areas alongside the creation of durable community, social and economic infrastructure. Since the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP) has been launched in 200 districts, and SGRY has been merged with NREGP in these districts, in the remaining districts, a certain percentage of the allocation under SGRY will be earmarked for beneficiaries belonging to the minority communities living below the poverty line till these districts are taken up under NREGP. Simultaneously, a certain percentage of the allocation will be earmarked for the creation of infrastructure in such villages, which have a substantial population of minorities.

3) National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP) is being implemented through the the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), enacted through legislation on August 25, 2005. NREGA is a employment guarantee scheme which provides a legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do unskilled manual work at the minimum wage rate of Rs.100 per day and as fixed by the state government from time to time. The Central government outlay for the NREGP is Rs. 39,100 crores in the financial year 2009-10. This act was introduced with the aim of improving the purchasing power of the rural people, primarily engaged in semi or un-skilled work, living in rural areas. The government has renamed it as Mahatma Gandhi Natinal Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (MNREGS)

iii) Measures to Overcome Inter-Community Disparity

Some of the important measures aimed at reducing rural-urban disparities are as follows

1) Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)

The ICDS is being implemented in backward rural areas, tribal areas and urban slums. Of the 6,118 ICDS projects sanctioned in the country up to 31st March 2006, 809 were in areas predominantly inhabited by the Scheduled Tribes. As on 31st June 2007, under 5,889 operationalised ICDS projects, the outreach of the services is being extended to 73.6 million pregnant and lactating mothers and children below 6 years of age, majority of whom belong to the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population.

2) Draft National Tribal Policy 2006

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs prepared a draft policy to address issues of STs concerning lower human development indicators, poor development infrastructure, diminishing control over the natural resource base, persistent threats of eviction from their natural habitat, exclusion from mainstream society, inequality in the distribution of wealth and opportunities, non-empowerment and inadequate implementation of Constitutional provisions. The draft policy specifically addresses the alienation of tribal land; tribal-forest interface; displacement, resettlement and rehabilitation; enhancement of HDI; creation of critical infrastructure; violent manifestations; conservation and development of particularly vulnerable primitive tribal groups; adoption of Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) strategy; empowerment; gender equity; enlisting support of NGOs; preserving tribal culture and knowledge; administration of tribal areas; the regulatory and protective regime; scheduling and de-scheduling of tribes, etc.

3) Central Sector Scheme for the Exclusive Development of Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs)

Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) are tribal communities with a declining or stagnant population, primitive agricultural technology, low levels of literacy and are economically backward. There are 75 PTGs identified in 17 states/UTs: They live in remote habitats, with poor administrative and infrastructure

back up. In 1998-99, a separate 100% central sector scheme for the exclusive development of PTGs was introduced by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, which continues to provide for housing, land distribution, agricultural development, cattle development, income generation programmes, health facilities, infrastructure development, insurance, etc. During the year 2004-05, the Ministry decided to provide insurance cover to the earning member of each PTG family throughout the country under the 'Janshree Beema Yojana' of the Life Insurance Corporation of India. The number of PTG families covered under the Janshree Beema Yojana increased from 0.1 million in 2004-05 to double the number in the subsequent year and remained more or less the same for the period 2006-07 compared to the previous year.

4) **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan**

The aim of the SSA is to provide useful and relevant elementary education for all children in the 6-14 age-group by 2010. One of the objectives of the SSA is to bridge social, regional and gender gap with active participation of the community in the management of the school. Further, one of the norms of the SSA is to distribute free text books to all girls/SCs/STs children at primary and upper primary level within the upper limit of Rupees 150 per child. The Programme was launched in Ninth Five Year Plan with 75:25 sharing of fund between the central and state government.

iv) **Measures to Overcome Gender Disparity**

Some of the important measures aimed at reducing rural-urban disparities are as follows

1) **Initiatives taken by the government during the 9th and 10th Five Year Plan for empowerment of women**

The Ninth Plan (1997-2002) made two significant changes in the conceptual strategy of planning for women. Firstly, 'Empowerment of Women' became one of the nine primary objectives of the Ninth Plan. The 9th Plan adopted the Life Cycle approach for empowerment of women which categorized women into 5 distinct sub-groups (population as projected for 2001). They included:

- Girl children in the age-group 0-14 years who account for 171.50 million (34.6 percent), deserve special attention because of the gender bias and discrimination they suffer from at such a tender age;
- Adolescent girls in the age-group 15-19 years who account for 52.14 million (10.5 per cent) are very sensitive from the viewpoint of planning because of the preparatory stage for their future productive and reproductive roles in the society and family, respectively;
- Women in the reproductive age-group 15-44 years numbering 233.72 million (47.1 per cent) need special care and attention because of their reproductive needs;
- Women in the economically active age group 15-59 years, who account for 289.40 million (58.4 per cent), have different demands like those of education/ training, employment, income generation and participation in the developmental process, decision making etc.;

- The elderly women in the age-group 60+years numbering 34.87 million (7.0 percent), have limited needs mainly relating to health, financial and emotional support.

The 10th Five Year Plan (2002-2007) also carried forward the commitments made in the earlier Plans and the 11th Plan (2007-2012) further reiterates these commitments. While organising women into Self-Help Groups marks the beginning of a major process of empowering women, the institutions thus developed intend to provide a permanent forum for articulating their needs and contributing their perspectives to development. Recognising the fact that women have been socialized only to take a back seat in public life, affirmative action through deliberate strategies will be initiated to provide equal access to and control over factors contributing to such empowerment, particularly in the areas of health, education, information, life-long learning for self development, vocational skills, employment and income generating opportunities, land and other forms of property including through inheritance, common property resources, credit, technology and markets, etc. To this effect, the newly elected women members and the women Chairpersons of Panchayats and the Local Bodies will be sensitized through the recently launched special training package to take the lead in ensuring that adequate funds/benefits flow towards the empowerment of women and the girl child.

2) **The Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY) and Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls (NPAG)**

These two schemes are being implemented for the development of adolescent girls using the existing infrastructure of the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS). KSY promotes self-development, nutrition and health status, literacy, numerical and vocational skills among girls in the 11-18 years age group. A new unified National Programme on Adolescent Girls, replacing the existing KSY and NPAG will be launched shortly by the government of India.

3) **The National Program for Education of Girls at the Elementary Level (NPEGEL)**

The NPEGEL, under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Education for All), provides additional components for education of girls from underprivileged/disadvantaged sections of society. It is being implemented in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) where the level of rural female literacy is less than the national average and the gender gap is above the national average, as well as in blocks that have at least 5% SC/ST population and where SC/ST female literacy is below 10%.

4) **The Shiksha Karmi Project (SKP)**

The Shiksha Karmi Project aims at universalisation and qualitative improvement of primary education in remote, arid and socio-economically backward villages of Rajasthan, with primary attention to girls. In SKPs, most of the students are from SCs, STs and OBCs.

5) **The National Plan of Action for the Girl Child**

The National Plan of Action for the Girl Child has been merged into the National Plan of Action for Children, 2005, which includes goals, objectives

and strategies for the girl child. The emphasis is on creating an enabling environment, increasing choices and promoting development through special opportunities. Equal rights in succession and inheritance, addressing persistent gender stereotyping and strengthening girls' self esteem are important strategies. Besides ensuring equal opportunity for free and compulsory elementary education to all girls, it specifically seeks prohibition of sex selective, female foeticide and infanticide, elimination of child marriages, security and protection from abuse, exploitation, victimization and all other forms of violence, deprivation and neglect in the home, community and in access to services.

After reading about the causes and measures of poverty, you should be able to answer a few questions relating to these two aspects, which is given in *Check Your Progress 3*.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: a) Write your answer in about 50 words.

b) Check your answers with possible answers given at the end of the unit.

1) What are the root causes of disparity in India? Is it humanly created?

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2) What possible measures can be taken to overcome disparity?

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2.8 LET US SUM UP

We have discussed several concepts and issues related to development and disparity in this unit. It is now important for us to sum up what we have discussed so far. This will help us to get a better understanding of the subject matter of this unit, and also help us to review our own understanding of the subject matter.

We started the unit with the meaning of development. Next, we discussed the meaning and types of disparities. Disparities create bottlenecks to development. The less the disparity, the greater the chances of development; and the greater the disparity, the less will be the chances that development takes place. Later on, we discussed different types of disparities – global, regional, interstate, intrastate, and rural-urban disparity.

Then, the next section was devoted to the causes of disparity. It was pointed out that disparity was caused due to the indifferent attitude of the government towards the SC and ST population, among others; and, that disparity is also due to the indifferent attitude of people towards issues of class, caste, gender, and age discrimination. It was also mentioned that disparity exists because certain states have abundant resources, which have placed them at a higher level compared to others. In the last section in this unit, we discussed the measures that need to be taken to overcome disparity, and some measures that have been taken by the Government of India for reduction of disparities.

2.9 REFERENCES AND SELECTED READINGS

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2.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS-POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) **What do you mean by development? Is it a multi-dimensional concept? Explain**

Answer. Development has no precise definition. There are a few identified indicators: economic, social, psychological, cultural, and political, on the basis of which development is said to have taken place. Among the economic indicators of development are: income, expenditure, growth, both industrial as well as agricultural. Social indicators of development constitute literacy, health, etc. The cultural indicators include modern/traditional cultures which tend to influence other cultures.

- 2) **Disparities are of different types. Illustrate, with examples.**

Answer. *Global disparity:* some countries are much more developed compared to others. In terms of GDP per capita, some countries have higher Gross Domestic Product per capita, life expectancy at birth, or, low infant mortality.

Regional disparity can be seen to exist at two levels, global and national. At the global level, certain regions like the sub Saharan and African regions are poor in resources, compared to, regions in the Middle East, and Europe.

At the national level, private investments have increasingly gone to relatively developed regions that have better social, economic, physical infrastructure, and better governance, especially in terms of speedy decision-making processes.

Check Your Progress 2

1) **What is global disparity? Explain, with an example.**

Answer. Simply put, the term, global disparity, describes disparities that exists between nations. For example, one often hears that America is much more developed than India.

Socioeconomic disparity exists at the global level, and that is why countries are classified into two categories: developed and underdeveloped. There are countries which are in the process of developing, and such countries are referred to as developing countries. Each country is at a different level of development, which causes disparity between countries. Some countries have been endowed with resources in abundance, while others are extremely poor in resources.

2) **What are the various types of disparity?**

Answer. The various types of disparities are: global disparity, interstate disparity, intrastate disparity, rural-urban disparity.

Check Your Progress 3

1) **What are the root causes of disparity in India? Is it humanly created?**

Answer. The root causes of disparity are:

Attitude of the government: for example, SCs and STs are given less attention in development work compared to the larger, better off population that belongs to the general category. Attitude of people: for example - urban living is considered superior compared to living in rural areas; girls are considered less deserving than boys, and are given less attention. Preferential treatment is given to some states in terms of private sector investments, for example, states like Gujarat and Karnataka, receive more attention than backward states like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan.

The root causes of disparity are many a times humanly created.

2) **What possible measures can be taken to overcome disparity?**

Answer. The possible measures include:

Changing the attitude of people – to get rid of caste and class considerations; giving preferential treatment to backward regions, states, areas; providing good governance to remove interregional, interstate, and intrastate disparity; bringing transparency to governance – providing awareness and knowledge about the Right to Information Act, legal literacy; encouraging people’s participation in development from the Panchayat level, upward; accountability to the people.