

DYNAMICS OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF GUJARAT, INDIA

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Regional Development Planning has been accepted as an essential component in economic and social development process in India. Balanced development of different parts of the Country, extension of benefits of economic progress to the less developed regions and minimization of regional disparity have been the major aims of the Independent India. Even though imbalances in regional development is considered as a major reason behind lopsided development of a Country, regional disparities do exist in the Country even after 60 years of planned development. This paper examines the veracity of regional inequalities in Gujarat State, India, in light of the empirical results at the district level using multi dimensional approach.

19 variables reflecting the agricultural, industrial, human and infrastructural development are chosen and inter-district variations are marked. The dynamics of regional development has been illustrated for 1981 and 2001. Temporal changes between these two respective decades is stressed. The districts of Gujarat have been ranked according to their levels of development derived by computing Z scores and Composite Index.

In 1981, higher level of development was noted in the districts of Central and South Gujarat. Surat was the most developed followed by Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar, Kheda, Vadodara and Valsad. The inter district disparity was also conspicuous in this decade. Remarkable changes are noticed between 1981 and 2001. The level of development enhanced in few more districts of Mahesana, Anand and Navsari. The earlier less developed districts of Saurashtra Plateau are also now more developed. All the districts of the Golden Corridor of Gujarat from Mahesana to Valsad are either very well or well progressive. Studies confirm that the process of industrialization enhances the development. Rajkot is very well developed followed by Junagadh and Jamnagar. The arid Kachchh and adjoining semi arid Patan and Sabarkantha continue to be the least developed districts of the State. The other three least developed districts are geographically isolated. They are the tribal district of Dahod in north east and Porbandar and Amreli in the Saurashtra Plateau.

To conclude, maximum development has occurred in the Golden corridor of the State. Another striking feature is the enhanced development of Saurashtra Plateau and the shrinking disparities among the districts in terms of levels of development.