

Level of Human Resource Development in Naga-Majority Areas of North-East India

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Abstract: India's North-east is one of the most ethnically diverse regions in the country with large-scale overlapping ethnicities and cultures within it. Ethnic tensions and neglect of the region has perpetuated the regional imbalance and socio-economic inequalities among the populations considerably undermining the development pursuits. Against this backdrop, the paper attempts to study the nature of human resource development and determine its relationship with the pattern of regional development in the Naga-majority areas of northeast India. Study shows that ethnic identity movement, lack of political will, corruption, inadequate social and economic infrastructure, low level of industrialisation and urbanization, and poor implementation of development schemes are responsible for the impediments of human resource progress in the study area.

Keywords: Human resource development, Regional Development, Northeast India, Ethnicity, Nagas.

Introduction

Human resource is perhaps one of the most critical determinants of economic growth and hence enhances regional development. Ironically, inadequate investments in building human resource remains a major cause of concern for a progressive nation like India. These concerns have failed to find adequate importance in the by and large unitary model of planning development; and there are regions or areas which are unable to benefit adequately from the overall growth process such as the northeastern part of the country. For the most part the northeastern region (NER) lacks basic social and economic infrastructure which tend to accentuate regional disparities in the level of development, partly on account of its peripheral locations, high degree of socio-cultural differences among the populations and low level of industrialization and urbanisation. Besides, the ethnic assertion and insurgent related problem and their far reaching implications on development discourse in the region is deep and massive. In this backdrop, the present study attempts to study the spatial character of human resource development and its relation with overall regional development in the Naga-majority areas of North-east India which spreads across four Indian states constituting a significant number of Naga populations in the country; they include the erstwhile eight districts of the Nagaland state, four districts of Manipur, two districts each from Arunachal Pradesh and Assam. Thus in the present context the issue of regional balance operates at both the inter-state and the intra-state level

and there is therefore the need to address it in a conceptual framework.

Concept

Human resource or human capital is broadly defined as “the sum total of knowledge, skills and aptitudes of the people inhabiting the country. The term includes initiative, resourcefulness, capacity for sustained work, right values, interests and attitudes and other human qualities conducive to higher output and accelerated economic growth”[1]. Thus, human resource development can be defined as “a process of increasing knowledge, skills and the capacities of all the people in the society”[2].

Conceptually, it is also important to note the difference between ‘human resource development’ and ‘human development’ as they are mistakenly equated with one another. The terms are concerned with human capital formation and an expansion of human capability respectively. Amartya Sen offers a much needed clarification: “The former concentrates on the agency of human beings – through skill, knowledge and effort – in augmenting production possibilities. The latter focuses on the ability of human beings to lead lives they have reason to value and to enhance the substantive choices they have”[3]. Human development is concerned with enlarging people’s choices in a way which enables them to lead longer, healthier and fuller lives. Human resource development, on the other hand, refers to the process of increasing knowledge, skill and capacities of

the people in a given society in a way which enable them to enhance economic growth. Here, in human resource approach, the focus is on human beings as resource. Hence, 'human resource' is merely considered as a means to economic growth, while 'human development' puts people at the centre of all development activity where human well-being is considered as ultimate ends. To further elaborate, in human development framework development is about people's well-being and the expansion of their capabilities – considering the income as means and people's well-being as ends – health, nutrition and basic education as ends in themselves and income only as means to achieve these; whereas human resource development is based on valuing economic growth as ends and human capabilities as means. Thus the difference between the two can be ascertained from their *ends-means* relationship. For instance, the human development approach focuses investment in education and health so as to value human lives, whereas human resource development approach stresses how education and health can enhance productivity and have important value for promoting economic growth.

Poverty is one of the major constraints of human development which is nothing but a deprivation of basic capabilities rather than merely as lowness of incomes[4]. In independent India, the planning mechanism also accentuated disparity by strongly favouring already developed regions or states. Hence, the lopsided development in India has resulted in concentration of investments and wealth in some specific pockets while ignoring the vast backward areas. At the same time, India so far has not been able to overcome the hindrances of rugged and mountainous states and they have remained underdeveloped and continued to depend on funds and subsidy allotted by the centre, the northeast states for example. And since the region lacks adequate infrastructure and economic progress, it has low human capital coupled with ethnic tensions and mobilisations. Therefore, due to lack of adequate higher and technical institutes, entrepreneurial skill and job avenues, the region saw out-migration of skilled manpower in search of better livelihood from the region causing a strong backwash effect in the region with so scene of spread effects from the developed regions.

Despite the government initiative through Five Year Plans by the erstwhile Planning Commission the pace of socio-economic development of the region is slow. Like any other tribal society, the economy of the Nagas is largely agricultural-based and the dominant labour process in agricultural production is subsistence in nature. Therefore, the relationship between dominant labour process and market is weak as it does not produce enough marketable surpluses within this agricultural mode of production.

As per history, the Naga ancestral territory has been divided into two equal halves between India and Burma by the British for their own administrative convenience without the consent of the Naga people just before India attained its independence. However, denouncing this arbitrary demarcation of their territory, since then the Nagas are demanding integration of all the Naga-inhabited areas and self-determination claiming that they were never controlled by the outsiders until the British occupied parts of their territory.

Geographically, the Nagas live in a compact area that lie between the Brahmaputra river and the Chindwin river, that is, between 93°-97°E and 23.5°-28°N, which they call it as 'Nagalim'[5]. The size of the Naga inhabited area in both India and Myanmar is approximately 1, 00,000 sq. km.[6]. And majority of the Naga population live outside the Nagaland state which constitutes only 16,579 sq. km (Census: 2001). Coupled with ethnic assertions and mobilizations, the Naga inhabited areas are characterized by socio-economic backwardness, inadequate economic overheads like transport, labour, technology, infrastructure, industries, urbanization, etc., poor household amenities, low human resource development, lack of political vision, unemployment and corruption though the region is endowed with rich natural resources and socio-cultural diversities. These factors have further intensified backwardness and disparity of development among the states.

Research Method

Owing to paucity of data, only secondary data has been used for the research purpose. Districts are taken as unit of analysis. These units include eight districts of the state of Nagaland, four districts of Manipur, two districts each from Arunachal Pradesh and Assam. The districts include Chandel, Senapati, Tamenglong and Ukhrul of Manipur; Changlang and Tirap in Arunachal Pradesh; Dimapur, Kohima, Mokokchung, Mon, Phek, Tuensang, Wokha and Zunheboto in Nagaland; Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills in Assam.

Tool

Composite Index is used in the present study to analyse the level of human resource development. To make the indicators comparable with each other, the variables has been standardized by subtracting the mean of every indicator and divided by their respective standard deviation. Higher the index higher is the level of development and vice-versa. It is calculated using the following formula:

$$ci = \frac{x - \bar{x}}{SD}$$

where *ci* is the composite index, *x* is the unit of observation, \bar{x} is the mean of each variable and SD is the standard deviation.

Then, the standardized data is added to find out the aggregate development factor score.

The level of development is thus represented in figure and table by categorizing the scores into quartile classes representing different levels, viz., high, medium and low.

Indicators

The following variables have been chosen for the analysis of human resource development:-

- a) literacy rate;
- b) population density;
- c) gross enrolment rate;
- d) percentage of population above poverty line;
- e) percentage of children getting complete immunization;
- f) work participation rate;
- g) percentage of literates with graduates and above other than technical degree to total literates;
- h) percentage of literates with technical degree or diploma equal to degree or post graduate degree to total literates.

The educated manpower may be considered as human resource potential. Since knowledge and skills acquired through education contribute to economic and social development, literacy rate of a population is generally regarded as a proxy for educational development. As the education provides the necessary pre-condition for the vertical mobility of the workforce, the overall development of human resource is determined by an increasing number of years in acquiring education[7]. Therefore, an analysis of the human resource potential in terms of literacy rate and the educational level of the people would be essential. Level of educational attainment of the population such as primary, middle, high school, secondary school, diploma (technical and non-technical), graduate & above significantly determines the kind of workforce in which the person is engaged. The level of educational attainment among the workers plays a significant role in economic transformation of any country or a region. It is an important indicator of the quality of workforce. Even a small amount of education makes a difference in employment prospect. A simple literate (ability to read and write and without acquiring any educational attainment) among the working population have a relative advantage over the illiterates as they can be more inventive and efficient in carrying out some economic activities.

The present study employs gross enrolment rate (GER) at the elementary level also as an indicator of human resource development because education is an important key to human capital formation. The income of households also determines the level of human resource development as they are proportional to one another. In this respect, percentage of population above poverty line is considered because the incidence of poverty is a direct result of low income.

Since human being is an important resource, population density is also considered as an important indicator of human resource because people have the ability to transform the nature and put them into use with the help of their inherent or acquired skills. Besides, health is another crucial indicator of human resource development because if the person does not have good health his labour productivity will be adversely affected. Therefore, investment in health of the working population facilitates human resource development and the growth of human capital. Similarly, improvement in health status of children through healthcare programmes and improvement in nutrition is sure one way of nurturing future human resources. Hence, percentage of children getting complete immunization is an important indicator of human resource development.

Workforce is another major indicator of economic base in a region. In India, it is generally believed that high female participation implies social improvement in development angle. Refuting this notion is the tribal society wherein women generally occupy an equal status in every sphere of development activities. Keeping this in mind the total work participation rate also has been considered in the present study.

Human Resource Development: Findings

As mentioned previously, human resource plays a pivotal role in regional development as human beings have the ability to transform the nature and put them into use with the help of their inherent or acquired skills, which otherwise remains unutilized. The potential human resources for regional development in the present study area are mainly comprised of drop-outs, educated unemployed particularly the educated persons with graduate and other than technical degree. Table-.1 shows a varying human resource development pattern in the study area and represents an intra-regional disparity.

Table-1: Level of human resource development

Value of Composite index	Class	Districts
1.775 to 6.001	High	Chandel, Dimapur, Kohima, Mokokchung, Phek, Ukhul
-3.078 to 1.774	Medium	Senapati, Tamenglong, Wokha, Zunheboto
-5.378 to -3.079	Low	Changlang, Karbi Anglong, Mon, North Cachar, Hills, Tirap, Tuensang

As far as spatial distribution of human resource is concerned, there is wide variation in the study area. Districts of Changlang, Karbi Anglong, Mon, North Cachar Hills, Tirap and Tuensang show low level of human resource development, whereas districts Senapati, Tamenglong, Wokha and Zunheboto fall under the medium category. Mokokchung district obtained the highest composite index scoring 6.000 followed by Kohima and Chandel with the value of 5.942 and 5.374 respectively; Tirap and North Cachar Hills recorded the lowest composite index in human resource development with the value of -5.378 and -4.883 respectively. Thus, it can be inferred from the figure that districts with higher value of composite index have shown higher level of human resource and vice-versa. Factors like geographical location, illiteracy, political ill-will, corruption, inadequate economic overheads, etc. play a dominant role in the disparity of development in this aspect.

Primarily the districts which show higher level of human resource development is the direct consequence of a relatively higher literacy rate, better health service, higher gross enrolment ratio, better income as they are based in areas of locational advantage, educational, administrative and commercial centres with a relatively higher proportion of population having graduate or above other than technical degree and literates with technical degree or diploma equal to degree or post-graduate degree. But still these areas/districts lack adequate higher and quality technical institutes coupled with low level of industrialization and urbanization as a result of which the region offers limited economic opportunity to absorb the educated unemployed. In consequence, the region experiences large-scale out-migration of people as limited job avenues are being generated by both public and private initiatives. Though there are few vocational training centres they do not prove sufficient to bring about any significant changes in the region. Thus, despite all the developmental efforts put in to improve the socio-economic conditions of tribal communities through plan schemes the results have fallen short of expectations. The development schemes have failed to speed up the process of socio-economic development of the inhabitants. Moreover, local population is not effectively involved in development pursuits and their participation in education programmes is not adequately ensured.

As educational development is a stepping stone to economic and social development, several efforts have been made by the government to improve the educational status of tribals and other weaker sections of society. For instance, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a major flagship programme formulated by Government of India with the objective of universalizing elementary education in the country in an attempt to achieve inclusive education. Yet the programme has failed to provide quality education in the study area. Likewise, many other educational schemes have been introduced to promote higher education for scheduled tribes (ST) such as the post-matric scholarship, book bank scheme, national overseas scholarship scheme for higher studies abroad, hostels for ST girls and boys, education among ST girls in low literacy districts, vocational training in tribal areas, etc. yet these have failed to make any significant progress in socio-economic status of the poor and illiterate tribal population and thus increase their employability. Lackadaisical attitude toward tribal development on the part of administration and implementing officials also held up developmental progress to a considerable extent. All of these factors have certainly resulted in concentration of wealth in few pockets and hence this type of spatial interaction has also accentuated the intra-regional disparity in socio-economic development of a multi-ethnic north-east region. Most of the districts in the present study remained backward in their own respective states in respect of socio-economic and infrastructure development.

Thus, in order to improve skilled manpower of the people in the region, the present educational system needs to be restructured in response to the needs of the time, set up higher and technical institutes, generate more job avenues by setting priorities for industrialization and urbanization so as to prevent draining out of human resources from the region, encourage private investments by lifting the stringent 'Inner Line Permit'[8] regulation and a strong political vision, proper channeling of central funds aiming at accelerating regional balance, appropriate technology to suit the local needs, etc. In short, human resource can play a significant role in minimising regional disparity as it is a positive contributor to balanced regional development.

Conclusion

The study shows that the process of human resource development in the Naga-majority areas is strongly influenced by its political economy coupled with infrastructural deficit, socio-cultural diversity and geographically disadvantaged locations. They are found to be key contributors to regional imbalance which suffers from strong backwash effects and weak spread effects. Therefore, the country's development model should endeavour to minimize the backwash effects through deliberate state intervention along with large-scale human capital investments and strong infrastructural base for regional development, as unbalanced development virtually increases the risk of social tensions in a multi-ethnic country of India.

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8. The British government enacted the 'Inner line regulation' in 1873 in order to prevent the friction between tea planters and the Nagas, power was given to the local authorities to prohibit British subjects from going beyond a certain line, without a pass or license, issued by the Deputy Commissioner.

Appendix

Table 1. Human resource composite index

Districts	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7	X8	CI
Chandel	57.38	37	46.10	88.2	93.80	34.50	9.32	0.77	5.374
Changlang	51.98	27	47.87	61.7	57.90	56.00	0.89	0.15	-3.506
Dimapur	78.15	333	33.43	99.5	76.90	45.50	2.59	0.20	3.569
Karbi Anglong	57.70	78	40.63	60.9	100.00	4.30	0.66	0.06	-5.276
Kohima	74.28	101	43.54	99.5	76.90	45.50	5.89	0.74	5.942
Mokokchung	84.24	141	47.08	99.5	80.00	46.60	4.65	0.38	6.001
Mon	42.25	145	50.20	99.5	39.80	25.80	0.84	0.07	-3.079
North Cachar Hills	67.60	38	37.32	60.9	100.00	7.50	1.31	0.14	-4.884
Phek	71.35	73	48.18	99.5	82.50	21.90	3.25	0.46	2.645
Senapati	50.47	116	45.93	71.7	73.60	49.30	3.49	0.12	-0.757
Tamenglong	58.46	25	45.62	71.7	78.50	35.30	3.96	0.20	-1.493
Tirap	42.01	42	48.91	71.7	39.10	36.90	0.86	0.17	-5.378
Tuensang	51.30	98	44.58	99.5	49.10	1.60	1.70	0.10	-4.585
Ukhrul	68.96	31	47.25	71.7	93.70	33.70	6.12	0.50	2.743
Wokha	81.28	99	34.89	99.5	80.80	15.80	4.66	0.37	0.908
Zunheboto	69.73	123	36.88	99.5	81.60	36.30	3.65	0.40	1.774

Source: a) Social and Cultural Table, Census of India 2001, b) State Primary Abstract, Census of India 2001, c) District Level Deprivation in the New Millennium, Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, 2000, edited by Bibek Debroy and Levesh Bhandari.

Index

X1=literacy rate (7 years and above)

X2=population density per sq.km

X3=work participation rate

X4=percentage of population above poverty line

X5=gross enrolment rate

X6=percentage of children getting complete immunization

X7=percentage of literates with graduate and above other than technical degree to total literates

X8=percentage of literates with technical degree or diploma equal to degree or post-graduate degree to total literates

CI=composite index