

BASELINE SURVEY OF SOME MINORITY-CONCENTRATED DISTRICTS

Executive Summary

Background of the Study

The Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India has identified 90 minority-concentrated districts in the country by using eight indicators relating to socio-economic development and basic amenities based on 2001 Population Census data. The objective is to improve these indicators for the identified districts through a multi-sector development plan during the Eleventh Five Year Plan, to uplift them to the level of the national average. Since some changes might have occurred in these indicators since 2001, a baseline survey has been conducted with a view to identify deficits and priorities to be undertaken in the multi-sectoral development plan.

Hardwar district is identified as one of the minority-concentrated districts of India, which lags behind in terms of socio-economic indicators. It is categorized as B1 category district by the Ministry of Minority Affairs.

District Profile (2001 Population Census based)

1. With a population of 14.47 lakh in 2001, Hardwar district accounts for about 17 per cent of the population of Uttarakhand. About 70 per cent of the population resides in rural areas.
2. The population of minority communities, comprising mainly Muslims, constitutes a sizeable share (34.7 per cent) in Hardwar. Tehsil-wise, the percentage of minority population is the highest in Roorkee (41.2 per cent), followed by Hardwar (36.7 per cent) and lowest (26.7 per cent) in Laksar.
3. The district has also the dubious distinction of having a low sex ratio (865) in India.
4. Nearly 64 per cent of the population in Hardwar district is literate, which is comparatively much lower than the average for the state of Uttarakhand (72 per cent). There is a significant gap in the literacy levels of males and females in the district – 73.8 per cent males are literate as compared to 52.1 per cent females.
5. The percentage of economically active population (main plus marginal workers) in the district is less than 30 per cent of population of the district – substantively lower than the state average of 36.9 per cent. It is much less at 8.8 per cent in the case of females.
6. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for about 55 per cent of the workers in the district.

7. The district is better placed in terms of infrastructure. Since 2001, there has been a considerable change in the availability of infrastructure in the district. The figures from District Statistical Diary, 2005 show that about 95 per cent of the villages have primary schools. Primary health centres are available within a distance of 5 km for over 62 per cent of the villages. About 94 per cent villages are electrified in the district.
8. The data for the year 2005 also shows that district has witnessed a rapid pace of industrialization in recent years. As of March 2005, there were 18 big factories, 3865 small scale units and 1636 Khadi and Village units respectively. These units employed a total of 19796 persons.

Survey Findings (2008)

Our survey results for Hardwar district show that the district lags behind in five out of eight indicators. Socio-economic indicators, i.e. literacy rate and work participation rate, are significantly lower for the district as compared to all-India averages, as can be seen in Table 1. The actual gap will be higher for the district as the national figures pertain to the years 2004-05 and 2005-06.

Development Priorities

1. Improving Work Participation

Low work participation in gainful economic activities is the major issue which needs to be accorded top priority in the development plan of the district. Less than 29 per cent of the sample population is in the workforce. The percentage of females in the workforce is even much less, at 9.2 per cent. This is observed both in case of minorities and other categories of households. This also shows high dependency rates.

The low work participation is largely attributed to social factors, which severely restricts the participation of women in work outside their homes. However, low educational levels of population also act as hindrance in taking the advantage of emerging economic opportunities.

Table 1: Development Gaps and Priorities for the Multi-sector Plan

Sl No	Indicators	Hardwar 2008	All India 2005	Development gaps between All -India and District	Development priorities based on the gaps
		1	2	(3=1- 2)	4
1	Rate of literacy	64.9	67.3	-2.4	4
2	Rate of female literacy	55.6	57.1	-1.5	5

3	Work participation rate	28.9	38.0	-9.1	2
4	Female work participation rate	9.2	21.5	-12.3	1
5	Percentage of households with <i>pucca</i> walls	84.6	59.4	25.2	8
6	Percentage of households with safe drinking water	89.7	87.9	1.8	6
7	Percentage of households with electricity	59.3	67.9	-8.6	3
8	Percentage of households with water closet latrines	41.6	39.2	2.4	7
9	Percentage of fully vaccinated children	79.5	43.5	36	-
10	Percentage of deliveries in a health facility	18.2	38.7	-20.5	-

Note: (1) Survey data of the district (Col. 1) pertains to the rural area only, but all India data (Col. 2) pertains to the total.

(2) Data in Col 2 from Sl. No. 5 to 10 pertain to the year 2005-06 from NFHS-3 and the rest of the data in Col. 2 pertain to the year 2004-05 from NSSO.

(a) Quality of employment

More than 70 per cent of the workers are working as casual wage labourers. The percentage is the highest among Muslims (73.4 per cent). The proportion of regular salaried workers is almost half (3.4 per cent) among Muslims as compared to Hindus.

Over three-fourths of the workers are engaged in agriculture and allied activities. These features clearly indicate the poor quality of employment which is available to villagers in Hardwar district. It is therefore important to generate productive employment opportunities in the district which will also benefit the rural population.

(b) High incidence of unemployment and search for additional employment

Nearly one-tenth of the labour force is unemployed. The incidence is almost the same among the minorities and other religious groups. Apart from the high incidence of unemployment, a very high percentage of rural households (over 75 per cent) are in search of additional employment for augmenting their income.

2. Improving Employability through Education and Skill Development

While looking at the quality of employment and high incidence of unemployment, a multi-pronged strategy is needed to improve the overall well-being of population in the district. First and foremost is to improve the educational levels of new entrants to the labour force so that they can take the advantage of new opportunities both within as well as outside the district. The focus should be to encourage students to opt for technical education.

This would necessitate opening of new institutions of vocational and technical education, particularly at diploma and certificate level, with focus on female skill development. For older persons, the strategy should be to organize skill development programmes for them based on area-specific employment potential activities. There is a need to undertake a comprehensive survey to identify area-specific potential economic activities in the district.

The low educational attainments of rural population in the district have adversely affected the employability of the population. In spite of a very high degree of industrialization which the district has experienced since 2002, an overwhelmingly large majority of the population could not take advantage of the employment opportunities created in the district. This clearly underscores the need to focus on measures for education and skill development.

(a) Improving literacy levels

The literacy levels among the sample households in the district are marginally lower than the national average. However, Muslims lag far behind the Hindus in terms of literacy – 61 per cent as against 76.3 per cent. Female literacy is much lower than the male literacy rate by over 23 percentage points. This is more worrisome in case of Muslim women as only 46 per cent among them are literate. More than one-fourth of the Muslim youths are simply illiterate.

(b) Improving enrolment and educational attainments

The future of the educational development of any population group depends on the current levels of enrolment. It is found that nearly three-fourths of the children and adolescents (in the age-group 5-16 years) are currently attending educational institutions. This ratio is, however, much lower at about 68 per cent among Muslims as compared to 84 per cent among Hindus. There is a need to intensify efforts to enroll children in schools. This would require expansion of school infrastructure, making schooling more attractive, and motivating parents to send their wards to schools.

The human capital base of the population is very low. Less than 12 per cent of the population has educational levels of high school and above. Less than 2 per cent are degree holders and only 1.1 per cent has some technical education. The situation of Muslims as well as of women in this regard is worrisome.

Our survey results show that over half of the Muslim students in the age-group 5-16 years are getting various forms of educational assistance. However, there is a need to increase the forms as well as amount of assistance for education.

Opening of boarding schools for girls can be considered with a view to improving their participation in education.

(c) Organising Skill Development Programmes

There is a need to organize women under Self Help Group scheme of the government. For such groups of women innovative skill training programmes should be organized for starting their enterprises. There is a potential for home-based activities such as garment manufacturing, food processing, handicrafts, etc. Training can be imparted in these activities along with training in enterprise development and marketing. Banks should come forward to finance such activities on easy terms.

4. Additional Areas of Intervention

1. Though all the sample villages are electrified in the district, nearly 40 per cent of the households do not have electricity. There is a need to electrify these households under *Kutir Jyoti Yojana*.
2. An intensive drive must be undertaken for ensuring safe child deliveries. This would not only require training of mid-wives under ASHA but also creating awareness among people about safe deliveries and sanitation.
3. At present rural households are spending a substantial portion (nearly 13 per cent) of their total expenditure on their health care. The focus group discussions underscored the need to improve the health services provided by the government such as availability of medicines, xray and other basic test facilities in the primary health centres.
4. The asset base of rural households is very poor, particularly among Muslims. This adversely affects their income levels. Access to institutional borrowing needs to be improved for the creation of productive assets.