



M.P. Institute of Social Science Research

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National Seminar on 'Regional Disparity in Contemporary India: Concerns for Development and Policy Interventions' (27-28 March, 2018)

The context:

A major challenge for a vast country like India is to maintain balance within its regions having multifarious economic and socio- cultural diversities. This is also essential that people of different regions have a feeling that their development aspirations being adequately addressed within the current development process. Regional distributive justice is the core value of inclusive growth. Among various axes of inequality in India, regional disparity has acquired greater salience in recent times due to the demand being made for special status for states on the basis of backwardness. Within larger states greater intra-regional disparity crystallizes into a demand for separate states. For a better national integration and for a healthy nation building, it is desirable that instead of locating upcoming development projects by political consideration, these should be guided by techno-economic viability and balancing with regional development. In the quest for a faster economic growth in the country, the regional issues are taking a back seat in the current development paradigm. Numbers of study clearly indicate the existence of large inter-state disparity and intra-state disparity within different regions in India. These regional disparities are engendering discontents and causing of internal security threats. Effective planned interventions in these directions are lacking on the one hand, and on the other, whatever efforts had been put in place during planning period, are also losing their effectiveness in the post liberalization period.

At the time of independence considerable differences in economic and social development between different regions of the country existed. Therefore, during the planning process initiated in the early 1950s, one of the main objectives was to reduce this regional disparity and to achieve a regionally balanced economy. A number of planning initiatives were put in place towards achieving this goal, such as, finance commission's allotment of block grant with a built in bias in favour of backward states as per Gadgil formula and starting of various special programmes for backward area development. However, despite implementation of several policies since the beginning of the plan periods, regional disparities in terms of per capita income and growth still persist and continue to be a concern in the planning circle. A second remarkable characteristic of regional disparity in India is the presence of backward areas within developed areas of such states that have grown faster and have attained higher income level. This inter-state and intra-regional disparity of income and human capital formation is often a source of political tension in a federal structure. This imbalance can create economic –social as well as political problems resulting into serious conflicts and dissatisfaction among the youth.

A number of recent studies indicate that regional inequalities in India remained largely unchanged during 1980s but rose drastically after the adoption of reform agenda in 1990s {Nagraj *et al* (1998); Ahluwalia (2000); Deaton, A and Dreze, J (2002); Shetty (2003); Bhattacharya and Sakthivel (2004); Sakthiwal, S and Sabyasachi, K (2007) and Mohanti, B (2015)}. This had been because of a restrictive space for national policies due to diminishing role of State and increasing reliance on market forces and private sector.

Thus, with the present state of affairs regional disparities are bound to aggravate in the coming decades. In this context a debate on revisiting the strategies that may reverse this trend and bring in the regional concerns in focus of development debate is need of the hour.

Keeping into view the above issues in the background, Madhya Pradesh Institute of Social Science Research, Ujjain proposes to organize a National Seminar on “**Regional Disparity in Contemporary India: Concerns for Development and Policy Interventions**” during 26-27 March 2018.

Objectives of the seminar:

The salient objective of the proposed seminar is to deliberate on:

1. Existing inter and intra regional disparity in the India, its causes and concomitant consequences.
2. Problems of backward regions and the role of civil society in voicing the cause of people residing in these regions.
3. Efficacy of government policy and programmes in addressing regional disparity, especially during post liberalization era; and
4. Desired course of action at the policy level.

Themes of the seminar:

- Status and dimension of inter and intra regional disparity at the National and Sub-National level;
- Regional dimension of rural-urban, social and gender disparity in India;
- Causes and socio-political consequences of widening regional disparity levels;
- Policy interventions for reducing inter and intra regional disparity: their trajectory and efficacy ;
- Impact of post liberalization policies on regional disparity at National and Sub-National level;
- Problems of Backward Regions and their fallout at the regional and National level development;
- Role of civil society and action groups in voicing the cause of the people living in disadvantaged regions;
- The future of regional disparity in India and the desired initiative at the policy level.

MPISSR, Ujjain invites you to participate in the National Seminar on ‘Regional Disparity in Contemporary India: Concerns for Development and Policy Interventions’. MPISSR will reimburse travel cost and will arrange local hospitality to the invited delegates.

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All communications may please be sent to mailboxmpissr@gmail.com

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