



Analysis of Socio-economic Status of People in Aspirational Districts of Odisha for Inclusive Growth

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ABSTRACT

Aspirational district programme was launched by the government of India to uplift the 117 backward districts in the country through rapid development. Ten districts of Odisha were included in this programme which included Dhenkanal, Gajapati, Kandhamal, Balangir, Kalahandi, Rayagada, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nuapada and Nabarangpur. Socio-economic variables formed important dimension for identifying the backwardness of districts. Hence, the socio-economic status of people in the 101 blocks in the ten backward districts were analyzed to address the weak points. The socio-economic indicators analyzed were: population density, sex ratio, SC and ST population, total literacy percent, male and female literacy percent, and gender gap in literacy percent and they were compared with the state average. Most of the aspirational districts are located in the southern part of Odisha except Dhenkanal. In the aspirational districts 89.3 percent of the population live in rural areas compared to 83.3 percent for state average. These aspirational districts have high tribal population (39.4 percent) with lower human density (153 per sq km), higher sex ratio (1010), low total literacy (58.1 percent), low female literacy (47.1 percent) and high gender gap in literacy (22.2 percent). The 101 blocks in the aspirational districts of Odisha were also ranked based on these indicators. The study revealed that the socio-economic indicators in the aspirational districts were weak which need focused attention for their improvement.

KEYWORDS

Aspirational districts, Gender gap, Literacy, Sex ratio

INTRODUCTION

The state of Odisha situated in the eastern part of India is one of the most backward state in India (Bharati *et al.*, 2014). The state is endowed with rich natural resources with long coastline, huge mineral deposits, vast forest cover and is also home to important rivers. The population of the state was 41.9 million (Census, 2011) with a population density of 269 persons per sq. km. In spite of the favourable climatic conditions and abundance of natural resources, the state has lagged behind in the development parameters. The per capita net state domestic product in 2017-18 at current prices (2011-12) in Odisha was Rs. 84854/- and it ranked 25th among states and UTs in India (GoI, 2020). Odisha is also home to the largest Scheduled Tribe population in the country with 22.8 percent of its population being ST. There is a large difference among the districts in Odisha on various indicators of development. Such districts which have lagged behind need special attention to bring them at par with the developed districts. Therefore, the 'Transformation of Aspirational Districts' programme was launched by the government of India to quickly and effectively transform 117 backward districts identified in India, with a view to raise the living standards of the people ensuring inclusive growth for all 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas' (Niti Aayog, 2018). The programme aims to rapidly transform the districts that have shown relatively lesser progress in key social areas and have emerged as pockets of under-development, thereby posing a challenge to ensure balanced regional development. To enable optimum utilization of their potential, the aspirational district program focuses closely on improving people's ability to participate fully in the burgeoning economy. Health & Nutrition, Education, Agriculture & Water Resources, Financial Inclusion & Skill Development, and Basic Infrastructure are this programme's core areas of focus. The Aspirational Districts programme envisages rapid development of the selected districts in the country on the basis of a composite index based on the five parameters. In Odisha, there are 30 districts, of which ten districts namely, Dhenkanal, Gajapati, Kandhamal, Balangir, Kalahandi, Rayagada, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nuapada and Nabarangpur were identified as aspirational districts (Niti Aayog, 2018).

Socio-economic indicators are part of measuring backwardness of districts; therefore, this paper particularly focuses on these indicators so that the areas weak in these indicators could be given priority attention. Most of the studies take district as the administrative unit to discuss the developmental parameters, but in this study the analysis has been made taking into account the 101 blocks in the ten aspirational districts of Odisha to study the socio-economic dimensions by taking data from primary census abstract (Census, 2011) so that targeted efforts could be made to bring them to the other developed districts in the country.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Block wise data of the rural area of the aspirational districts of Odisha were collected with respect to socio-economic indicators like total area, total population, population density, sex ratio, SC and ST population, total literacy percent, male and female literacy percent and gender gap in literacy percent and compared with the state average. The socio-economic data were taken from primary census abstract (Census, 2011). The data were presented for the districts in tables and for blocks they were represented in maps.

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Table 1: Area, population, and other socio-economic indicators in the aspirational districts of Odisha (2011)

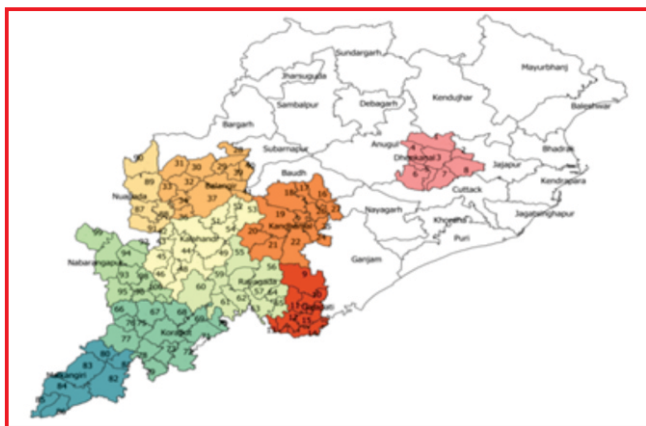
Districts	Total area (sq km)	Total person (,000)	% Rural population	Density	Sex ratio	Scheduled Tribe %	Scheduled Caste %
Balangir	6575	1649	88	251	987	21.1	17.9
Dhenkanal	4452	1193	90.1	268	947	13.6	19.6
Gajapati	4325	578	87.8	134	1043	54.3	6.8
Kalahandi	7920	1577	92.3	199	1003	28.5	18.2
Kandhamal	8021	733	90.1	91	1037	53.6	15.8
Koraput	8807	1380	83.6	157	1032	50.6	14.2
Malkangiri	5791	613	91.9	106	1020	57.8	22.6
Nabarangapur	5291	1221	92.8	231	1019	55.8	14.5
Nuapada	3852	610	94.4	158	1021	33.8	13.5
Rayagada	7073	968	84.8	137	1051	56.0	14.4
Aspirational districts	62107	10522	89.3	169	1010	39.4	16.2
Odisha	155707	41974	83.3	270	979	22.8	17.1

Mapping the aspirational districts:

Open source GIS software QGIS 3.4.3 was used to create thematic maps for the 101 blocks in ten aspirational districts. The various indicators were then projected in the map for easy comprehension and analysis. In the present study, the terminology 'aspirational' and 'backward' have been used inter-changeably and conveys the same meaning as the districts identified in the 'Aspirational districts' programme of the government of India.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**Location of aspirational districts**

The ten aspirational districts are primarily located in the southern part of Odisha except Dhenkanal. The aspirational districts are located within six agro-climatic zones out of ten agroclimatic zones of Odisha. The aspirational districts cover 101 blocks which have been numbered from 1 to 101 as shown in the fig. 1.

**Fig.1:** Aspirational districts of different blocks of Odisha**Area and population**

The aspirational districts are spread over an area of 62.1 thousand sq km (39.9% of the State). Koraput (8.8 th sq km) is the largest and Nuapada (3.85thsq km) is the smallest district among aspirational districts in terms of geographical area (Table 1). The total population of the ten aspirational districts

was 10.52 million (25.1% of Odisha) in 2011. The rural population of these districts was 9.40 m (26.9% of rural population of Odisha). There were 2.26 m (28.0% of state) households in the rural areas of these districts. Balangir district had the highest population (1.65 m) while lowest population was in Gajapati (0.58 m). Most of the people of these districts were living in the rural area ranging from 83.6% (Koraput) to 94.4% (Nuapada).

The population density (person per sq km) in the aspirational districts was 169 which is lower than the state average (270). The population density in Dhenkanal (268) was at par with the state average and in other districts it ranged between 91 (Kandhamal) to 251 (Balangir). The sex ratio in all the districts except Dhenkanal and Balangir was more than 1000 and it was highest in Raygada (1051). Six of the ten districts have more than 50 percent scheduled tribe population except Balangir, Dhenkanal, Kalahandi and Nuapada. The corresponding data in the rural areas of the aspirational districts are given in Table 1. NRHM (2011) reported that the population of Odisha state in 2001 was 36.8 million with a density of 236 persons per sq km.

Literacy and sex ratio

The overall literacy rate in the aspirational districts was 58.1 per cent against the state average of 72.9 per cent (Table 2 and Fig. 2). Female literacy also lagged behind the state average being only 47.1 per cent against the state average of 64.0 per cent. Four districts (Raygada, Koraput, Malkangiri and Nabarangapur) had female literacy below 40 percent. The gender gap in literacy in the aspirational districts was 22.2 per cent against the state average of 17.6 per cent. Kandhamal, Kalahandi and Nuapada districts had over 25 per cent gender gap in literacy. Sahu (2013) cited several case studies from tribal areas of Odisha and concluded involving entire stakeholders at various levels in public-private partnership mode resulted in streamlining the educational system and helped in achieving higher literacy level among the tribal children. Several others (Rami, 2012; Kumar and Sharma 2015) have also reported that the educational level among tribals were lower than the rest of the population.

Table 2: Scenario of literacy in the aspirational districts of Odisha

Districts	Total literacy (%)	Male literacy (%)	Female literacy (%)	Gender gap in literacy (%)
Balangir	64.7	75.8	53.5	22.3
Dhenkanal	78.8	86.2	71	15.2
Gajapati	53.5	64.4	43.2	21.2
Kalahandi	59.2	71.9	46.7	25.2
Kandhamal	64.1	76.9	51.9	25
Koraput	49.2	60.3	38.6	21.8
Malkangiri	48.5	59.1	38.3	20.8
Nabarangapur	46.4	57.3	35.8	21.5
Nuapada	57.3	70.3	44.8	25.5
Rayagada	49.8	61	39.2	21.9
Aspirational districts	58.1	69.3	47.1	22.2
Odisha	72.9	81.6	64.0	17.6

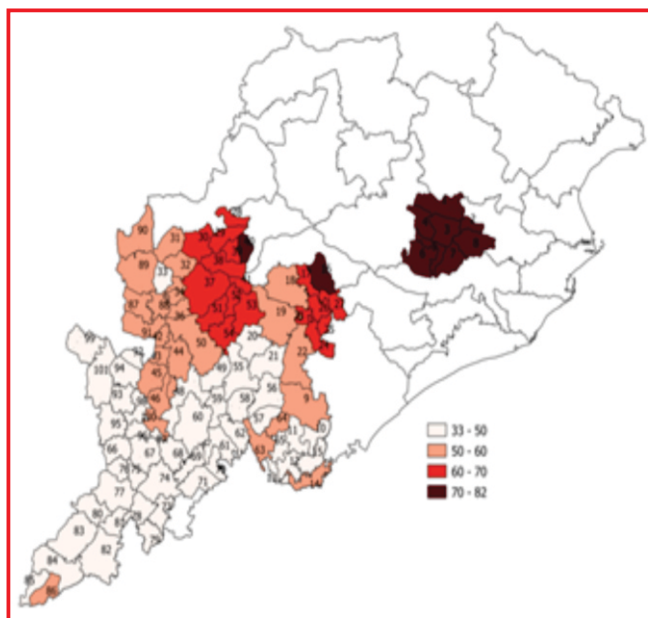


Fig. 2: Percent total literacy in the aspirational districts of Odisha

Block wise socio-economic dynamics

Block wise socio-economic attributes for the 101 blocks of the aspirational districts were also analyzed. It was noticed that 77 blocks (76.2 %) have sex ratio over 1000 indicating healthy attitude towards the girl child (Fig. 3). In 11 blocks, the overall literacy was less than 40% and in 48 blocks the total literacy was less than 50%. Only seven blocks had total literacy more than the state average (72.9%). In respect of female literacy, 13 blocks had female literacy less than 30% and 51 blocks less than 40%. Only seven blocks had female literacy more than the state average for female (60.7%) in rural areas. The aspirational districts of Odisha are predominantly inhabited by tribal population. Of the 101 blocks, 81 blocks (77%) have scheduled tribe population more than 25 per cent. Seven blocks have ST population more

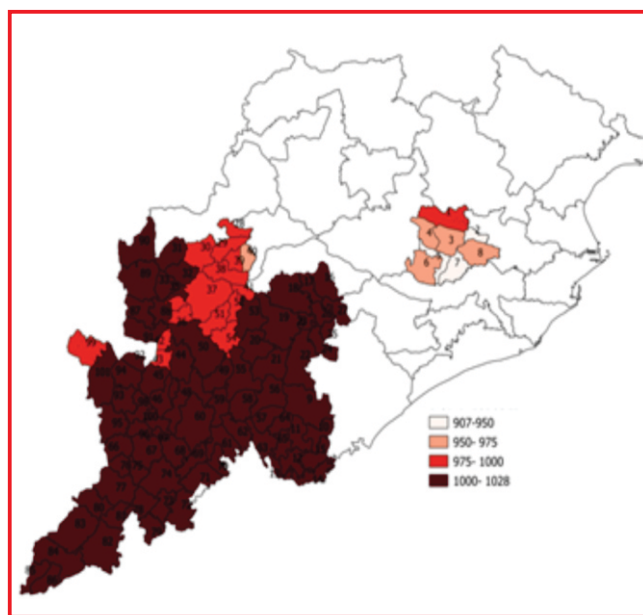


Fig. 3: Sex ratio (no of female per 1000 male) in the aspirational districts of Odisha

than 75 percent and 51 blocks more than 50 per cent ST population.

The ten blocks with highest and lowest indicators each for sex ratio, total literacy, female literacy and scheduled tribe population are given in Table 3. Highest sex ratio was observed in Kalyansingpur block of Rayagada (1128) while lowest is Odapada block of Denkanal (907) (Fig. 4). Highest literacy per cent was observed in Odapada block of Denkanal (81.7%) while lowest in Pottangi block of Koraput (32.5%) and also in female literacy i.e. 74.1 % and 24.1% respectively. Highest scheduled tribe percentage is observed in Narayanpatana block of Koraput (84.4%) while lowest is Puntala block of Balangir (6.8%).

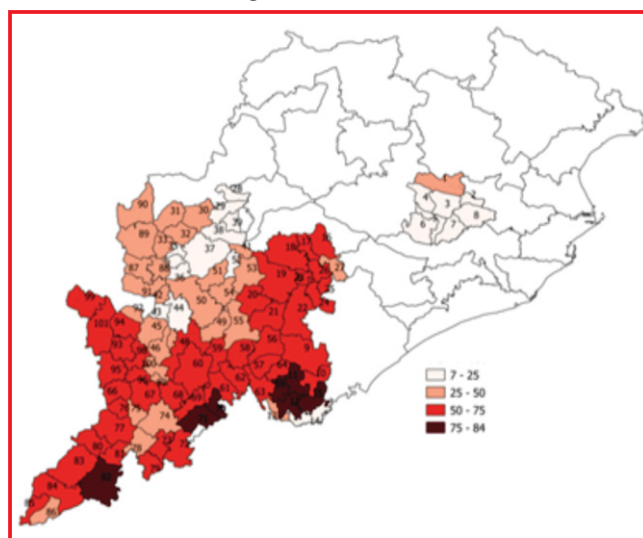


Fig.4: Percent Scheduled Tribe population in aspirational districts of Odisha

Table 3: Ten blocks with highest and lowest socio-economic indicators in the aspirational districts

Sex ratio	Literacy total %	Literacy female %	Scheduled Tribe %
Highest-ten			
1 Kalyanasingpur (RG) [1128]	Odapada (DK) [81.7]	Odapada (DK) [74.1]	Narayanpatana (KO) [84.4]
2 Bishamakatak (RG) [1120]	Bhuban (DK) [80.3]	Bhuban (DK) [73]	Rayagada (GJ) [84.2]
3 G. Udayagiri (KM) [1100]	Kamakshyanagar (DK) [79.3]	DK Sadar (Sadar) (DK) [71.9]	Bandhugaon (KO) [79.8]
4 Rayagada (RG) [1097]	DK Sadar (Sadar) (DK) [78.9]	Kamakshyanagar (DK) [70.9]	Gunupur (RG) [77.1]
5 Rayagada (GJ) [1085]	Parajang (DK) [77.4]	Gandia (DK) [69.3]	Nuagada (GJ) [77.1]
6 Kolnara (RG) [1077]	Gandia (DK) [76.6]	Parajang (DK) [68.7]	Kudumulguma (MK) [76.7]
7 Bandhugaon (KO) [1072]	Hindol (DK) [75.8]	Hindol (DK) [67.1]	Guma (GJ) [75.9]
8 Khairaput (MK) [1069]	Khajuripada (KM) [71.6]	Kankadahad (DK) [60.7]	R. Udaygiri (GJ) [73.9]
9 Dasamantapur (KO) [1064]	Puintala (BL) [70.7]	Puintala (BL) [60.4]	Gudari (RG) [73.8]
10 Nandapur (KO) [1061]	Kankadahad (DK) [70.7]	Loisinga (BL) [59.4]	Rayagada (RG) [73.5]
Lowest- ten			
1 Bangomunda (BL) [978]	Jharigan (NB) [38.9]	Chandrapur (RG) [28.9]	Kamakshyanagar (DK) [16.1]
2 Balangir (BL) [977]	Dabugan (NB) [38.9]	Jharigan (NB) [28.6]	Gosani (Parlakhemundi) (GJ)[15.9]
3 Puintala (BL) [967]	Kudumulguma (MK) [38.6]	Kudumulguma (MK) [28.2]	Karlamunda (KL) [14.6]
4 Parajang (DK) [963]	Kashipur (RG) [38]	Nandapur (KO) [27.4]	DK Sadar (Sadar) (DK) [13.2]
5 Gandia (DK) [962]	Narayanpatana (KO) [37.9]	Kosagumuda (NB) [26.7]	Agalpur (BL) [12.7]
6 Hindol (DK) [959]	Kosagumuda (NB) [36.6]	Boipariguda (KO) [26.4]	Bhuban (DK) [10.2]
7 Kamakshyanagar (DK) [950]	Boipariguda (KO) [36.1]	Kalyanasingpur (RG) [26.4]	Parajang (DK) [9.2]
8 Bhuban (DK) [942]	Kalyanasingpur (RG) [36]	Kashipur (RG) [25.6]	Odapada (DK) [8.2]
9 DK Sadar (Sadar) (DK) [938]	Bandhugaon (KO) [32.9]	Bandhugaon (KO) [24.9]	Hindol (DK) [7]
10 Odapada (DK) [907]	Pottangi (KO) [32.5]	Pottangi (KO) [24.1]	Puintala (BL) [6.8]

* Block (district) [value];

District code : DK: Dhenkanal, GJ: Gajapati, KM: Kandhamal, BL: Balangir, KL: Kalahandi, RG: Rayagada, KO: Koraput, MK: Malkangiri, NU: Nuapada, NB: Nabarangapur

The population of tribal people in the aspirational districts of Odisha was high (39.4 percent). The tribal areas have poor infrastructure and educational which contribute to their backwardness. Ghosh (2007) reported that in the tribal areas of West Bengal and Jharkhand female literacy was lower than the male literacy in terms of enrolment ratio. Drop-out rate of children from schools was higher to assist the family at home. The benefits of government programmes and policies generally do not reach the tribal children because they were not contextualized and localized considering regional, geographical and physical differences and barriers (Majumdar, 2018; Raja and Krishnveni, 2019; Dutta and Sivaramkrishnan, 2013). Lack of political initiative and grassroot movements in the educational sector also contribute to the lower literacy among tribal people.

Because of relatively lesser discrimination based on gender, the sex ratio is relatively better in the tribal areas which also reflect in the aspirational districts of Odisha being 1010 compared to 979 for Odisha state. Various workers supported that women gets special and important status in tribal community having better sex ratio (Padvi, 2018; Mandal, 2016). The sex ratio in Odisha was 1037 in 1901 and it

remained over 1000 until 1961, thereafter it has gradually declined to 972 in 2001 (Singh, 2010) before increasing to 979 in 2011. Therefore, for improving the overall socio-economic status in the aspirational districts in Odisha, there is need to prioritize the development of tribal areas with easy access to education for which NGOs should also be roped in to supplement the government efforts.

CONCLUSION

Human development is key to the progress of a society which is reflected in various socio-economic indicators. A better indicator in these dimensions lead to multiplier effect which result in better quality of life over a period of time. The ten aspirational districts of Odisha have relatively weak socio-economic indicators which lead to their backwardness. The present study made an in-depth analysis of the socio-economic indicators taking block as administrative unit to identify the pockets within districts which need priority intervention. The 101 blocks in the ten aspirational districts were also ranked based on the various indicators studied. Addressing the various socio-economic indicators prioritized up to block level through enabling policy measures may result in the backward districts catching up with the rest of India.

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