

## RURAL-URBAN DIVIDE IN INDIA: A SPATIAL PERSPECTIVE

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**Abstract:** *The unequal pace of development has created multidimensional disparity in the country; rural-urban disparity is one of them. The present study attempts to examine urban-rural divide in India from a spatial perspective with the help of a number of indicators pertaining to education, income, expenditure and health by picking up data from various sources. The study reveals that more than two-thirds of India's population living in villages is lagging far behind the urban on several parameters. The planned efforts of narrowing down the gaps in literacy, income, expenditure and health did not succeed in achieving desired results. For instance, disparity index of literacy was as low as 0.1397 for Goa and as high as 0.8911 for Mizoram in 2011. Rural per capita income is less than 32.0 per cent of urban income in Maharashtra, one of the developed states of the country. The same is true for the people below poverty line, per capita expenditure, total fertility, infant mortality, institutional deliveries, and availability of basic amenities. Persisting wide urban-rural gaps on various parameters have divided country into India and Bharat. The study recommends that development policies and programs aiming to reduce these gaps between these two segments of the society should be based on the principles of urban-rural linkages.*

**Key words:** Disparity, human development, indicator, enrolment, drop out, poverty, urban-rural linkage, fertility, infant mortality, crude birth rate, crude death rate, literacy.

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### Introduction

The economic reforms in India accelerated the economic growth but widened social and spatial disparities especially between rural and urban areas. India is still predominantly rural with more than two-thirds of its total population living in the countryside. Rural habitats occupy nearly 97.0 per cent of total geographical area of the country against only about 3.0 per cent by the urban. Usually villages are small in size and widely distributed in space, resulting in low density and long intervening distances. Contrary to it, urban population is concentrated on minute piece of land yielding high and very high density, where the delivery of services and facilities is more economic and spatially efficient.

In the present set up, rural economy is losing its significance in the national economy. Nearly three-fourths (70.7 per cent) of rural main workers are engaged in agriculture (Census of India 2011). *Economic Survey, 2016-17* reports that the share of agricultural sector in the gross value added of the country has declined from 52.7 per cent in 1950-51 to only 19.6 per cent in 2016-17, at current prices. Rural areas are still far behind in welfare indices and gap between the two is very wide. It results in perpetual increasing flow of rural migrants to urban centres. Like atmospheric system, people from rural high pressure areas flow towards urban low pressure areas. During 2001-11, 82.6 million people migrated from rural to urban areas. Migration on such mass scale is the cause and consequence both of the disparity between them. Usually resources are disproportionately drained out of rural areas to towns and cities; a major hurdle in reducing the existing gaps.

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Taking a cue from the above, the present study examines rural-urban divide from the spatial perspective in the light of the following objectives.

### Objectives

1. To have a critical assessment of approaches adopted in India to narrow down the urban-rural gaps through the planned developments;
2. To assess the gaps between rural and urban areas in terms of literacy, health and economic empowerment and to see how far these gaps have narrowed; and
3. To analyze the trends in and pattern of socio-economic development between rural and urban areas in the country.

### Data sources and methodology

Different secondary data sources have been tapped for the present study including the Census of India 2011, Economic Survey, 2016-17, Report of the Labour Bureau of India, 2016, Reports of National Sample Survey Organization on key indicators relating to the situation of Agricultural Households in India, 2014; Household Consumer Expenditure across Socio-economic Groups, 2015; Key indicators of household social consumption on education in India, 2019 and Drinking water, sanitation, hygiene and housing condition in India 2019; National Family Health Survey-IV, National Rural Health Mission and RBI's Handbook of Statistics on Indian Economy 2020.

A number of indicators relating to different dimensions of human well-being and development have been calculated, including longevity of life at birth rate, death rate with special reference to infant mortality, nutrition and life expectancy at birth, literacy rate particularly female literacy, and enrolment of school-going children, drop-out ratio, pupil-teacher ratio, wage rates, income and employment, per capita gross domestic product, incidences of poverty and employment opportunity.

For calculating urban-rural disparity, an index devised by David Sopher and known as Disparity Index (DI), has been put into the service (see Mundhe et al, 2017, 64). It can be expressed a formula:-

$$DI = \text{Log} (X2 / X1) + \text{Log} (100 - X1) / (100 - X2)$$

Where, DI = Disparity Index

X2 = Percentage of Urban Literates; X1 = Percentage of Rural Literates.

i.e. X2 X1

## DISCUSSIONS AND ANALYSIS

### Rural-urban population composition

In 2011, 833.8 million or 68.9 per cent of India's total population (1210.6 million) was living in nearly six lakh rural inhabitations. There are wide inter-state differentials in share of rural population, varying from only 37.8 per cent in Goa to 90.0 per cent in Himachal Pradesh. This share was more than >75.0 percent (high) in Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, Assam, Odisha, Meghalaya, Uttar Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Rajasthan.

Except Punjab and Haryana in the north and West Bengal in the east, all other states in north, center, east and north-east have higher share of rural population than the national average of 68.9 per cent (Fig. 1). Among union territories, Andaman and Nicobar Islands (62.3 per cent) has highest share followed by Dadra and Nagar Haveli; it was quite low in NCT, Delhi (2.5 per cent) and Chandigarh (2.7 per cent).

Urban population was 377.1 million or 31.1 per cent in 2011 and fast growing. However, from global perspective India is still a low urbanized country; more than 55.3 percent of world population was urban in 2018 (UN, DESA 2019). Among states, Goa with 62.2 per cent is the most urbanized state in the country followed by Mizoram. Among the major states, Tamil Nadu is at top with 48.4 per cent, followed by Maharashtra (45.2 per cent). Gujarat, Karnataka, Punjab, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal also have this share higher than the national average. Urbanization is low to very low in all major states of north, central and north-east India. Himachal Pradesh (10.0 percent) is the least urbanized state. Bihar, Assam, Odisha and Meghalaya also are among the low urbanized states. In Uttar Pradesh only one-fifth (22.3 per cent) population is urban. Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Sikkim are also among low urbanized states. On the whole, urbanization is high in southern, western and north-western states.

In general, union territories have high level of urbanization. Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Andaman & Nicobar Islands are exception to this. It is as high as 97.5 per cent in NCT, Delhi and 97.3 per cent in Chandigarh.

Urban centres, considered as the growth engines, promote cultural and technological innovations. From this angle, states having very high shares of rural population are supposed to suffer in terms of various amenities, services and infrastructure and market facilities.

### **Rural-urban literacy differentials**

The literacy rate in India has increased from 18.3 per cent in 1951 to 73.0 per cent in 2011. During the same period, rural literacy increased from only 12.1 per cent to 68.9 percent and urban literacy from 34.6 per cent to 85.0 percent. There are, however, wide male-female and rural-urban literacy differentials. Rural female literacy rate is 57.9 per cent against 79.1 per cent for the urban female; and male literacy rates are 67.8 per cent and 84.1 per cent, respectively. Evidently, rural male literacy rate is lower than urban female literacy rate.

Notably, gap in rural-urban literacy rate is declining continuously after 1961. Disparity index (DI) value that was the highest (0.61) in 1961 came down to 0.41 in 2011. Similarly, rural-urban literacy ratio, 1:2.9 in 1951, came down to 1:1.2 in 2011 (Table 1). During this period, rural literacy increased from 12.1 per cent to 68.9 per cent. NSO in its 75<sup>th</sup> round, *Key Indicators of Household Social Consumption on Education in India*, has estimated rural and urban literacy rates at 73.5 per cent and 87.7 per cent, respectively during 2017-2018, yielding ratio of 1:1.2. This indicates to parity between rural and urban literacy rates in near future (see also Victoria and Lahiri, 2012: 1).

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**Table 1, India: Progress in literacy rates (%), 1951-2011**

Census Year	Total	Rural	Urban	Disparity index	Rural-urban literacy ratio
1951	18.33	12.1	34.59	0.585	1:2.86
1961	28.3	22.5	54.4	0.614	1: 2.42
1971	34.45	27.9	60.2	0.592	1:2.16
1981	43.57	36.0	67.2	0.561	1: 1.87
1991	52.21	44.69	73.08	0.526	1: 1.64
2001	65.38	59.21	80.06	0.442	1: 1.35
2011	73.00	68.91	84.98	0.407	1: 1.23
2017-18*	77.7	73.5	87.7	0.410	1:1.19

Sources: Census of India, for different years; \* NSSO, 2019.

A look on age-specific literacy rates is highly revealing. The difference between urban-rural literacy is less than 10.0 per cent points up in the age of 18 years, but increases thereafter to reach 32.8 per cent points in age-group of 75-79 years (Fig. 2). Rural people, below 18 years of age in 2011, were born after 1992. Low literacy difference in these age groups suggests that literacy movement in rural areas started in 1990s; supported in rapid increase of rural literacy after 1991 (see Table 1).

In addition, in spite of increasing literacy, absolute number of illiterates is also increasing in both urban and rural areas, simultaneously. Number of illiterates increased from 260 million to 351 million in rural areas and from 42.5 million to 96.3 million in urban areas between 1981 and 2011. It reveals that growth in literacy could not keep a pace with growth of population aged 7 years and above.

#### **Disparity in rural-urban literacy rates: Pattern and change**

In none of the states and union territories, rural literacy is higher than the urban. National average of difference between rural and urban literacy rate being 16.3 per cent points in 2011, it ranges from a low of 0.34 per cent point in Lakshadweep to a high of 25.7 per cent in Dadra and Nagar Haveli. Among states, it ranged from 2.1 per cent points in Kerala to 23.0 per cent points in Arunachal Pradesh. National average of DI value being 0.401, it varied from 0.020 in Lakshadweep to 0.891 in Mizoram. Taking the national index into account, states can be classified into three groups: high, medium and low disparity in rural-urban literacy rates (Fig. 3). Most of the states with high urban-rural literacy ratio have also high disparity index. Eleven states and union territories have high disparity index, located in a continuous belt from Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh in south to Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland in the northeast, encompassing Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Index is also high in Union territory of Dadra Nagar Haveli.

Inter-state differentials in literacy rates are associated with the socio-economic structure of the population. Literacy disparity is directly and highly correlated with the proportion of

agricultural workers, proportion of ST and rural population. Literacy, particularly female literacy, is comparatively quite low among these segments of population than the urban literacy, causing higher disparity. Contrary to it, disparity declines with the increasing proportion of non-agricultural workers, rural literacy, female literacy and degree of urbanization (Table 2).

Variables	Coefficient of Correlation	Variables	Coefficient of Correlation
Disparity Index	1.000	SC population (%)	-0.235
Agricultural workers (%)	0.574	Female literacy (%)	-0.247
ST population (%)	0.484	Urbanization (%)	-0.410
Rural population (%)	0.410	Rural literacy (%)	-0.417
Urban literacy (%)	0.179	Non-farm workers (%)	-0.574

The rural-urban gap in literacy rates of states declined during 1981-2011 (Fig. 4). Maximum decline is in Lakshadweep (-9.3 per cent per annum) followed by Tripura state (-4.8 per cent). In Tripura, rural literacy increased much higher than that of urban literacy. Rural literacy nearly doubled (45.8 per cent to 84.9 per cent, 1981-2011), while urban literacy increased from 83.4 per cent to 93.5 during this period. Other states experiencing high decline are Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, combined Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Jammu & Kashmir; and Union Territories of Chandigarh, NCT, Andaman and Nicobar, and Daman & Diu. Except Uttar Pradesh other states are small in size and/or high urbanized with dominance of non-farm activities.

In all such states and UTs, rural literacy grew faster than the urban literacy. In rural areas also, female literacy increased steadily. Moderate decline (-2.0 - 3.0 per cent per annum) is recorded in Haryana, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Nagaland, Tamil Nadu, combined Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Meghalaya and Gujarat states and Puducherry UT. The majority of these states have substantial share of tribes in total population. On the other hand, Rajasthan, Bihar including Jharkhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Mizoram and Manipur and union territory of Dadra & Nagar Haveli witnessed a slow decline, ranging from -1.1 per cent in Dadra & Nagar Haveli to -1.9 per cent in combined Bihar. Except Rajasthan, all other states of this group are from southern and eastern parts of India. However, declining literacy disparity in majority of states of rural dominance is a healthy sign.

#### **Formal education: Average number of years**

In its 75<sup>th</sup> round of survey report, NSSO computed number of years of formal education completed by each person (15 years and above) completing 'below primary' or above level of education. The duration varied from 9.0 years (8.6 for females and 9.2 for males) in rural areas to 10.9 years (10.6 years for females and 11.2 years for males) in urban areas during 2017-18. The difference between the two averages being 1.9 years, it ranged from 0.5 year in Kerala to 2.5 years in Odisha. On the whole, the difference is more than 2 years in nine states, yielding disparity index of more than 0.10. These states are predominantly tribal and rural. Notably, rural areas need more functional and professional education rather than higher

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formal education; still lacking in villages. Only 4.2 per cent of rural literates have received vocational/technical training against 6.4 per cent in urban areas.

This difference in years of formal education manifests itself in different shares of educated persons with higher grade. For example, only 30.6 per cent rural literates could cross higher secondary level against 57.5 per cent in urban areas (NSO, 2019). Contrary to it, more than two-thirds (69.6 percent) of educated youth aged 15 years and above could attain education up to middle standard in rural areas. Further, rural literacy took momentum in 1990s; the majority of rural literates were below the graduation age in 2011 (Fig. 2).

### Proportion of drop-outs

Rural-urban net enrolment of children in different standards is almost comparable up to middle level. However, the proportion of drop outs is still much higher in rural areas than in urban areas. As per NSSO 75<sup>th</sup> round survey report, overall dropout is 13.8 per cent among ever enrolled persons of 3-35 years of age in formal education system in rural areas, against only 9.6 per cent in urban areas. Rural-urban dropout difference is 4.2 per cent points. Notably, dropout rate is comparatively high up to secondary level in both the areas. Of course, it is higher in rural than urban areas. However, it narrows down thereafter. Absence of significant difference in dropout rates among girls (13.2 percent) and boys (12.1 percent) in both areas negates the myth of faster dropout among female students. NSSO (2019) stated that the commitment of engagement in economic and domestic activities, financial constraints and lack of interest in education are reasons behind the dropout.

Except Uttar Pradesh, all other states record higher drop-out rate in rural than in urban areas, the difference in rural-urban dropout ranging from -0.4 per cent points in Uttar Pradesh to 10.8 per cent points in Odisha, national average is 4.2 per cent points. Interestingly, drop-out is higher (3.7 per cent) in urban than rural areas (3.2 per cent) in Uttar Pradesh. Here, towns are more or less are an extension of rural hinterlands; hence rural-urban literacy disparity index is quite low (0.203). In all, eleven states, forming a belt from Assam, in the east, to Maharashtra, in the west encompassing Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Gujarat and Haryana record higher difference than the national average (Fig. 6), having medium to high literacy disparity index, except Haryana. Of them, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Haryana and West Bengal display high urbanization level. Higher dropout in rural areas is explained by factors other than the dominance of rural population and/or economic backwardness. Normally drop-out is higher among female than male students. But reverse is true in ten out of twenty-one major states of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, suggesting higher dropout of girls is not responsible for overall higher dropout rates.

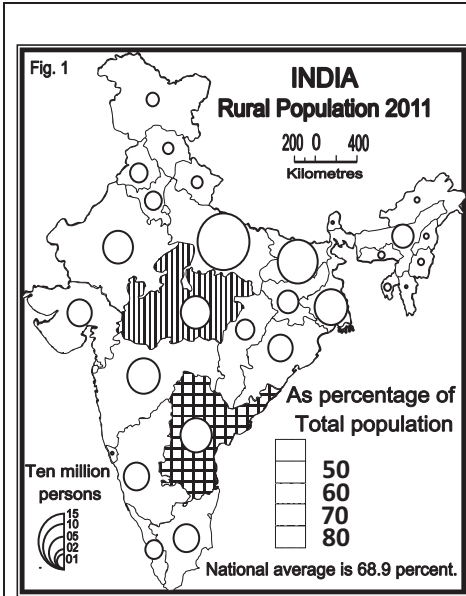
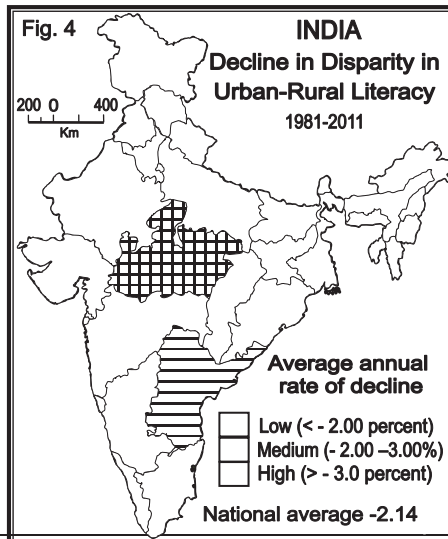
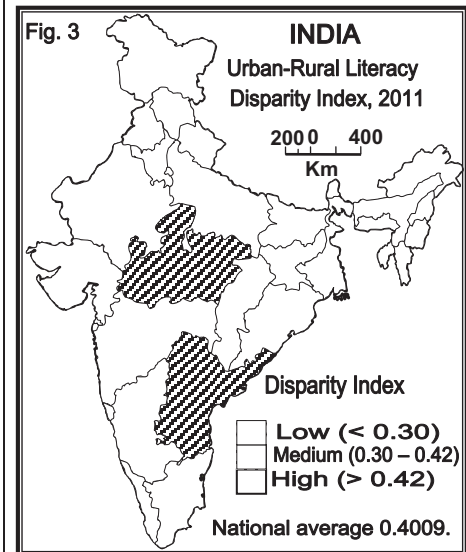
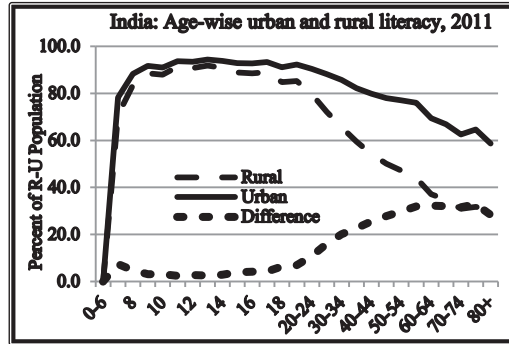


Fig. 2



**ECONOMIC DISPARITY: INCOME**

Per capita income is traditionally used as an important measure to assess development level. But income data are not bifurcated into urban and rural sector at the state level. Information on average monthly household earnings, compiled by the Labour Bureau of India (2016-17) and summarized in **Table 3**, presents rural-urban gap in earning on national level. About 76.9 percent of surveyed rural households have average monthly



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earning up to Rs 10,000 as against only 44.9 per cent urban households. Contrary to it, more than 26.7 per cent of urban households earn Rs 20,000 or more per month whereas this true only for 7.1 per cent of rural households.

**Table 3, India: Households by average monthly earnings, 2015-16. (in rupees)**

Residence	up to 5000	5001-7500	7500-10000	10001-20000	20001-50000	50001-100000	>100000
Rural	27.3	29.6	20	16	6.3	0.7	0.1
Urban	9.3	15.3	20.3	28.5	21.7	4.4	0.6
Both	22.1	25.4	20.1	19.6	10.8	1.8	0.2

**Source:** Labour Bureau of India (2016). *Report on Fifth Annual Employment-Unemployment Survey, 2015-16, Vol. I*, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Govt. of India, New Delhi. p 19.

Dholakiya and Dholakiya (1978) attempted for the first time to estimate urban-rural income differentials for major states for 1970-71. Again, Dholakiya *et al.* (2014:18) estimated to show wide rural-urban income disparity. They estimated that per capita rural income varies from Rs. 20,800 in Bihar to Rs. 87,614 in Haryana in 2011-12 (Fig. 5). Urban per capita income is also lowest in Bihar (58,336) and highest in Haryana (Rs.175, 860) in the same year. Rural per capita income made only 32.0 per cent of urban in Maharashtra but 71.0 per cent in Kerala. Only in four of 15 major states, for which data are available, rural per capita income made more than half of urban incomes. Further, only in six states (Kerala, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Odisha), the ratio of rural-urban ratio increased during 1994-2012, indicating to rapid growth of rural incomes than urban in these state. Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Karnataka present the reverse trend.

### Population below Poverty Line

Rural poverty (25.7 per cent) is nearly double of urban (13.7 per cent), indicating to poor quality of life, deprivation, malnutrition, and hence low human development in rural areas. The eradication of poverty has been an integral component of the development strategy in the country. The importance of reduction in poverty and provision of other basic needs has been emphasized in all Five-Year Plans particularly 5<sup>th</sup> Plan onward. Government has two pronged approaches, viz. promoting economic growth and direct attack on poverty alleviation.

The comparable estimates of poverty, available at national and state level from 1973-74 to 2011-12, reveal that the poverty ratio declined from 56.4 percent to 25.7 percent in rural areas and from 49.0 percent to 13.7 percent in urban areas during this period (Table 4). Four major trends can be deducted: (i) the percentage of people living below poverty line has declined steadily both in rural and urban areas; (ii) there is still wide rural-urban disparity. Rural poverty ratio is almost double (25.7 per cent) the urban (13.7 per cent); (iii) decline in rural poverty ratio (30.7 points) is slower by 35.3 points in comparison to urban during 1973-2012; and (iv) poor people are concentrated in rural areas. According to 2011-12 estimates, of total 269.3 million people below poverty line, 220.9 million (82.0 per cent) are in rural areas. As evident in decline in value of disparity index, rural-urban poor declined up to 1999-2000 but



increased thereafter, indicating inconsistent decline in urban-rural gap. It has reached to 0.338 in 2011-12 from only 0.129 in 1973-74. Growth in rural earnings is not coping with that of the urban areas.

Fig. 5

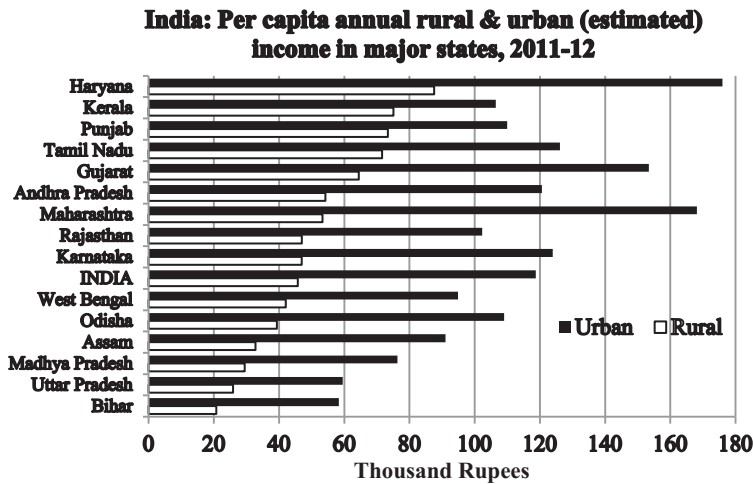


Fig. 6

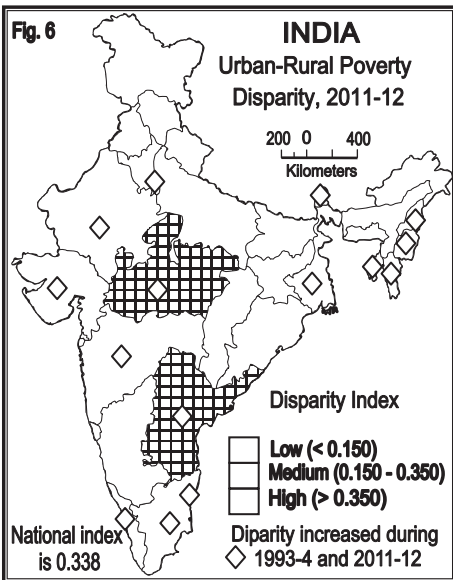
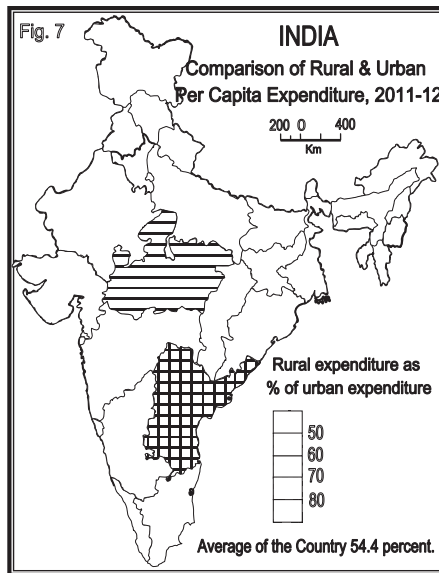


Fig. 7



**Regional pattern of rural-urban gap in poverty ratio**

In 2011-12, the incidence of rural poverty varies from 6.8 per cent in Goa to 44.6 per cent in Chhattisgarh, giving a ratio of 1:6.5 between the lowest and highest poverty states. In most of

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the states in central-north and eastern parts of India the share of rural poor is between 25.7 per cent (national average) and 40.0 per cent. In this group are Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Bihar, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram and Uttar Pradesh. Against this, rural poverty ratio is below 10.0 per cent Goa, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Sikkim. Remaining states fall in between the two. Urban poverty ratio ranges from 3.7 per cent in Sikkim to 31.2 per cent in Bihar. Notably, there is a high degree of correspondence between urban and rural poverty ratios in states, supported by high correlation value ( $r = 0.715$ ).

**Table 4, India: Trend in poverty, 1973 -2012**

Year	Rural		Urban		Rural/Urban poor	Disparity Index
	Number	%	Number	%		
1973-74	261	56.4	60	49.0	1.15	0.129
1993-94	244	50.1	76	32.4	1.53	0.333
2004-05	326	41.8	81	25.7	1.63	0.317
2009-10	278	33.8	76	20.9	1.62	0.286
2011-12	217	25.7	59	13.7	1.88	0.338

**Source:** Govt. of India (2002). *Economic Survey 2001-02*, and RBI (2020). *Handbook of Statistics on Indian Economy*, Table 154

*Note:* Population figures are in million persons and estimates of poverty in percentage

In 2011-12, the national average of rural-urban poverty DI value being 0.338, it ranges from 0.05 in Uttarakhand to 0.907 in Mizoram. The majority of major states fall in moderate or high category on this count (see Fig. 6). In low category are included the states that are either relatively developed or backward. In former states, the rural and urban poverty ratios both are quite low: Punjab, Haryana and Uttarakhand. In the latter category of states, both ratios are high: Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. In high DI value states, rural poverty ratio is more than twice of urban poverty. For example, in Maharashtra incidence of rural poverty (24.2 per cent) is 265.6 per cent of urban poverty (9.1 per cent). It suggests that it is not the proportion of rural population but the difference between rural and urban economic status that determines the rural-urban poverty gap.

Notably, there has been an overall decline in poverty ratio during 1994-2012 in India, but the decline in poverty had not been uniform across the states. Fifteen states for which comparable data for the two periods is available suggest that only five states of Karnataka, Goa, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir registered high decline in rural-urban poverty gap. On the whole, six states fall in low poverty frequency states and the nine in medium or high poverty frequency states. In the former six states, the rural poverty ratio declined faster than that urban poverty, reducing rural-urban poverty gap. In the remaining nine states, rural-urban poverty gap increased. Widening rural-urban poverty gap in the case already high poverty disparity states is dangerous for socio-economic development.

### Per Capita Expenditure

Per capita expenditure throws light on living conditions and poverty. NSSO collects information on monthly per capita expenditure; latest such information was collected during 2011-12 in its 68<sup>th</sup> round. For the present discussion, data generated by Mixed Modified

Reference Period (MMRP) method has been used. At the national level, daily per capita expenditure (DPCE) for rural areas increased from Rs. 19 in 2004-05 to Rs. 48 in 2011-12, registering an increase of Rs. 29. During the same period, DPCE for urban areas rose from Rs. 37 to Rs. 88, registering increase of Rs. 51. Ratio between rural and urban expenditure was 1:1.94 in 2004-05, declined slightly to 1:1.83 in 2011-12.

However, there has been a gradual increase in rural-urban DPCE. DI value increased from 0.399 in 2004-05 to 0.900 in 2011-12; also corroborated by the actual value of difference between urban and rural expenditure (see Col. 5 of **Table 5**). Widening gap divides the country into: Bharat (rural) and India (urban).

**Table 5, India: Trends in average per capita expenditure (in Rs.)**

Year	Rural	Urban	Disparity Index	Urban-Rural difference
2004-05	19	37	0.399	18
2005-06	21	39	0.381	18
2006-07	23	44	0.420	21
2007-08	26	49	0.437	23
2009-10	35	66	0.557	31
2011-12	48	88	0.900	40

Source NSSO 66<sup>th</sup> and 68<sup>th</sup> Round Surveys

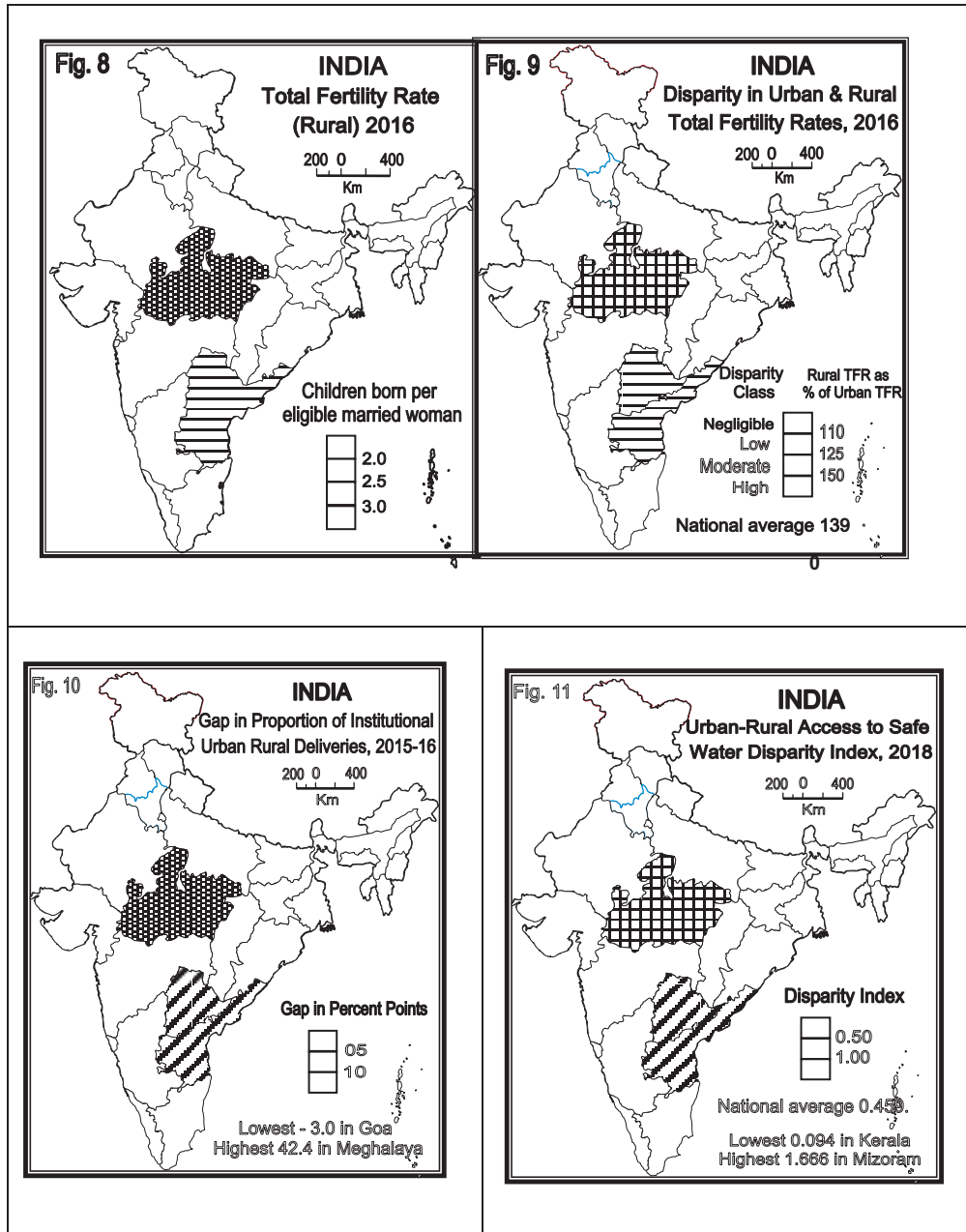
There is wide inter-state disparity in annual per capita rural expenditure. Average rural MPCE is very low in Odisha (Rs. 1003), Jharkhand (Rs. 1006) and Chhattisgarh (Rs. 1027); and low in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh (Rs.1125- Rs.1160). Six states having MPCE higher than Rs. 2000 are Kerala, Goa, Punjab, Haryana, Nagaland and Himachal Pradesh along with all union territories except Nagar Haveli.

Urban Bihar has lowest MPCE of Rs. 1507. In Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh Urban MPCE range between Rs. 1865 and Rs. 2060, below the national average of Rs. 2630. In these states both rural and urban MPCEs are far below the national average.

Even rural-urban differential in MPCE is quite high in some states. For instance, urban MPCE is more than double of the rural in West Bengal. Other states of high differential are Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Odisha. The gap being the lowest in Punjab, other states of low gap included Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Bihar and Kerala.

At the state level, disparity in rural-urban expenditure is quite alarming. On national level, rural expenditure is nearly half (54.4 percent) of the urban. Representing the highest disparity in rural-urban expenditure, Jharkhand and West Bengal along with union territory of Dadra & Nagar Haveli have rural expenditure less than half of the urban (**Fig. 7**). On the other side of the scale, in Daman & Diu, and Manipur rural expenditure is higher than the urban; and in seven states/union territories rural expenditure made more than two-thirds of the urban. These included Nagaland, Lakshadweep, Punjab, NCT of Delhi, Goa, Chandigarh and Kerala.

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### HEALTH

The improvement in the quality of health care over the years is reflected in some of the basic socio-economic parameters. The crude death rate (deaths per thousand of population in particular year) declined rapidly from 16.4 in 1971 to 9.1 per thousand in 2001 and 6.9 in 2016 in rural areas; and 9.7 in 1971 to 6.3 in 2001 and 5.4 in 2016 in urban areas. Decline in

infant mortality rate (deaths of children below one year of age per thousand live births) became less than one-third in 2016 of 1971 (138/1000). Less than 38 children die before attaining the age of one year per thousand of live birth in 2016.

Nonetheless, it is as high as 50 in rural Madhya Pradesh. Bihar, Meghalaya, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Assam, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh also record higher IMR rates than the national average of 38. It was ten or less in Chandigarh, Goa and Kerala, against more than forty in Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Notably, areas of high total fertility and high infant mortality almost coincide with each other. The same is supported in high positive correlation between the two ( $r=0.7485$ ). Perhaps, uncertainty of the survival of the child born leads to high fertility rate (Sharma 2006, 48).

### **Infant mortality**

Generally, rural IMR is higher in states. However, Tripura, Nagaland, Chandigarh, Andaman & Nicobar, Lakshadweep, and Daman & Diu display the case of higher urban IMR, and Kerala of parity between the two in 2016.

In Mizoram rural IMR was two and half times of urban, but only less than 10.0 per cent higher in Jammu & Kashmir. It ranged between 40.0 per cent and 50.0 per cent higher in NCT of Delhi, Uttarakhand, Karnataka; Goa, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Jharkhand and Rajasthan; and between more than 50 per cent to 150 per cent higher in Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Assam, Mizoram, D & N Haveli and Puducherry. Evidently, notwithstanding a sharp decline in IMR in both the rural and urban areas, rural-urban differentials in IMR among state are high to very high. Moreover, there is hardly any consistency of decline in rural-urban gap in IMR.

### **Total Fertility**

Fertility rates also declined. Total fertility rate (TRF) registered a decline from 5.4 children per rural woman in 1971 to 2.5 in 2016. The rate of decline is likely to accelerate during the next decade revealing the success of the family planning program.

Nevertheless, TFR rate varies across states. In India, rural TFR is 2.5 against 1.8 for the urban areas, differing by almost one child per women. In turn, rural TRF varies from 1.5 in Manipur to 3.4 in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh in 2016 (**Fig. 8**). Rural TFR is more than 2.5 in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand. On the other side, it is below 2.0 children, below the replacement rate, in twelve states. Level of development and infant mortality find inverse relationship with rural total fertility.

In 2016, rural-urban gap in TFR is nil in Kerala but higher by more 50.0 per cent in Jammu & Kashmir (**Fig. 9**). It is more than 130 percent in West Bengal, Gujarat, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Odisha and Jammu & Kashmir. In major states of central, eastern and northern parts of the country rural-urban disparity in total fertility rates is moderate to high.

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Happily, the rural-urban gap in TFR are declining and narrowing down. Difference that was 1.4 children in 1971 got to half (0.7 child) in 2016. However, the gap was still quite wide in states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

### Institutional delivery

The National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) program initiated in April 2005 with a special focus on 18 states in north, central and north-east India has yield some good results. It is aimed at to provide accessible, affordable, accountable, effective, and reliable healthcare facilities in the rural areas of the entire country with a focus on poor and vulnerable sections of population. *Janani Suraksha Yojana* (JSY), an intervention under the purview of NRHM, provides transport facility to expecting mothers to reach health institutions for delivery; and the beneficiaries receiving cash incentives immediately after the delivery.

On an average, there were only 39.0 per cent institutional of deliveries in the country during 2005–06. However, after the introduction of NRHM in 2005, there has been drastic improvement in institutional deliveries. According to 4<sup>th</sup> NFHS, 2015-16, the share of institutional deliveries has gone as high as 78.9 per cent. Of course, there is wide urban-rural difference. The share of institutional delivery is 75.1 per cent in rural areas against 88.7 per cent in the urban, differing by 13.6 percent points. Which is, however, much lower than it was in 2005-06 (38.6 per cent points), suggesting rapid bridging of the gap between the two.

At the state level, the share of institutional delivery in rural areas is only 24.0 per cent in Nagaland, while it is almost cent percent in Kerala. Notably, this in twelve states (Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Assam, Manipur, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand) is below the national average (75.1 percent). In hill states of Meghalaya Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh, proportion of institutional deliveries is below 50.0 per cent. Against this, in six states and three union territories proportion of institutional delivery in rural areas is above 90.0 per cent. Among the major factor determining the occurrence of institutional deliveries one is education. As the number of years of education increases, more and more women go for institutional deliveries. Evidently, education has a huge potential to turn around the status of maternal and infant care in rural areas.

The share of institutional deliveries in government hospitals was higher in rural areas (55.5 percent) than in urban area (47.5 percent); *Janani Suraksha Yojana* and '108 ambulance service' are credited for it. Against the national average of 13.6 per cent point gap in rural-urban institutional deliveries, it ranged from -3.0 percent points in Goa (rural institutional deliveries are higher than urban) to 42.4 per cent point in Meghalaya in 2015-16 (**Fig 10**). The gap is more than 10.0 per cent points in Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura, Mizoram, Madhya Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Contrary to it, gap is negligible or in favour of rural areas in Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Sikkim, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Goa, Puducherry, Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep.

## BASIC AMENITIES

Rural India lags far behind in basic services and amenities such as housing condition, availability of water, toilet, bathroom and kitchen and use of electricity for light. According to data available from Report number 584 of 76<sup>th</sup> Round of NSSO (2019, b), survey conducted during July and December 2018, of total houses used for living in rural areas, only 34.7 per cent are in good condition against 58.2 percent in urban areas, gap being 23.5 per cent points (Table 6). Thanks to *Pradhan Matri Awas Yojana* the share of *pucca* houses in rural areas has gone up to 76.6 per cent against 96.0 per cent in the urban.

**Table 6, India: Urban -Rural Disparity in Basic Amenities, 2018**

Amenities	Rural	Urban	Total	U-R Diff.
Good house	34.7	58.2	42.7	23.5
Pucca houses	76.7	96.0	83.3	19.3
Tap water	36.9	65.0	43.9	28.1
Principal source of water within premises	56.4	80.7	65.9	24.3
Principal source of water with in 0.2 Km	30.4	13.8	24.7	-16.6
Water source away, >0.2	11.4	5.5	9.3	-5.9
Electricity for domestic uses	93.9	99.1	95.7	5.2
HH Latrine facility	71.3	96.2	79.8	24.9
HH with bathroom	56.6	91.2	68.5	34.6
HH with kitchen	52.4	75.3	60.2	22.9

Source: NSS Report No 584 (2019). Drinking water, sanitation, hygiene and housing condition in India.

Further, more than half (56.1 percent) of rural against 78.6 per cent urban households have access of improved sources of drinking water with in the premises. Rural tap water supply reached 36.9 per cent households, against 85.0 per cent in urban areas. Though situation improved 1990s onward (Das and Pathak, 2012, 4), rural-urban gap on this count is still 28.1 percent points on national level. Among states, this share ranged from 23.0 per cent in Odisha to 95.4 per cent in Goa (**Fig. 11**). Among UTs, it varied from 29.5 per cent in Dadra and Nagar Haveli to cent percent in Chandigarh. Rural-urban gap, expressed in disparity index, ranges from 0.054 in Daman and Diu to 2.253 in Andaman and Nicobar. In majority of the states distributed in west, central and south the DI value is higher disparity than the national average.

In sanitation also rural areas lag far behind the urban. Less than two-thirds (63.2 percent) of rural households had latrine facilities in the premises against more than three-fourths (77.6 percent) urban households. The Central government scheme of providing financial support for construction of latrines has enhanced this facility in rural areas. In 2011, only 30.7 per cent rural households had this facility.

## RURAL-URBAN GAP: MISSING LINKS

Undoubtedly, multifaceted efforts have been made for the development of rural economy and society since independence by evolving several methodologies and approaches. Problems relating to rural development can be broadly classified into three major groups. Firstly, there is a problem of policy perception. Most of the rural development programs are visualized in



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isolation from urban areas (Ticoli 1998). At the same time, villages are treated as independent entity rather than a part of integrated settlement system. Further, the development efforts have urban bias (Lipton 1977, 2000, Sharma 2016), benefitting towns and cities. However, the studies conducted on micro to macro scales conclude that towns and villages are intimately interconnected and are complementary to each other (World Bank, 2013; Cali and Menon, 2013). Rural areas cannot be developed in isolation.

Rural problems must be seen in terms their internal and external linkages both. No doubt, socioeconomic and infrastructural changes in the villages are prerequisite for initiating development, it is equally important to review their relationship with their urban counterparts. Classical studies of von Thunen and Christaller have established this relationship. There is, in fact, an urban dominance in decision-making, major share of benefits going to them. In the present setup of governance, development benefits accrue to the dominant areas and dominant people (Sharma, 1987). Urban-rural linkage is pre-requisite and is capable of enhancing inclusive development (Akkoyunlu, 2015), but most of the rural development programs heavily concentrate on transformation of internal rural structure, ignoring their urban linkages. Urban areas treat villages as source areas of raw materials, labour, capital, water, energy and market for their products. Heavy dependence on agriculture and allied activities and their low productivity compels rural people to move to cities and towns, creating dangerous situation for both. Unless terms of trade between rural and urban areas are not properly visualized and promulgated, development disparities may continue as such.

Secondly, policies, programs and projects for rural development are formulated, improved, modified and restructured at the state and central levels. In absence of appropriate institutions and organizations for their implementation, these hardly percolate or reach quite late and that too in pieces to the rural communities. For example, NSSO conducted survey during 2013 on conditions of farmers, bringing out several astonishing facts. The scheme of crop insurance against possible crop loss was opted by a very small segment of agricultural households. It also revealed that in spite of creating several institutions for cheap and easy loan for farmers, 40.0 per cent of the outstanding loans were taken from non-institutional sources, agricultural/professional moneylenders. Similarly, to facilitate access of farmers to modern technology and technical advice, a ladder of such institutions were created, but the survey revealed that 59.0 percent of agricultural households were benefited neither from governmental nor from private extension agencies. Further, of 41.0 per cent receiving technical advices, only 11.0 per cent got information from governmental extension officers, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, agricultural universities and colleges; majority receiving information from progressive farmers (20.0 per cent) and radio/ TV/newspaper/internet (19.6 percent). It is because of ineffective implementation process on ground level. Therefore implementation machinery must be geared up.

Third and more serious is the colonial and deep rooted general belief especially among the rural people that the development is the responsibility of the government. This is detrimental to the development. The process of development originates within and it cannot be

superimposed. Therefore, it is prerequisite to infuse awareness, belongingness, entrepreneurship, active participation and positive attitude towards development programs among rural people. States with such characteristics of their residents are at higher level of development with low disparity. Kerala, Punjab and Haryana are the examples.

### Conclusions

The preceding discussion reveals that the rural-urban gaps on various counts are narrowing down with time, particularly in social and infrastructure development. Rural literacy, particularly among the young age groups, is getting quite close to that in urban areas. Enrolment rates are almost similar in both areas. The achievement in health sector is more remarkable, reducing gaps in terms of infant mortality, total fertility and delivery in health institutions. Amenities in rural habitats, though have improved remarkably, are still far behind the urban. Improvement in housing, toilet facilities and electrification in rural areas has reduced the gap in these areas.

Against this, the economic sector, supposed to be instrumental in development, presents a gloomy picture. There is a very wide rural-urban gap in both per capita income and expenditure. It manifests in sluggish decline in proportion of rural poor. Resultantly, poverty disparity index shows increasing trend. Rural-urban divide is more pronounced with inter-state differentials in the economic conditions. As such, backward states present higher disparity on most of the development indicators. Rural development programs could not uplift the rural face to the desired level in these states, required to create rural-urban parity or near parity. Approaching rural and urban segments of settlements and population separately from each other in development policy is the detrimental factor in this respect.

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