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Economic Development Index, Spatio-Temporal and Gender Appraisal at Panchayat Samiti Block Level, 219 pages

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This book is the outcome of a research project conducted at the Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur. It is the second part of a case study and presents an analysis of the economic aspect of human development at the Panchayat Samiti level. The first part includes the study of the status of educational development. This volume stresses on the gender appraisal of economic development index. The third part is proposed to be on the study of health

The present volume represents a spatio-temporal and gender appraisal of the economic development index from 1991 to 1998 and the study area includes 237 panchayat samitis (PS) in Rajasthan.

The objectives of the study are to present the Income Index (INI), the gender related income index (GINI) and the Human Poverty Index (HPI) at two points of time namely 1991-92 and 1988-89. The years 1991 & 2001 are selected for HPI. It also aims at studying the spatial distribution pattern of the income index and the change in

the relative status of the panchayat samitis in INI. Finally, it aims at presenting the trends of growth and plan of action. These objectives are based on the certain hypotheses. (i) INI in the state has increased significantly but the index of deprivation is very high. (ii) There is a great deal of spatial variation in INI, GINI and HPI. (iii) There is an acute gender disparity in the economic development status at the PS level.

The volume is divided into eleven chapters. The first chapter deals with the importance of the study as well as the methodology. The second chapter includes the details of the geographical and the economic profile of the state of Rajasthan. Chapter three deals with the district-wise income index (91-98). The next two chapters include the study of income indices for the years 91-92 and 98-99. The changing pattern of income index during 1991-98 is outlined in the sixth chapter. The next two chapters deal with the gender related income index (GINI) at two different time periods of 91-

92 and 98-99. The HPI index for the years 1991 and 2001 are discussed in the next two chapters. The main findings are discussed in the eleventh chapter. The recent economic trends in Rajasthan and the approach and strategy for the Tenth five-year plan have been enlisted. This chapter also highlights the recent economic trends in Rajasthan, the challenges that face rural Rajasthan and the recommendations to combat them.

The study area in Rajasthan covers 237 Panchayat Samitis that are spread over 32 districts and 6 divisions. The six main divisions include Jaipur, Bikaner, Ajmer, Jodhpur, Udaipur and Kota. The highest numbers of PSs are in the seven districts of Jaipur - (61) and the lowest number are in the four districts of Bikaner (21). The methodology adopted is based on the UNDP The areas having very high, medium, low and very low levels of the three indices namely INI, GINI and HPI are identified. The spatial variation in these parameters over selected years have been mapped. The isolines for these three parameters known as ISOINI, ISOGINI and ISOHPI have been beautifully and accurately mapped using GIS techniques.

Surprisingly 109 pages out of a total of 219 pages (50%) of the book are devoted to tables showing the details of the Panchayat Samiti villages, district-wise, socio-economic indicators of population and ranking of the Panchayat Samitis for the selected years for the three indices. Other related details include budget proposals for 2004-2005 which apply to Rajasthan, tehsil wise distribution of working population, literacy and samiti wise details of BPL families.

This book by Prof. Joshi is the result of an elaborate micro level study. Such an exhaustive study would help in understanding the nature of economic deprivation. The sensitive issue of gender disparities which are common place in Rajasthan has been handled in a scientific manner. In the main findings, the box diagrams, showing partial balance sheets represent the failures and the achievements which are quite effective in summarizing the problems. Although the computation of the three indices INI, GINI and HPI may appear complicated, these indices make it possible to measure qualitative aspects of Human Development in a concrete manner. The models made for these indices are based on many socio economic indicators related to health, education, transport and communication highlight an integrated approach. The identification of the problem areas at the grass root level is commendable. It is a case of "Putting the last things first". Due to the growing importance and thrust on decentralized planning this book would provide a useful guideline for similar projects on other States. This volume would be of immense help to social scientists, educationists, and planning strategists Geographers would appreciate the ISOGINI, ISOINI and ISOHPI maps. The shades of green are quite appealing to the eye. Statistical diagrams could make the tables easier to perceive.

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