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A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON DEVELOPMENT IN WESTERN
BORDER AREAS OF INDIA



Utpal Kumar

Ph.D. Scholar (UGC – SRF) Department of Geography, Panjab University, Chandigarh.

Short Profile

Utpal Kumar is Ph.D. Scholar (UGC – SRF) Department of Geography at Panjab University, Chandigarh.



ABSTRACT:

The western border areas of India fall in diverse geographic landscape such as salt marsh (Rann), hot desert, plain and fragile mountains. The settlement system ranges from high degree of concentration in plain areas to very dispersed isolated hamlets in the Himalaya. The border areas are strategically important. Development of these areas is not only important for population living there but is also important for security and integrity of the nation. Understanding the strategic importance of these areas the government of India introduced Border Area Development Programme (BADP) to promote

development in border areas adjoining Pakistan during seventh Five Year Plan. In this backdrop present paper attempts to measure the levels of socio-economic development in western border areas of India and tries to understand the regional variation in it, if any. The study is based on secondary data collected from the Census of India 2011.

KEYWORDS

border areas, development, social development, economic development, female literacy, urbanization, development index.

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INTRODUCTION

India has almost 15106 kilometers long international land border stretches through variety of geo-climatic as well as socio-cultural milieu. India has some kind of border disputes with many of its neighbouring countries. In many context most disputed parts of India's land international border belong to western part of it especially Jammu & Kashmir part. This part of international land border of the country plays a vital role in national security, integrity and development. By keeping these importances of this border in mind the government of India introduced a special area development programme named as Border Area Development Programme (BADP) during seventh Five Year Plan. Main objective of this programme was to ensure the balanced development of this area and to improve the sense of security among the population living in border areas. In this backdrop present study tries to measure the levels of socio-economic development in the border districts located in western part of the country.

Though development is a very broad term and it has many facets. It is not possible to investigate all the dimensions of development in a single study. Therefore present study focuses to examine the socio-economic transformation of the society in terms of female literacy and level of urbanization. Literacy is a basic indicator of level of development achieved by a society. Female literacy has been observed as a universally accepted indicator for measuring social development. The level of urbanization is an index of transformation of society from traditional to modern one. Urbanization is an integral part of economic development. So, by combining both female literacy and urbanization, one can understand the process of development in an area.

Study reveals that international border influences the development process in the area situated along it. Bala and Krishan (1982) in his study on urbanization in border region find that the impact of border was critical up to a distance of forty kilometers, moderate between forty to hundred kilometers and negligible beyond this distance. The most damaging effect was noticed in the Punjab sector. Vig (2009) finds that the average development index of border districts of India was far lower than the national average of the country. Therefore it can be said that proximity to international border has its impact on development in an area adjacent to it. Study reveals that most of the border districts of the country are lacking in development process. So it becomes very important to examine the levels of development in border districts of India located in western part of the country. Because Border Area Development Programme (BADP) was initiated in this part of the country so it is assumed that the area has received balanced socio-economic development after almost three decades.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The study aims to assess the levels of socio-economic development in border districts of India situated in western part of the country. It tries to understand the spatial patterns of development in the area. Present study also tries to measure the levels of deprivation or development in the area in comparison to the parent states (state to which a particular border district belongs) as well as national average of the country.

To achieve the desired objectives, study uses secondary data collected from Census of India 2011. Data on female literacy and level of urbanization has been processed in various ways to achieve the desired goals. To assess the levels of development in the area Development Index (DI) has been

derived separately for both indicators. To depict the holistic picture of development the Composite Index (average Development Index) has been derived. United Nations Institute of Social Research (UNISR 1991) uses this method for measuring social development. To derive the development index, firstly we calculate the deprivation score. The index is derived as follows:

$$\text{Deprivation score} = \frac{\text{Maximum value} - \text{Actual value}}{\text{Maximum value} - \text{Minimum value}}$$

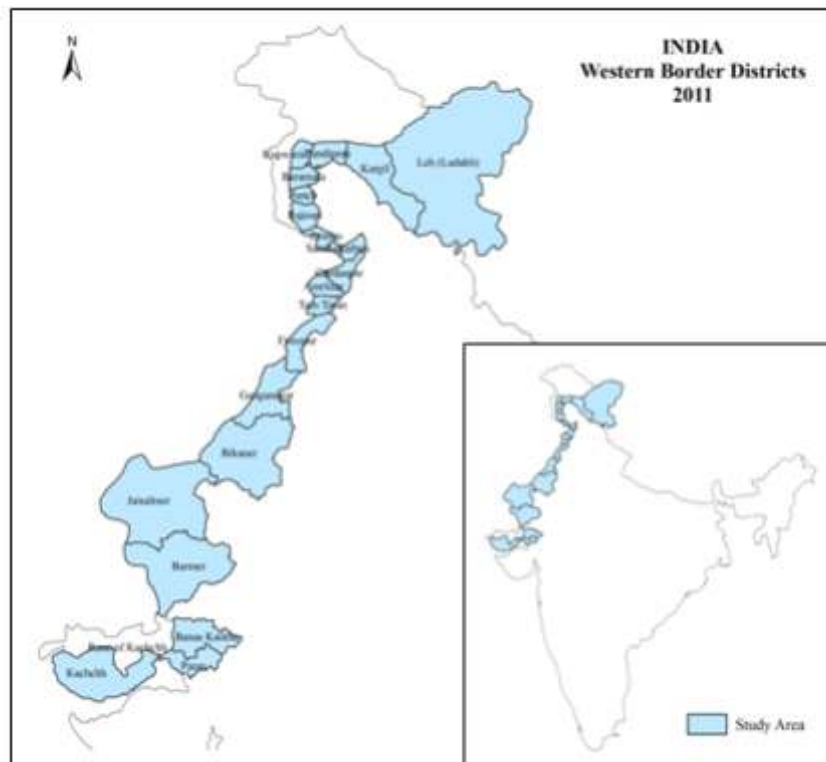
The deprivation score ranges between zero (0) to one (1). Subtracting the deprivation score from one (1), the development index is worked out as:

The development index ranges between one, denoting maximum development, to zero representing no development (Mohan 2005). It measures the relative development level of various regions in relation to the most developed one. This reflects the extent to which a particular region is lagging behind as compared to the one at the top. To show spatial patterns of development in the area, maps have been prepared with the help of GIS software ArcMap.

STUDY AREA

The study includes twenty one border districts of four Indian border states namely Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir (map 1). All these border districts are located along Indo-Pakistan border except the district of Leh (Ladakh) which shares its boundary with China too. Out of these twenty one border districts maximum ten districts are from the state of Jammu & Kashmir while four each from the states of Rajasthan and Punjab and three districts are from the state of Gujarat. India shares more than thirty three hundred kilometers long international land boundary with the Pakistan which stretches through a diverse geo-climatic setup. It includes marshy land, hot desert, river plain, hills, mountains and snow clad peaks. Population living in these districts is also very diverse in their social as well as cultural setup.

Map 1



The districts included in present study all together have an area of more than 2.6 lakh square kilometers which constitute almost eight percent of total geographical area of India. It has almost 2.8 crore population which is slightly more than two percent of India's total population. Study area comprises of district as small as of the Bandipore district which area is only 345 square kilometers, on the other hand the district of Kachchh has an area of 45674 square kilometers which is almost more than 132 times greater than the geographical size of Bandipore. In terms of population, study area has district of Leh (Ladakh) which population is 133487 on the other hand population of Banas Kantha district is 3120506 which is almost 23 times greater than the population of Leh (Ladakh). If we talk of density of population it is observed that the study area has district having very low population density e.g. Leh (Ladakh) having density of population only 3 persons per square kilometer, on the other hand the district of Bandipore having density of population 1137 persons per square kilometer. It can be said that the study area has great diversity in both context – physical as well as social, it has only similarity that is all are situated along international border.

DISCUSSIONS AND FINDINGS

The study has taken two indicators that are female literacy and level of urbanization. Female literacy is widely accepted indicator to measure the level of social development; on the other hand level of urbanization is an indicator of transformation of a society from traditional to a modern industrialized one. It can be believed that by combining these two indicators one can understand the status of development in any area. At country level there are little less than two third of female

population that are literate according to census 2011 while almost one third of Indian population are living in urban areas. When we take all four border states, included in study, as an unit and all border districts, included in study, as an unit it is found that in terms of female literacy the average value of all border states (61.89 %) is less than the national average (64.64 %) and the average value of all border districts (59.35 %) is less than both, average value of all border states as well as national average. In case of urbanization the average value of all border states (33.45 %) is more than the national average (31.15 %) but average value of all border districts (25.27 %) is lower than the average value of all border states as well as national average.

Table 1

Sr	State/India	Female Literacy	Urbanization
1	Gujarat	69.68	42.60
2	Rajasthan	52.12	24.87
3	Punjab	70.73	37.48
4	Jammu & Kashmir	56.43	27.38
	India	64.64	31.15

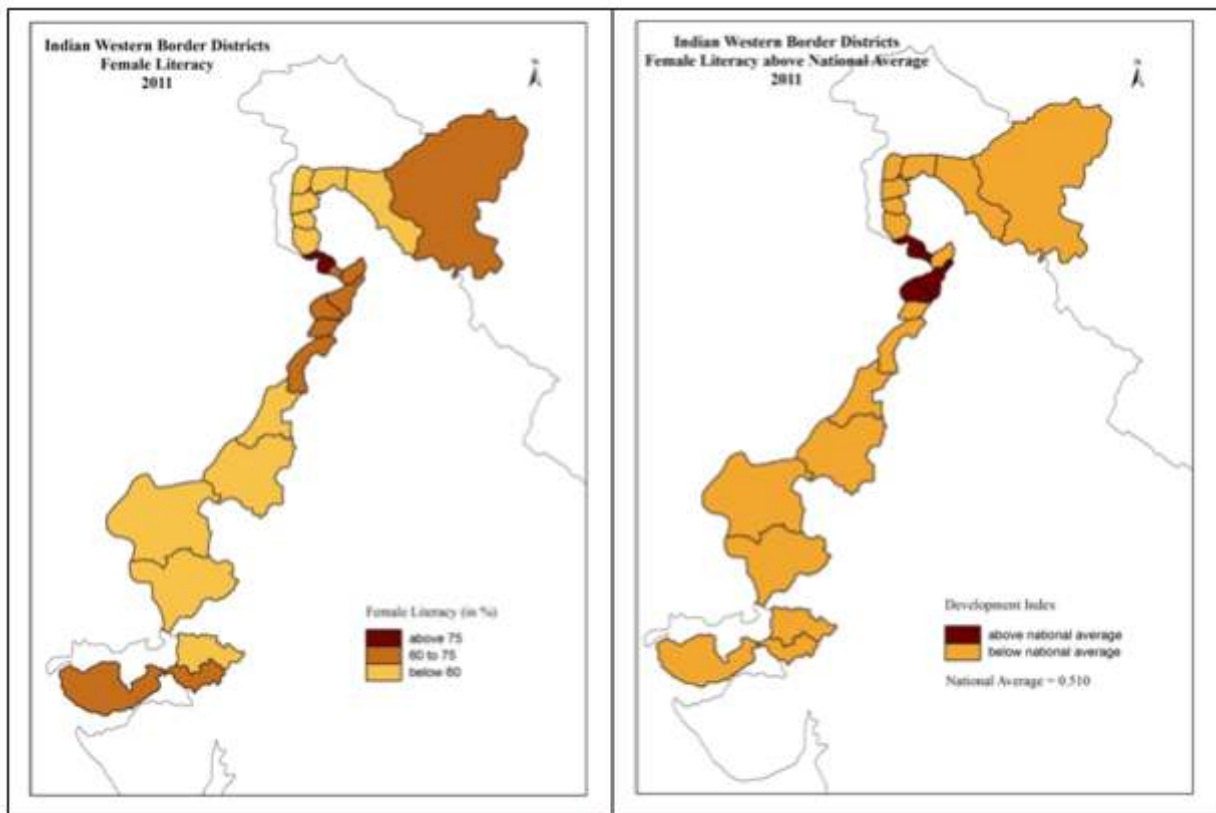
Source: Census of India Primary Census Abstract 2011

Female literacy in the states included in this study ranges between almost fifty two percent in Rajasthan to nearly seventy one percent in Punjab (table 1). If we compare with national average it is found that out of these four border states two states namely Punjab and Gujarat have female literacy above than the national average while two states Jammu & Kashmir and Rajasthan have female literacy less than national average.

Female literacy in border districts of India included in study ranges between almost forty percent in Jaisalmer to nearly seventy seven percent in the district of Jammu. There is only one district – Jammu of the state of Jammu & Kashmir where level of female literacy is above than seventy five percent (map 2a). There are nine districts where female literacy ranges between sixty percent to seventy five percent. Out of twenty one districts there are eleven districts where level of female literacy is less than sixty percent.

Map 2a

Map 2b

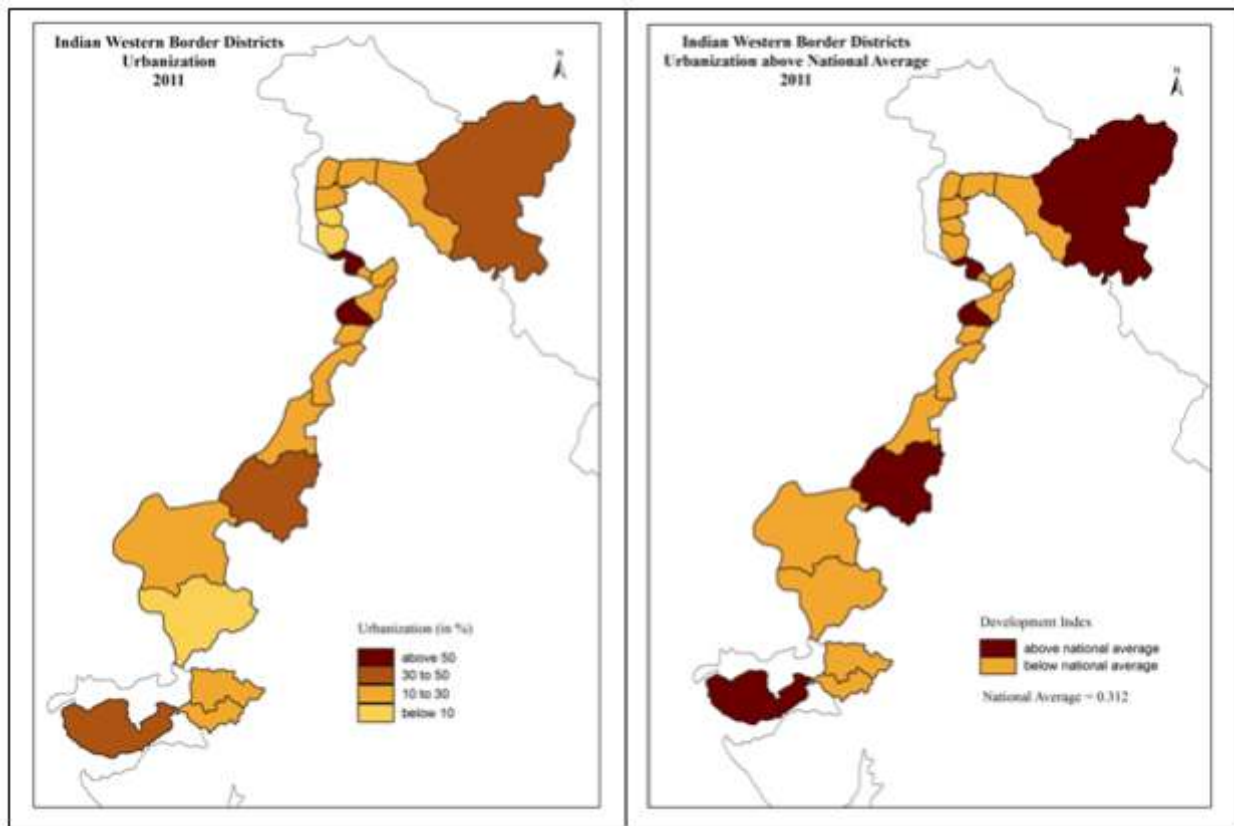


When development index on the basis of female literacy for each district was calculated it is found that there are only four districts – Jammu & Samba of Jammu & Kashmir and Gurdaspur & Amritsar of Punjab, which development index is more than the national average of 0.510 (map 2b). Therefore it can be said that out of twenty one border districts seventeen districts are lagging behind in comparison to the national average.

In terms of urbanization the border state of Gujarat is on top among the four border states included in the study, where nearly forty three percent population is living in urban areas. Minimum level of urbanization is found in the state of Rajasthan where only one fourth of its population is living in urban areas. In comparison to the national average of urbanization in India out of four border states two states namely Gujarat & Punjab are above than national average and two states namely Rajasthan and Jammu & Kashmir are below than national average (table 1).

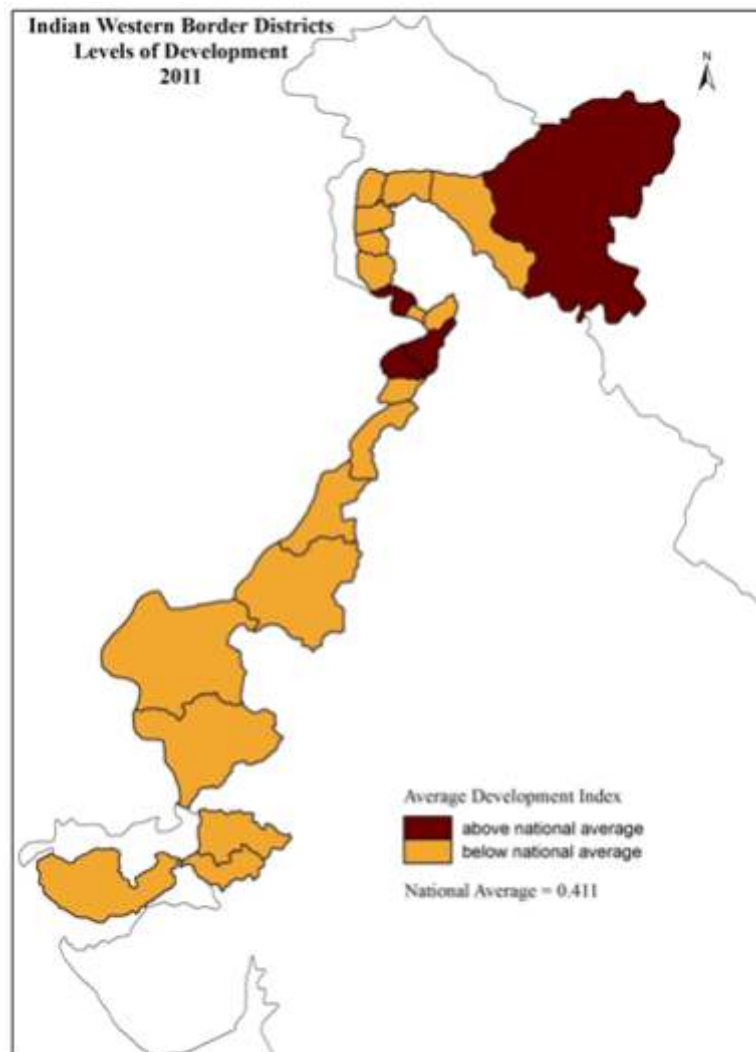
Map 3a

Map 3b



Level of urbanization in border districts ranges between only seven percent in Barmer to seventy two percent in Amritsar. Out of twenty one districts there are only two districts namely Amritsar of Punjab and Jammu of Jammu & Kashmir where proportion of urban population is more than fifty percent (map 3a). On the other hand there are three districts namely Barmer of Rajasthan, Punch and Rajouri of Jammu & Kashmir where share of urban population is less than ten percent. When we derive the development index on the basis of level of urbanization and compare with national average (0.312) it is observed that out of twenty one districts there are five districts namely Amritsar, Jammu, Leh (Ladakh), Kachchh and Bikaner that are performing better than the national average (map 3b).

Map 4



On the basis of development index it is observed that out of twenty one border districts included in the study four districts and five districts are performing better than the national average in case of female literacy and level of urbanization respectively. Therefore it can be said that situation is more critical in terms of social development as level of female literacy is not good as much as desired. One thing which is noticeable that in terms of level of urbanization border states as an unit is performing better while border districts as an unit is performing worst, it reflects that these areas are not attracting investment specially industrial one. On the basis of composite index derived as average development index it is observed that out of twenty one border districts there are only four districts namely Jammu & Leh (Ladakh) of Jammu & Kashmir and Amritsar & Gurdaspur of Punjab that are performing better than the national average of 0.411 (map 4). According to average development index the district of Barmer from the state of Rajasthan is on bottom in the list while among the bottom five districts two districts are from the state of Rajasthan and three districts are from the state of Jammu & Kashmir. On the other hand among the top five districts two districts are from the state of Punjab and three districts are from the state of Jammu & Kashmir.

CONCLUSION

Border areas are lagging behind in the process of development it was realized long back in the country's plan era and these areas are still continuing with the same – they are lacking. The government of India had introduced the BADP to develop these areas but study reveals that most of these areas are still undeveloped or underdeveloped even after almost three decades of launching of BADP in the area. Though development policy of the concerned states also matter for development of these areas but one thing we should never forget that border area is a matter of great concern for national security and integrity. In case of urbanization, performance of border districts is worse than the parent states but these states have higher level of urbanization in comparison to the national average which shows that the border areas have not attracted enough investment. To conclude, it can be said that the government should pay rightful attention for making investment – public as well as private, which can further lead to balanced development of such marginal areas and bridge the gap among core and periphery.

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