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Report

Intra-state regional disparities in Manipur

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Abstract

Unequal development, complex traditional and outdated laws, mismanagement of resources, failure in governance, lapse in the law enforcing agencies are some of the most important causes promoting regional imbalance in Manipur. Hill-valley dichotomy in the developmental process is clearly seen as a factor behind many of the social, economic and political unrest in the state.

Keywords: Regional disparities, conflicts, intra state, development

Introduction

Regional disparity has its own consequences for further development of a region. It is a fertile ground for germination of identity politics. North east region of India is a testimony to the rise of ethnic conflicts and of identity politics which can easily be linked to disparities deeply regional in character. Manipur is no exception. This north-eastern Indian state is physiographically divided into two major regions; the valley and the hills, the later can be further be divided into Naga-dominated and Kuki-Chin/Chin-Kuki dominated sub regions. The capital city Imphal is located in the central part of the state which is predominantly a valley region mostly inhabited by the Meiteis surrounded by hills on all the sides. Meiteis including Meitei Pangals (Meitei Muslim), Nagas, and Kukis are the three main ethnic groups of Manipur which occupy three different locations of the state. The hill district headquarters are far from the main administrative center and lack good transportation and communication facilities and are sparsely populated. Hanjabam (2012) noted serious urban bias in development giving rise to a valley-hills dichotomy in most parameters of development. There is wide disparity between the rural and urban areas too. There are also significant intra-regional disparities within the valley and the hill regions. Though the intra-state disparity index has reduced by 10.8 points from 41.2 in 1991 to 30.4 points in 2001 (Singh, 2016) the state continues to be among the top states of India in terms of intra-regional disparity occupying the fourth position despite massive decline in the level of disparity. Problem of insurgency in the state, especially in the hill regions, is only adding to the complexity.

Since 1960s Manipur is witnessing a series of ethnic conflicts and problems of insurgency which has hampered the developmental process and has led to the birth of a new dimension of poverty (Kumar, et. al. 2011).

The present research aims at unveiling the patterns of intra-state regional disparity in Manipur, its causes and impacts that became a threat to economic development and peace and integrity of the state. Identification of regional disparities involves three basic problems: selection of appropriate and judicious indicators to represent various dimensions of development; to use an objective technique for the combination of a variety of data relating to all the indicators for every basic spatial unit; and to choose appropriate statistical and cartographic techniques to represent the process and patterns of development (Dubey, 1992).

Indicators

This study mainly focuses on different sub-divisions of Manipur, their population, level of economic, social and political development. Identification of the disparities and regional imbalance on the basis of select indicators is crucial to an understanding of the problem. The present study uses four indicators to identify the development level, spatial patterns and trends in regional disparities in Manipur. These are: (i) female literacy rate, to represent social development (ii) degree of urbanisation to represent the level of modernization (iii) percentage of rural non agriculture workers, to represent rural development and (iv) percentage of population with assets as per the census of India- a proxy indicator of population above the poverty line to represent economic development.

Fig.1. Administrative divisions of Manipur, 2011

Technique

The research mainly depends on arriving at a composite score of development at sub-district (sub-divisions) level in order to analyse the extent of inter-regional and intra-regional disparity

in the state. The composite score has been arrived at by calculating two other indices such as deprivation score and development score. The techniques used are given below:

$$Deprivation\ Score$$
$$= \frac{\text{Value of first ranking sub division} - \text{Value of specific sub division}}{\text{Value of first ranking sub division} - \text{Value of last ranking sub division}}$$

$$Development\ Score = 1 - Deprivation\ Score$$

$$Composite\ Index = \frac{\sum(Development\ Score\ of\ four\ indicators)}{4}$$

Using the above technique, development level of each sub-district was shown. The following is an illustration for one sample sub-district, i.e. Porompat sub-district. Highest female literacy rate is Lamphelpat with 87.65 per cent and the lowest is Paomata with 40.94 per cent. Porompat has 81.90 per cent female literates. The deprivation score and development score of the sub-district is calculated as given below:

$$Deprivation\ Score = \frac{87.65 - 81.90}{87.65 - 40.94} = 0.12$$

$$Development\ Score = 1 - 0.12 = 0.88$$

Likewise, for urbanisation, deprivation score and development score of Porompat sub-district is calculated as:

$$Deprivation\ Score = \frac{95.61 - 65.76}{95.61 - 0} = 0.31$$

$$Development\ Score = 1 - 0.31 = 0.69$$

Using the same technique the deprivation and development scores are 0.15 and 0.85 respectively with regard to the rural non-agricultural workers; 0.01 and 0.99 for population with Assets.

Taking into account all these four indicators the composite index of the Porompat sub-district is calculated as:

$$Composite\ Index = \frac{0.88 + 0.69 + 0.85 + 0.99}{4} = 0.85$$

Table-1 has this development score calculated for all the sub-districts.

Female literacy

Female literacy is a very sensitive indicator to show the social development of any society. High female literacy rate is mostly seen in developed nations. In India, the constitution guarantees equal opportunities to both men and women in all respects but the gap between male and female literacy is staggering. Majority of the states in India have crossed the national average of 65.46 per cent female literacy rate as per the census 2011. However, ten states are below the national average.

Table 1.Development scores, Manipur-2011

Sub – divisions	Composite Index
Lamphelpat	1.00
Porompat	0.85
Patsoi	0.71
Wangoi	0.69
Nambol	0.62
Churachandpur	0.58
Bishnupur	0.56
Moirang	0.55
Lamshang	0.55
Thoubal	0.52
Keirao Bitra	0.52
Lilong	0.51
Kakching	0.50
Sawombung	0.50
Ukhrul Central	0.44
Tengnoupal	0.44
Chandel	0.42
Jiribam	0.42
Tamenglong	0.40
Saitu-Gamphazol	0.38
Sadar Hills East	0.35
Ukhrul South	0.34
Tipaimukh	0.34
Sadar Hills West	0.33
Phungyar-Phaisat	0.31
Kamjong-Chassad	0.31
Chakpikarong	0.30
Churachandpur North	0.25
Machi	0.24
Tamenglong North	0.24
Nungba	0.22
Singngat	0.22
Ukhrul North	0.21
Mao-Maram	0.21
Thanlon	0.20
Tamenglong West	0.13
Purul	0.13
Paomata	0.00

Source: Calculated from the Census of India, 2011 data

In case of Manipur, female literacy rate in 2011 is 70.26 per cent. Out of 38 sub-divisions in the state, 14 are located in the valley and 24 in the hill districts. In terms of female literacy rate, there are significant regional variation between the hills and the plains. As many as fourteen sub-divisions mostly located in the valley, have a female literacy above the state average. Only three such sub divisions are found in the hilly areas. Sub division/sub-district with the highest female literacy rate is found in the heart of the state capital i.e., Lamphelpat of Imphal West district where over 87 per cent females are literate and the lowest female literacy rate is found in Paomata sub-division/sub-district bordering Nagaland in the Senapati district with 41 per cent

female literates. Intra-regional disparities are no less staggering. While most of the sub-divisions of the hill districts have a female literacy rate below the state average, half of the valley sub-division too displays a female literacy rate below the state average. Sub-divisions away from the capital have lower female literacy. In the hills of Manipur, the influence of Christianity has played an important role in spreading modern education and western culture among the people in the hills of Manipur.

Urbanisation

Urbanisation is a prime indicator to represent the level of development in the sense it shows the transformation of a society from an agricultural to service or industrial society. As per the Census 2001, India had 27.78 per cent urban population and it increased to 31.14 per cent in 2011.

After the 1891 defeat of Manipur in the hands of the British, it came under the indirect colonial rule, during this time came certain reforms in the Manipuri society in the field of education and spread of Christianity which is now mostly followed by the Manipuri tribes and a few Meiteis. Colonial rule in Manipur did not bring any big industrial development though it helped modernizing the society through education. Manipur, with 29.21 per cent people residing in urban areas as per 2011 Census remains the second most urbanized state since 1971 among the northeastern states and in 1981 it was the most urbanized. Mizoram overtook Manipur after 1981 and is holding the status of the most urbanized state in the northeastern region since then. The 1991-2001 decade witnessed maximum social and political unrest in the state. Coincidently it is also the period of adoption of new economic policy in India though it had very little impact on the state. The most urbanized sub-district in the state is Lamphelpat of Imphal West district as per the Census 2011 where over 95 per cent people live in urban areas. Contrastingly Paomatasub-division is completely rural in its population composition. Other eighteen sub-divisions of the five hill districts too had no urban population at all. Urbanisation is mostly confined to three valley districts i.e. Imphal West, Thoubal and Bishnupur. Only two hill sub-divisions namely Tengnoupal and Tamenglong have an urbanization level above the state average of 29.21 percent.

Rural Non-Agricultural Worker

An occupational shift from agriculture to non-agricultural activities in the rural areas may be important from a development perspective. In Manipur, especially in the hill districts, people are mostly found to be engaged in agriculture and allied activities not because agriculture is profitable, but mainly due to lack of opportunities in other sectors and in infrastructure facilities. Proportion of the rural non-agricultural workforce is very less in the hill sub-division. All the sub-divisions in the valley except Kakching are above the state average of 35.97 per cent rural non-agricultural worker. This is in sharp contrast to only one sub-division i.e. Churachandpur in the hill sub-division which is above the state average. The Lamphelpat sub-division of Imphal West district has 95.13 per cent rural non-agricultural worker. On the other extreme, Paomata of Senapati district has only 8.48 per cent engaged in such activities.
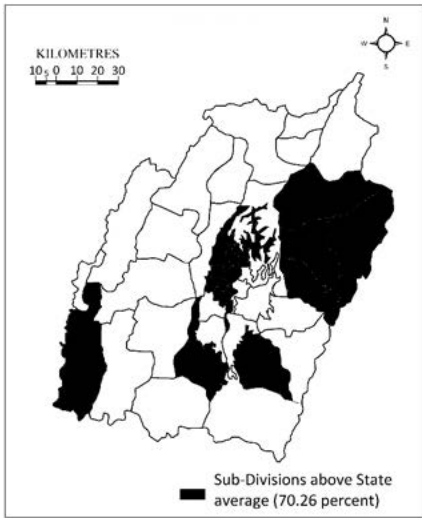
Fig.2. Sub-divisions with female literacy rate above state average, 2011
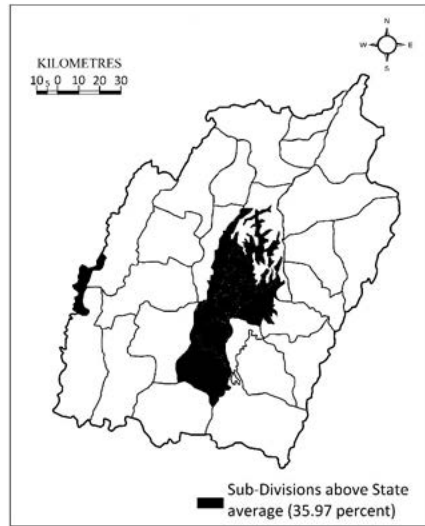
Fig.4. Sub-divisions having rural non-agricultural workers above state average, 2011
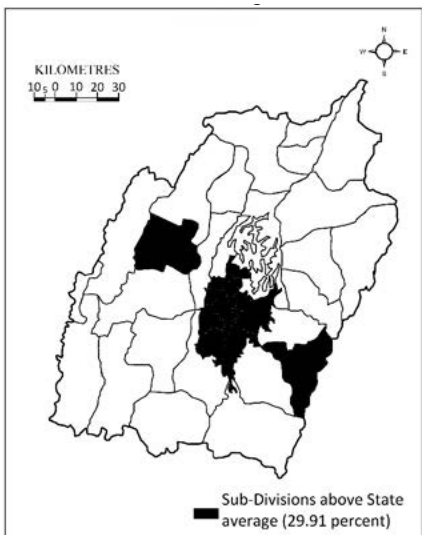
Fig.3. Sub-divisions with urbanisation level above state average, 2011

Fig.5. Sub-divisions having population with Assets above state average, 2011

Population with assets

Population with the availability of assets is a proxy indicator for identifying people above the poverty line though it may not be a very accurate estimate of poverty or poor households. (The term Assets is strictly as per the Census of India Report mentioned in the House listing and Housing Census, 2011). Highest percentage of the population in the Lamphelpat sub-division (97.6%) while only 31.3 per cent people in Paomata sub-division of Senapati district had

access to assets. Most of the sub-divisions in the hill districts had fewer households with assets except Churachandpur, Chandel, Sadar Hills East, Tengnoupal and Machi. Among the valley sub-divisions only Jiribam sub-division had ferwer households with assets. Fig. 2-5 show that households with assets above the state average are spread over a continuous region, revealing a concentrated pattern.

Regional disparity, 2011

It is evident that there is significant regional difference in the pace and level of development in the state. Even though a sub-district such as Lamphelpat of Imphal West districtis neraly completely urban, there are nineteen other sub-divisions which are completely rural. Fig.6 reveals that high level of development is confined to the centre of the state where the capital city is located in two sub-divisions- Lamphelpat and Porompat. These two sub-divisions serve as the main marketplace, government and private corporate offices, airport, universities, and other professional institutes etc. The main economic and business activities are concentrated in these two sub-divisions only.

Another pocket which is relatively developed is the outer ring bordering the previous pocket. This includes all the sub-division in the valley region and the Churachandpur sub-district which falls in the hill district. But the literacy rate in some of the sub-divisions in this pocket is lower than some of the sub-divisions in the hill sub-division. This pocket of relatively higher development extends towards the south which is more or less a plain land until it reaches Churachandpur which is at an average elevation of 914 metres above the neighbouring valley sub-division of Moirang.

The relatively less developed region includes thirteen sub-divisions of the hill and the Jiribam sub-division of Imphal East in the valley. Jiribam is a border town in the western part of the state, 225 km away from its district headquarters Imphal East. Like most border towns in India, this too remains highly undeveloped unlike its neighbours. The level of urbanisation in the less developed region is very low. Only Tengnoupal and Tamenglong are exceptions with a literacy level exceeding that of the state average. Frequent ethnic conflicts in the hilly region in the past have contributed partly to its remaining less developed. The least developed region is exclusively confined to the ten sub-divisions of the hill districts adjacent to the western border. All of these sub-divisions have no urbanisation at all and are farthest from the state capital except the Machi sub-division bordering Thoubal. Table 2-5 and fig. 6 show distribution of sub-divisions according to their level of development in 2011. Table 6 shows the state average of all the selected indicators and the sub-divisions above the state average.

Table 2 Manipur: Sub divisions with high level of development, 2011

District	Sub-division
Imphal east	Porompat
Imphal West	Lamphelpat

Table 3 Manipur: Sub divisions with relatively high level of development, 2011

District	Sub-division
Imphal East	Keirao Bitra , Sawombung
Imphal West	Lamshang, Patsoi, Wangoi
Thoubal	Lilong , Thoubal , Kakching
Churachandpur	Churachandpur
Bishnupur	Nambol, Bishnupur, Moirang

Table 4 Manipur: Sub divisions with relatively low level of development, 2011

District	Sub-division
Senapati	Sadar Hills East , Sadar Hills West , Saitu-Gamphazol
Chandel	Chandel, Tengnoupal, Chakpikarong
Ukhrul	Ukhrul Central, Ukhrul South , Phungyar-Phaisat , Kamjong-Chassad
Churachandpur	Tipaimukh , Churachandpur North
Tamenglong	Tamenglong
Imphal East	Jiribam

Table 5 Manipur: Sub divisions at low level of development, 2011

District	Sub-division
Ukhrul	Ukhrul North
Senapati	Mao-Maram , Purul , Paomata
Tamenglong	Tamenglong North , Nungba , Tamenglong West
Churachandpur	Thanlon , Singngat
Chandel	Machi

Table 6 Sub-divisions above state average on selected indicators, 2011

Indicators	State Average %	Sub-divisions above state Average	% in total
Female Literacy	70.26	14	36.84
Urbanisation	29.21	12	32.57
Rural Non-Agricultural worker	35.97	15	39.47
Population With Assets	68.91	18	47.36

The composite score of development (Table 1) reveals that the highest level of development is found in the Lamphelpat sub-division in the Imphal West district. Paomata sub-division of Senapati district is the least developed. Out of 38 sub-divisions in the state, 18 have composite score above the state average of 0.41. Number of the sub-divisions above the state average for urbanisation was 12. Not even one-third of the total sub-divisions are urbanized. Out of a total 38 sub-divisions only 14 are above the state average as far as female literacy is concerned. Such sub-divisions are 15 for rural non-agricultural workers and 18 for population with assets.
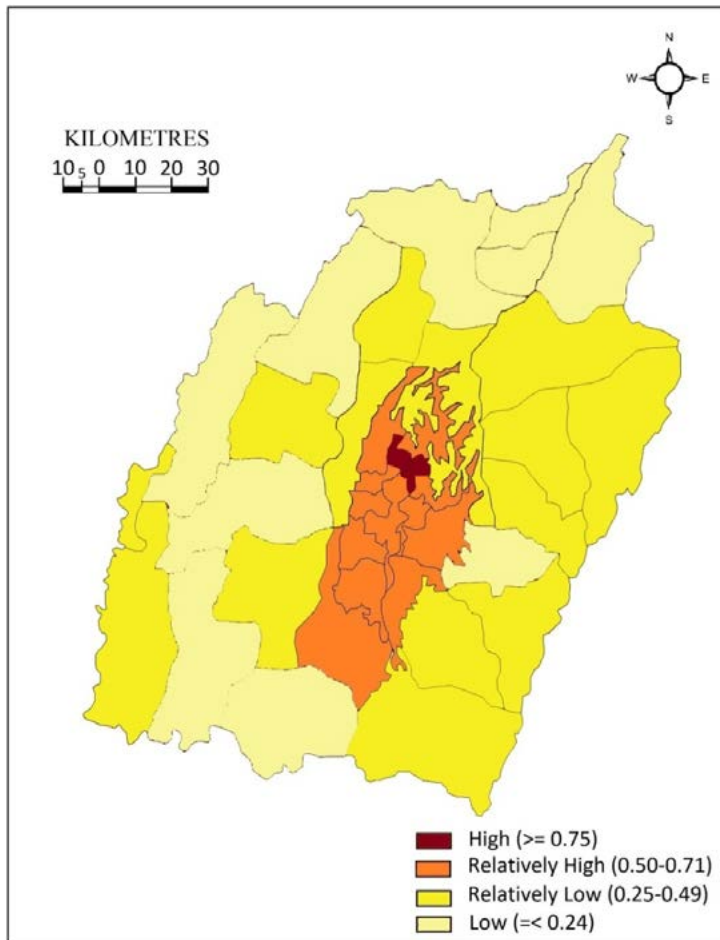
Fig.6. Manipur: Level of development, 2011

Results and discussion

The primary faultline in the development process apears to correspond with physiographic differences between the hills and the plains. This of course will be simplistic and deterministic to conclude. The divergences in the two sub-regions of the state also have ethnic and cultural separateness, historical and political differences and so on. The resultant disparities are not only between the hill and the valley but also within each of these two sub-regions. From the Table 1 it is observed that in the valley, the composite development index varies between 0.42 and 1.00, whereas for the hill sub-divisions the highest is 0.58 and the lowest is zero. The overall composite development index shows that only 4 hill sub-divisions out of 24 are above the state average, whereas all the 14 valley sub-divisions are above the state average. Intra-state disparity index for Manipur during 2001 was 30.4 (Table 7) which was among the highest among the states in the country. Although all the valley sub-divisions are above the state average, development gap is very

wide between the highest and the lowest. In certain sub-divisions in the plains, the female literacy and rural non-agricultural workforce percentage are lower than some of the hill sub-divisions. It is not correct only to stop at examining disparity between the hills and the plains. The following factors are responsible for wide intra-state regional disparities. These include among others: Physiographic factors, insurgency problems and ethnic conflicts (Table 8 highlighting internal displacement of people due to ethnic conflicts).

Table 7 India: Intra-state regional disparity, 1991 and 2001

State	Intra-state disparity index		Decline in points
	1991	2001	
Uttarakhand	53.0	19.6	33.4
Bihar	57.8	26.8	31.0
Meghalaya	47.3	18.6	28.7
Uttar Pradesh	53.0	27.3	25.7
Maharashtra	48.8	23.8	25.0
Chhattisgarh	48.8	24.1	24.7
Madhya Pradesh	48.8	25.0	23.8
Andhra Pradesh	36.0	14.3	21.7
Sikkim	35.3	17.0	18.3
Rajasthan	35.3	17.9	17.4
Arunachal Pradesh	38.1	21.6	16.5
Jharkhand	57.8	42.8	15.0
Tamil Nadu	34.3	20.0	14.3
Nagaland	31.8	18.4	13.4
Mizoram	28.2	16.1	12.1
Karnataka	41.2	29.5	11.7
Gujarat	32.8	21.3	11.5
Manipur	41.2	30.4	10.8
Punjab	23.3	12.7	10.6
Assam	31.4	21.1	10.3
Haryana	23.8	14.0	9.8
Himachal Pradesh	21.3	12.8	8.5
Tripura	24.2	17.4	6.8
West Bengal	40.6	34.9	5.7
Delhi	16.3	11.1	5.2
Kerala	15.1	10.6	4.5
Goa	1.2	0	1.2
Orissa	41.5	46.7	-5.2
Jammu & Kashmir	NA	19.1	NA

Source: Singh(2016)

Table 8 Internal displacement in Manipur, 1992 to 2001

Year	Cause	Persons displaced
1992	Kuki-Naga ethnic conflict	11000
1993-1997	Kuki-Zomi conflict	15000
	Thadou-Paite conflict	7500
	Meitei-Pangal Muslims conflict	1000
2001	Naga ceasefire extension	7000

Source: Hussain (2000) and Thomas (2002)

Conclusion

There is sharp intra-state regional disparity in the level of development in Manipur. Unless the hill valley divide in development is reduced to a manageable level, there cannot be overall development in the state. The intra-ethnic, inter-ethnic and other conflicts in large measure have their origin in regional disparities and poverty in the state. However, it is also true that the disparity in the state has declined over 1991 to 2001 by more than 10 per cent. The state has large potential to grow in the near future. However, peace is fundamental prerequisite for these potential to translate into reality. The effort of the people in making the state prosperous is as much needed as a good plan and effective implementation of it. The state government needs to give more emphasis on delineating planning regions of the state and in the development of the hill districts.

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