

Human Development Achievements by China and India: Why and how is it Different?

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Paper Abstract:

The People's Republic of China (PRC) and India, the two largest countries in the world have undergone rapid economic and social transformations in recent times. However, while both China and India recorded high rates of economic growth, the attainments in human development levels between the countries have remained somewhat different. Although India experienced impressive growth rates in recent years and is often considered an alternative to China in terms of economic growth rates, the ranking shows that India's human development attainments have remained poor. According to the latest figures of UNDP [2015], China's human development index (HDI) rank remains at 90 and India's at 130 out of 188 countries in 2014. Thus, while China has moved from medium to high human development category, India remains at the lower levels of medium human development group. It is found that the achievements in various dimensions of human development, viz., health, education and income moved at varying degrees in both China and India. It is further observed that the regions (provinces) in both the countries have demonstrated different rates of human development progresses.

There are often comparisons between China and India on account of their economic growth rates but little attention is provided for achievements in their human development or in any aggregate qualities of life indicator. There are several issues that are crucial on the subject, viz., i) whether the HDI progress over time is uniform across all the constituent dimensions, ii) whether the HDI progress is uniform across its states or provinces, iii) whether the national progress in human development is obtainable to the larger sections of population, iv) finally, whether there is equivalence between performances in economic growth and human development among the states and provinces in each country?

In this background, the main objective of the present paper is set to examine the comparative performances of dimensional human development scores in each of the 31 provinces and 22 states of China and India, respectively and then use this information to address these questions. We would use the National Human Development Report of China 2007/08 and 2013 as well as the National Human Development Report of India 2002 and 2011. The empirical analyses would be performed by using cross-sectional data from the 31 provinces and 22 states in China and India, respectively. The structure of the paper can tentatively be as follows. We would first review the literature to understand the human development outcomes at the regional level in these two countries (section 2). Section 3 would examine the comparative performances of human development scores in individual dimensions for each of provinces and states in China and India. The statistical findings based on the provincial data to ascertain the country's translation of economic growth into human development would be attempted next in section 4. We would use the cross-sectional correlation and regression analysis to discern the growth and human development linkages for individual dimensions of health and education in the country. The final section would summarize the results.