



Review Article

Nepal and Human Development a Comparative Study of Nepal Human Development Report, 2009 and Nepal Human Development Report, 2014

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Abstract

Human development in Nepal has improved over the years, particularly in the areas of health, education, and income. However, disparities in education, income, and access to quality services continue to pose challenges to inclusive and sustainable human development. The study aims to comparatively analyze Nepal's human development progress using the Nepal Human Development Reports 2009 and 2014. Specifically, it examines changes in the Human Development Index (HDI) and its three dimensions—health, education, and income—and compares Nepal's human development with other SAARC countries. The study is based on secondary data obtained from the Nepal Human Development Reports and other relevant sources. HDI values and their component indicators are compared to assess changes in human development during the study period. The study also considers the methodological change in HDI calculation from the arithmetic mean to the geometric mean. The findings indicate that Nepal has made steady progress in human development. Nepal's HDI increased from 0.463 in 2012 to 0.548 in 2014, partly due to improvements in life expectancy and income. However, education and income inequality remain important concerns. The shift from the arithmetic mean to the geometric mean in HDI calculation provides a more balanced assessment by considering the performance of all three dimensions. The comparison with other SAARC countries also highlights Nepal's continuing human development challenges. The findings suggest that Nepal needs to give greater priority to quality education, accessible health services, employment opportunities, and equitable income distribution. Strengthening these areas is essential for reducing inequalities and achieving sustainable, inclusive, and balanced human development in Nepal.

Keywords

Human Development Index, Nepal, Comparative Analysis, Health, Education, Income, SAARC, UNDP

1. Introduction

Human beings have always sought out ways for their progress and betterment. This tendency stands out as the cause of human supremacy as the most advanced member of the animal kingdom.

With the change in time, new methods and practice as the

strategy for survival emerged. Human development approach is a relatively new one that focuses on the overall well-being of human beings. The previous methods, like economic growth approach, basic needs approach, community develop-

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ment approach, among others, focus on a fixed or limited dimension. "Human development" is more holistic approach than its predecessors.

Development signifies change, both qualitative and quantitative, in positive direction over a period of time. "The concept of development contains not only the material prosperity, but also the idea of something more in the way of human dignity, security, justice, and equality" [2]. Human development, as an approach, focuses on the overall well-being, focuses on making human beings not only the means, but also the ends of development. "Human development focus on people and their well-being. It concerns expanding their choices to live full, creative lives in freedom and dignity" [6]. Human development "purports to liberate human energies for creating practical options as well as for shaping the pace and direction of development" [1]. Sen [5] views development as freedom while Haq [3] views that the purpose of development is to enhance human choices, and it enables environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives. Haq further identifies four essential components, or pillars, of human development viz. equity, sustainability, productivity and empowerment.

"Human development is linked to the process of increasing 'people's choices and opportunities', healthy life, education, access to assets, employment and income necessary for a dignified life and liberty and full participation in community decisions" [1].

Human development index (HDI) combines statistics of economy (income per capita), health (life expectancy) and education. Before 2010, the index was calculated as the arithmetic mean of life expectancy index, education index (two-third of adult literacy rate index and one-third of gross enrollment index) and income index (gross domestic income per capita index at purchasing power parity). After 2010, however, the geometric mean of life expectancy index, education index (average of mean-year of schooling index and expected year of schooling index) and income (gross national income per capita index) is taken as human development index. The new index introduced after 2010 reduced the tendency of arithmetic mean of being affected more by more extreme values.

From 1990 onwards, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has published annual human development reports, with exception of 2007/08 - when indices of two years were published in a single report, and 2012 - when the report was not published. The reports focus on different themes like economy, health, education, equity, economy and others.

Human development index published for Nepal, also included in the global report. In addition, different human development reports have been published in Nepal till date- like Human Development Report 1998, 2001, 2004, 2009, 2014.

2. Statement of the Problem

As per Nepal Human Development Report, this study focuses on Human Development Report 2014 and comprises of it to the previously published reports. This study attempts to

compare the human development indices on Nepal published in Human Development Report, 2014 and Human Development Report, 2009. In addition, the study will focus on the ways forward for the future actions to achieve sustainable and equitable human development.

3. Objectives

The broad objective of the study is to find out the progress made in human development of Nepal. Based on this, the study has the following supporting objectives:

- 1) To analyze the trend of Nepal human development index.
- 2) To sought out areas with more progress as well as with least progress.
- 3) To compare human development indices of Nepal and other SAARC countries.

4. Significance and Scope of the Study

The study will attempt to point out the progress made in human development between 2009 and 2014, and in doing so, seeks to find out which area within the human development approach needs more consideration for the future.

5. Literature Review

Different human development reports have been published on Nepal until now. They have focused on their own specific themes like overall human development in 1998 [4], poverty reduction and governance in 2001 [10], empowerment and poverty reduction in 2004 [11], state transformation in 2009 [12] and enhancing human potential in 2014 [13]. In addition to the data on their respective themes, data on human development of Nepal are also included, which give pictures of the progress of human development over time. What is significant is that the 2014 report "... is computed as the geometric mean (unlike its predecessors, which used arithmetic mean) ..." [13]. In doing so, "poor performance in any dimension is now directly reflected in the HDI, and there is no longer perfect substitutability across dimensions keeping in mind that health, education and income are all equally important" [7].

As the Nepal Human Development Report, 2014 is published more than 2yrs ago, we could found rarely that comparison has made between it and the report published earlier even though UNDP has been publishing data on Nepal on human development in its annual human development reports of the countries of the globe.

According to UNDP [8], Nepal's HDI value for 2012 was 0.463 - in the low human development category - positioning the country at 157 out of 187 countries and territories. UNDP [9] has computed and adjusted human development indices trends based on consistent time series data and new goalposts, and has given 0.548 as Nepal's HDI value for 2014 - placing it at 145 out of 188 countries and territories. Nepal's HDI

trends based on consistent time series data and new goalposts, according to UNDP [9], are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Nepal's HDI trends based on consistent time series data and new goalposts.

	Life expectancy at birth	Expected years of schooling	Mean years of schooling	GNI per capita (2011 PPP\$)	HDI Value
1980	46.6	4.8	0.6	961	0.279
1985	50.2	5.9	1.2	1,080	0.325
1990	54.3	7.8	2.0	1,209	0.384
1995	58.5	8.4	2.2	1,374	0.416
2000	62.4	9.3	2.4	1,563	0.451
2005	65.5	9.9	2.8	1,712	0.480
2010	68.0	12.1	3.3	2,014	0.531
2011	68.4	12.4	3.3	2,055	0.536
2012	68.8	12.4	3.3	2,135	0.540
2013	69.2	12.4	3.3	2,190	0.543
2014	69.6	12.4	3.3	2,311	0.548

Source: UNDP (2015)

6. Methodology

6.1. Research Design

For the purpose of the study, comparative and exploratory research designs will be used.

6.2. Sources of Data

Secondary data will be used for the purpose of the study. Content analysis will be done on Nepal Human Development Report, 2009 and Nepal Human Development Report, 2014, and comparisons will be made. Other data will be collected from concerned Central Bureau of Statistics, concerned ministries and other governmental publications.

6.3. Data Analysis

For the purpose of data analysis, data will be tabulated in different suitable forms. In addition, statistical tools will be carried out to interpret and present the data.

7. Limitations of the Study

The study will focus on human development index and its supporting indices on health, education and income. This study will not cover other indices like inequality adjusted in-

dex, gender development index, gender inequality index, human poverty index / multidimensional poverty index and others. In addition to these indices, the study will also not focus on indices of countries except Nepal.

The method used for the computation of human development index has changed since 2010. In addition, over time, the goalposts have also been changed. Hence, for comparison, data of 2009 will be adjusted as per the method used after 2010. Therefore, some data presented may not match those presented in the actual report.

8. Organization / Structure of the Study

The structure of the study will be based on the following steps.

- 1) Selection of the topic: 1 week
 - 2) Initial review of literature: 1 week
 - 3) Preparation and approval of proposal: 1 week
 - 4) Detailed review of literature: 2 weeks
 - 5) Collection and filtration of data: 3 weeks
 - 6) Data analysis and presentation: 2 weeks
 - 7) Drawing conclusion: 1 week
 - 8) Final report writing: 2 weeks
- Total duration: 13 weeks (i.e. 3 months)

9. Conclusion

In 13 weeks' time, the study will attempt to evaluate the condition of human development in Nepal presented in two different but related reports, and will also try to find out which

area of human development is lagging behind and hindering the overall index.

Abbreviations

HDI	Human Development Index
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
GNI	Gross National Income
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
ORCID	Open Researcher and Contributor ID
NEFAS	Nepal Foundation for Advanced Studies
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
NESAC	Nepal South Asia Centre
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations

Author Contributions

Ubash Yadav: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Resources, Formal Analysis, Writing-original draft, Writing-review & editing

Conflicts of Interest

The author declare no conflicts of interest.

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