

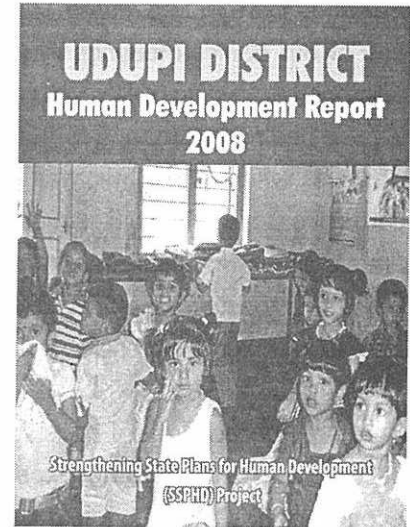
## District Human Development Report UDUPI 2008 HDR with a Difference

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The Human Development Report for Udupi district consisting of Karkala, Udupi and Kundapur taluks for 2008 was published in 2009. It contains 15 chapters, as many as 92 statistical tables, 19 charts and 45 Boxes with fascinating facts and runs up to 288 pages. A very useful public document as it is, it can easily command importance both in the academic and administrative circles. Its unique charm is that we are introduced to it through a grand and enamoring display of Yakshagana, the popular folk theatre of coastal Karnataka, of which Udupi district is a part. The document is academically attractive and appealing because it has inter-disciplinary perspective. It is prepared by Udupi Zilla Panchayat, published by the Planning, Program Monitoring and Statistics Department, Government of Karnataka funded by UNDP. The immense worth of the Report holds an eloquent testimony to the erudition, research-mindedness and concern for excellence of its chief author namely Dr. N.S Shetty, retired FAO (UN) expert and Emeritus Professor, JKSHIM, Nitte. The Coordination and Editorial Committee for the Report was headed by Hemalatha P, presently Deputy Commissioner for Udupi district. Prasanna Kumar N.S, V. Vijaya Kumar Shetty and Srinivasa Rao were the members of the Committee who have served Zilla Panchayat for the district of Udupi in various capacities. Dr. Krishna Kothai, former Director, Centre for Rural Studies (CRS), Manipal University also acted as a member of the Committee.

The CRS constituted the nodal agency for the project of preparing this comprehensive HDR which with its rich contents can serve as a model for other districts in Karnataka, nay for all other districts in India.

Precisely for this reason and also because it is the outcome of a systematic and serious effort to construct HDIs at the Grama Panchayat levels, the Report can be acclaimed as HDR with a Difference.



### Special Significance of the Report

It was Paul Streeten, who brought out in an unequivocal manner the utility and significance of human development, which in the process of enlarging people's choices, puts people back at the center stage of the whole development process. Human development should be the end, while economic growth in its conventional sense is only a means to a this end. Human development, when accomplished, can serve as a means to higher productivity. There is a nexus between human development accompanied by poverty reduction and physical environment with effective check on deforestation, desertification and soil erosion. Extensive literature on human development, which is now available, would go a long way in establishing the fact that it can contribute to the emergence of a wealthy civil society and strong democracy. There is enough reliable evidence proving that human development can help in reducing civil disturbances in a society. It can pave the way for increasing political stability as well (Paul Streeten 1981, *Development*

*Perspectives*, MacMillan Press, London). The Human Development Report for 1996 lends support to Streeten's cogent arguments. A careful reading of the Human Development Report for Udupi District, 2008 (referred hereafter HDR Udupi 2008) would at once demonstrate the need for human development for raising the productivity of people who are both the agents as well as the beneficiaries of a development-oriented growth strategy.

In one of its publications titled *India: The Road to Human Development* (1997) the UNDP highlighted that India's basic goals are to eradicate poverty and accelerate human development. The UNDP further observed that India had the disappointing human development profile. There is, at present, a strong case for better balance in the depth and extent of reforms in the economic and social sectors to strengthen a mutual reinforcing relationship between economic growth and human development. Government and civil society organizations need to reinforce the steering capacity to convert economic growth into human development. Important it is to note that the concluding part of HDR Udupi 2008 also recognizes in clear terms the link between economic growth and human development, when it states that there is a need to strengthen the virtuous cycle of linking human development with growth (p. 220).

The HDR for India for 2010 recently released in New Delhi pointedly shows that though India has the credit of moving on a high growth trajectory, mere growth or the tall claim that India is an emerging economic power does not ensure the evolution of a healthy society as long as there is wide spread poverty and basic rights are denied to the people. The country ranks 119 among 169 nations in spite of remaining as one of the top 10 countries in terms of income growth. Therefore, one may be justified in remembering that growth for the sake of growth alone is the ideology of the cancer cell!

The growth in India is not translated into social welfare, measured by the basic requirements of life like access to health, education and the condition of the weaker sections of the society, not to forget women and children. The UNDP has brought to the fore in the HDR for 2010 that poorer countries like Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan have done better than India in terms of life expectancy at birth, mean years of schooling and female participation in labor force. Therefore, there is abysmal record of inequality of income and regional imbalances with the ingredients of the possibility of social and political tensions (*Deccan Herald*, Nov 13, 2010: Editorial). It is indeed heartening to note that Udupi district in Karnataka presents a picture, which is quite contrary to that of India in significant respects. As the HDR Udupi 2008 observes, "As per the state HDR Reports, Udupi district is considered as one of the most progressive districts in human development in the state; it ranks first in literacy and education, second in health, fifth in per capita income, and third in human development index" (p. 217).

The relation that human development maintains with governance needs hardly any elaboration. Jayanth Kumar Roy has made a searching analysis for need for good governance in the reform era (Jayant Kumar Roy, 2001, *India in Search of Good Governance*, KP Bagchi and Company, Kolkata). He tries to find answers to two questions: a) why has the Indian government failed to establish good governance since Independence?, and b) why have some other countries speed ahead in the establishment of good governance for the benefit of the people? While answering these two questions, the author ably points out that though there is a provision for Panchayat Raj Institutions in our Constitution and even after the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendments made them an essential component of our constitutional system, they have not come in full stream yet. The World Development Report for 2004

stated that basic services necessary for human development have failed to reach the poor in many countries including India. From a human development perspective, good governance is democratic governance that should support institutions assuring people's freedom and empowerment, distribution of benefits on an equitable basis and fostering social harmony and cooperation. An empirical study covering 26 transition countries of Europe during 1997-2004 was indeed revealing. According to the study, a country with good governance structures or with high quality of governance can be expected to display better human development performance compared to other countries where such structures are less developed (Bayarjargal Ariun-Erdene, *Human Development and Governance - An Empirical Analysis*, Development & Transition, UNDP, December 2009). The HDR Udupi 2008 exhibits an innovative approach in stressing the governance issues in human development. Arguing for people's participation in governance, the Report tells us that there was a positive connection between human development and Panchayat Raj institutions in Udupi, Kundapur and Karkal taluks. Its observation is worth quoting: "Good governance under Panchayati Raj implies that local bodies are representative; their functioning is participatory and the decision-making process is responsive to the needs and aspirations of the local people" (p.194).

The major players in the process of ensuring human development include the governmental organizations as well as NGOs and community organizations. The purpose of development in any country is to create an atmosphere conducive to the enhancement of people's capabilities, and opportunities for both present and future generations. The NGOs can act as agents for capability enhancement including employment, health, education and nutrition attainments. If they succeed in this endeavor, their significance as generators of

income in the society would become conspicuous in the long run, if not necessarily in the short run. It was not for nothing that J.S. Mill (1806-1873), an British eminent classical political economist and a reputed political thinker, insisted that the people of a country should not be looked upon as wealth because wealth existed only for the sake of people. The effective role of many NGOs in the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America is one of the key factors for the success of Human Development Initiatives for reaffirming that wealth of income exists for the people who constitute the target group of development planning. The HDR Udupi 2008 also informs that Udupi district is blessed with a large number of NGOs and voluntary agencies who are the suitable catalysts for empowering and promoting sustainable development of the people (p.181). Undoubtedly it is a source of light illuminating many factors influencing the development process in the district as evidenced by its rich and informative chapter contents.

### **Chapter Contents**

Chapter 1 makes a strong case for preparing HDRs at district levels. The government of Karnataka launched a pilot program with the assistance of the UNDP to prepare for the first time District Human Development Reports for Udupi, Mysore, Bijapur and Gulbarga. This pilot project was completed in 2009. The major objectives and methodologies are presented in Chapter 1. The Udupi District Human Development Report is different from the reports for Mysore, Bijapur and Gulbarga districts as it constructs Human Development Index at Grama Panchayat, Municipal and taluk levels while other reports stop at the taluk levels. To quote the HDR Udupi 2008, "It should be noted that the attempt to compile data on key human development indicators and construct Human Development Index at GP, Municipal and taluk levels, and also to carry out a disaggregated analysis of human

development problems at the grass roots level is itself a pioneering one and is of great importance”(p.5).

An overview of the geographical features, demography, agriculture and the related activities, industry, tourism, power, infrastructure and growth process is provided in Chapter 2. So far as the general growth process in Udupi district is concerned, the chapter notes that between 2002-03 and 2007-08 the agricultural sector in the district registered negative growth rate of about 7% per annum. The secondary and tertiary sectors made major contributions to the growth process here. Even in the case of these sectors, there was deceleration in the growth rate. The Chapter 2 records that while the Indian economy as a whole witnessed annual average growth of 7 to 8% during the years 2005-08, Udupi district achieved only 4% average annual growth.

In Chapter 3, many crucial issues such as the concept of human development, measuring human development, comparison of human development level in Udupi district with that in other districts of Karnataka, HDI for Grama Panchayats and taluk wise disparities in HDI are dealt with. Though well placed in human development status, when compared to many other districts in Karnataka, the Udupi district witnessed the lowest growth in human development during the decade 1991-2001. A little disappointing fact was that during this period, while the state average growth in HDI was as much as 20%, it was only 8% in Udupi district. The Human Development Report for the entire Karnataka state for 2005 also expressed dissatisfaction over the fact that only 2 districts Viz., Dakshina Kannada and Udupi registered an increase in HDI which was less than 10% between 1991 and 2001. The Report stated that this was a cause for concern because these districts have the capacity to match the HDI status of Kerala and any setback here needs to be monitored carefully (Planning and Statistics Department, 2005,

government of Karnataka, *The Karnataka Human Development Report*, Bangalore). There were wide disparities in the levels of human developments among Grama Panchayats (GPs) within the district, a fact which has serious implications for policy makers, while formulating strategies and allocating resources. The Report asserts that the implications of these disparities provide thrust areas for action programs and also policy interventions from perspective of human development (p.31).

An indepth analysis is made to examine the education parameter as the basic requirement for human development in Chapter 4. On an average every GP had more than 6 primary schools and every village had more than 2 primary schools in Udupi district in 2008. The government is the main provider of primary education in rural areas in the district. As per 2001 census data, Udupi district has literacy rate of 81.25% as against the state average of 66.6%. The disparity between male and female literacy in Kundapur taluk in 2001 was more than 20% as against about 12% in Karkala and Udupi taluks. The adult literacy program was executed very well in the district. Udupi taluk has the highest education index (0.903) followed by Karkala taluk (0.880) and Kundapur taluk has the lowest (0.840). There were disparities even in terms of education index among GPs. As the HDR Udupi 2008 observes, “It is also important to note that the majority of the GPs existing in the coastal belt have recorded higher educational index due to better transport and communication network and higher standard of living” (p.53).

The Health Status of the District is well documented in Chapter 5, which declares that the Udupi district has an enviable record in the health sector with a very good health infrastructure. The life expectancy at birth in the district as whole in 2005-06 was 72.9 years. The Health Index which stood at 0.685 in 1991 stepped



up to 0.978 in 2006 (p.63). There were wide disparities among GPs from the perspective of health index also. There are very useful suggestions in order to address some of the areas of health concerns and to strengthen health facilities. Some of these suggestions include extension of private initiatives in health services in rural areas, greater involvement of NGOs in the provision of health facilities, expansion of Yashashwini Health Insurance Scheme, provision of good governance in health facilities and the involvement of GPs in monitoring health care by developing a set of village level health indicators, which can be used regularly under the supervision of the Zilla Panchayat (p.75). Income, Employment and Poverty in Udupi district are analysed in Chapter 6. Viewed from the angle of the long run, the agriculture sector in Udupi district does not hold the promise of propelling higher growth. The district is known for the origin and growth of banking institutions. More than 50% of the total district income is contributed by the service sector. The remittances produced a clear beneficial impact on the economy of the district. We may note in passing that an earlier study of the patterns of migrations by Lobo had put on record that the remittances generated an atmosphere of growth in rural incomes in the district (Norbert Lobo, 2004, *Migration and Migrants*, Mohit Publications, New Delhi). The Udupi district in 2003-04, ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in total GDP and 6<sup>th</sup> in per capita income in the Karnataka state. The disparity in per capita income was also found significantly very wide. With the spread of urban influence on rural sector, non-farm employment opportunities increased, especially for women. But with all these achievements, the fact remains that annual employment growth rate of the district was only 1.6% while the Karnataka state as a whole witnessed the growth rate of 2.5%. One of the areas of concern is the Poverty Profile, poverty being primarily a rural phenomenon (p.118). There is a very significant

observation that poverty reduction is a multi-dimensional problem requiring not only raising incomes, but also improving non-income elements such as excess to safe water and sanitation, good health and literacy. With the Konkan railway, opening up of Mangalore airport for international trade and commencement of Nandikur thermal and Suzlon projects, the Udupi district holds out a vast growth potential in the near future itself (p.122).

Chapter 7 deals with gender issues and women empowerment. Gender disparity in human development as well as gender gap in education is brought out. Out of the total number of 207201 families surveyed, as many as 18.71% were headed by women. The bank linked SHG movement very much facilitated self-employment of many women in the district. Wage differential between men and women is relatively less in Udupi district compared to other districts in Karnataka (p.136). Chapter 8 brings out the status of the child in Udupi district. Chapter 9 discloses the Status of Weaker Sections. Various studies undertaken in the district show that enrollment of SCs and STs in higher education and professional courses, is only marginal. However, compared to other districts in the state, SCs and STs in Udupi district are better in education, health and economic status (p.162). Chapter 10 provides a bird's eye view of housing, water supply and sanitation facilities in the district, while the culture, traditions and customs are presented with interesting evidences in chapter 11. Chapter 12 throwing light on Voluntarism and NGOs, states that the most notable among the NGOs is the Sri Kshetra Dharmasthala Rural Development Project (SKDRDP), which was started at Beltangadi taluk of Dakshina Kannada district during 1982 by Dr. D. Veerendra Heggade, the Dharmadhikari of Sri Dharmasthala temple.

Chapter 13 discusses in an impressive manner,

governance under Panchayati Raj with a strong argument that decentralized governance is the handmaiden of human development at the grass root level. A quick survey of different legislations of Panchayat Raj system in Karnataka is made. This survey is followed by an attempt to explain people's participation in governance in Udupi, Kundapur and Karkala taluks. GPs were involved in Udupi district in implementing special schemes such as water supply, sanitation, housing of the poor and village infrastructure development. The GPs are classified based on key performance indicators. The findings of a study done by CRS are aptly presented. There are recommendations for strengthening Panchayati Raj system which can have relevance in the Karnataka state as a whole. Chapter 13 concludes that unless GPs are empowered in terms of functions, finances and functionaries, the good participatory governance cannot be ensured which has serious implications for Human Development at the grass root level (p.204). Who can deny the fact that this conclusion deserves acceptance at the national level?

Chapter 14 discusses environmental concerns. The steep decline in the area of forests in Udupi district is regretted. There is an important information that Udupi district has many sensitive and unique biospheres. Amongst 17 important biospheres listed by the UNESCO, Tallur Biosphere near Gangolli (Kundapura taluk) is one (p.211). The serious environmental consequences of aquaculture in Kundapur taluk are brought out. This chapter provides some strategies for conservation of environment. The GPs have an important role to play in implementing these strategies (p.214).

The 15<sup>th</sup> Chapter shows the Way forward for Human Development in the district. As per the state HDR Reports, Udupi district is considered as one of the most progressive districts in human development in the

state. It ranks first in literacy and education, second in health, fifth in per capita income and third in human development index (p.217). The major challenges which have to be encountered relate to rural -urban and inter- GP disparities, low per capita income growth, declining employment opportunities, emerging problems in health sector, issues in governance and damages caused to environment (p.217-219). There are again strategies for facing these challenges. The suggestion for linking human development with growth process has a lot of theoretical significance as well as policy importance.

#### **Minor Limitations of the Report**

The HDR Udupi 2008 has no doubt a good lay-out coupled with presentation of hard realities and also future possibilities. Yet, repeated readings of the Report, though useful from the point of view of understanding the need and course of human development, may prompt some readers to remark that a little more planning of the chapter outlines would have increased the significance of the get up of the Report. Chapter 7, Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 could have been combined into a single Chapter for these are brief and breezy. The judicious combination of these Chapters would not have reduced the effectiveness of the Report. Chapter 12 and 13 could be carefully combined under the chapter title Governance and Human Development. After all, the NGOs are also expected to facilitate governance in any region by playing the role of catalytic agents. Chapter 11 ends with a disappointing statement that some religious, cultural and folk activities could be viewed as propagating superstitions and caste and gender discrimination. Though this Chapter is well written, it is not easy to understand how human development in Udupi district can be linked to culture, traditions and customs. Notwithstanding these minor limitations, we can unhesitatingly say that the HDR Udupi 2008 can

be useful to researchers in all social sciences. Here is an HDR with a difference, which can be fascinating by any standard.

### Fascinating Boxes

- The Manipal University based at Manipal is a University of international repute with all round development having diversified courses conducted through many professional institutions. The degrees given by the University are recognized worldwide (Box 4.3).
- The Nitte Education Trust was founded by Justice K.S Hegde, a legal luminary, a retired Supreme Court judge and the former speaker of the Loka Sabha. The Trust has developed a number of educational institutions. Nitte has now become an Education Center of Excellence (Box 4.4).
- Udupi district is known for Jasmine cultivation. The fragrance of Jasmine flower grown here is noticeable in the Middle East also. The SHGs of women in the area have now taken a lead role in the promotion of Jasmine cultivation (Box 6.1).
- Udupi district has the distinction of emerging as 100% financial inclusion district. The Lead Bank (Syndicate Bank) has already launched the second phase of financial inclusion, where in, banks operating in Udupi district are expected to identify financial needs of all households and undertake financing for their economic uplift (Box 6.5).
- Rural Development and Self Employment Training Institute (RUDSETI) established in 1982 at Ujire, near Dharmasthala has the main objective to train unemployed rural youth and to empower them to take up self-employment ventures in their own villages. RUDSETI model has come to be recognized as a cost effective instrument in creating self-employment ventures in rural areas. It has become a role model for self-employment training institutes in India (Box 6.11). Shyam Prasad who is running a lucrative nursery owes his success entirely to RUDSETI and Syndicate Bank's timely financial assistance (Box 6.12).
- There is a success story of economic empowerment of women through dairy farming at Shankaranarayana. It is a success story of cooperation also leading to empowerment of women (Box 7.2).
- Fishing is an important activity in Udupi district. The Fisher Women's Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society at Maravanthe is another instance of success of cooperation. The members of this Society are economically empowered (Box 7.7).
- The Makkala Panchayat (Children's Panchayat) in Keradi Panchayat of Udupi taluk made a mark by getting success in closing liquor shops (Box 8.4).
- The Saligrama Makkala Mela, a children's Yakshagana troupe is a troupe with a difference. The remarkable achievement of this troupe is properly presented (Box 8.5).
- 8 GPs in Udupi taluk and 3 GPs in Kundapur taluk have got prestigious award of Nirmala Grama Puraskar (Box 13.1).
- An illiterate woman Sannamma by name, belonging to a Scheduled Caste could become an effective Panchayat member. Here is an evidence to show that illiteracy is no bar to the success of democracy (Box 13.2).

The HDR Udupi 2008 is the result of a sound methodology combining government data and reports and available technical details. The workshops organized for the purpose of preparing the Report at the district and taluk levels were instrumental in improving the quality of the Report. Even if we consider the methodology, we cannot resist the temptation of repeating the remark that the HDR Udupi 2008 is an HDR with a difference the model of which can be profitably replicated elsewhere in the country, where growth is yet to be effectively linked to human development.