



Uttarakahnd: A Story of Hope Belied

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KEYWORDS

The ecology and economy of the mountains – require distinct approach to development, and neglect of this very fact in the past has resulted in marginalization of the region(s). As a result gradually people of hills districts of Uttar Pradesh developed a perception that power elites, even those from the mountain regions have less concern for marginalized regions. This perception was based on the argument that mountain region lacks the capacity to influence the outcome of electoral politics at state and national level. Therefore, a sense of powerlessness grew and in search of more effective ways of empowerment of people , it was felt that shifting of political power to the region itself - in other words creation of separate state, could be a solution of development problems. This was the precise political economy argument that led to creation of separate state of Uttarakhand (Joshi, 1995, p. 23; Rao, 2010).

However, even after creation of Uttarakahnd, the process marginalization of mountainous region of state continues . Regional inequalities in the state – between mountainous north and plain south are momentous .The much awaited alternative paradigm of development aiming to diversify the livelihood option by conserving and diversifying natural resource base and the much talked model of low volume high value product, which could correct the terms of trade between mountainous region of the state and rest of state is still to be evolved. The various fiscal incentives given to industrialist and the special category state status –undoubtedly has benefited the state as “the investor friendly policies resulted in the investment of more than Rs. 35000 crores and creation of employment opportunities for about 2 lakh persons” (Government of Uttarakhand , 2013). Many centres of specialization and excellence – like IIM , IIT, AIMS have been/are being established, but the marginalized of mountains has not been reduced – as most the industrial and other activities are confined to the narrow strip of terai-valley and plains. The state government is relentlessly pursuing the policy of hydro-electric power generation and claims to make the state as energy surplus state. Regardless to the repercussion of large hydro electric projects to regions – known as water tower of Asia, to the ecology of northern India , these project also have political economy dimensions . These project as experience of Tehri - Hydero electric project indicates, have the potential to radically alter the demographic and cultural fabric of the region. As mountains , bear the real cost - the environmental and pains of displacement, of the hydro-electric projects but in the present paradigm of development will have very little share in the power generated. (Agrawal, 2013)¹.

The present development paradigm – have also not capitalize on the rich social capital the hill regions of the state. This is apparent from the fact that large number of posts of teachers in government schools are vacant, quality of education at elementary level is abysmally poor² and the teacher absenteeism is quite high³ (Juyal, Sati, Chaturvedi, & Rakesh, 2013, pp. 112-117). The condition of other indicators of social service delivery system is also deplorable. As result of these and other deficiencies – which is indicative of the failure to evolve an integrated policy of functional and spatial integration, results

in perpetuating the low level of equilibrium in mountain economy. As a result the peripheral status of mountains – supplying semiskilled and unskilled manpower to the core – urban areas and plains have not changed Consequently the culturally – economically disastrous process of migration popularly referred as “money order economy ” started during the late 19th century⁴ not only continues but as a mater of fact has hasten further (Juyal & Tyagi, 2011, p. 182). It has been admitted at the highest policy level, that “migration of population from Hill Districts to Plain Districts due to non-availability of economic opportunities resulting in demographic vacuum as well as demographic substitution in vulnerable and sensitive border areas” (Government of Uttarakhand , 2013) ⁵ . The migration of population from hills to plain districts of the state also has serious implication to later as well, it is resulting in “ shortage of land for Agriculture and Industrial expansion.”(ibid). The present parading of development has been accused as the root cause of several natural calamities and disaster. (Bhatt, Pandya, & Goh, 2013; Bandyopadhyay, 2013)

However, mountain does not mean poor region. There mountainous countries which are development in every sense of term. The need only is to evolve an alternative model of development based on mountain characteristics, avoiding short term gains and even temptation of high growth rate. In this paper a modest attempt in this direction i.e. to evolve an Micro Level Planning Tools and Techniques for Integrated Development for mountainous region of Uttarakhand .

The model of integrated developed has to be based on the fundamental premise that resource utilization is not only an economic phenomena but also has environmental and institutional implication. These three variables economic activity (function) , environment(place) and organizations (people) are interdependent, change in one, invariably brings change in others. Therefore, change in any of the three – has be sustainable for others as well. This is essence of integrated development For example if hydroelectric electricity is to be generated it will utilize make dam on rivers –which will displace people from their home and hearth. This will alter land utilization pattern for ever and will bring some change in the climate of the area. Thus integration is an dynamic process which aims at directing interrelated activities in a desired direction having two dimensions – **functional and spatial integration** . Functional integration refers to coordinated expansion of economic activities in desired direction and spatial integration refers to utilization of hierarchies of human habitations to locate social and economic function (Patel, 1975, p. 33; Sen, 1971, p. 2) The other important conceptual issue related resource utilization is of the **spatial level of decision making and implementation**. The lowest unit of human habitation is a village, which could be the basic unit of decision making and implementation. As a matter of fact there is plethora of literature eulogizing villages – for its social capital - a close knit functional society – working on the principle of compassion and self reliance. However, there are theoretically and empirical evidence challenging these attributes of villages – on social and economic realities . One on hand -stands Mahatma Gandhi and his followers who feel that central and state govern-

ments to have very limited powers and villages should to rule themselves through Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayats On the other extreme are But Ambedkar and his followers who argue that in villages it is the dominant group whose writ run large and caste and communal prejudice act in inhuman fashion. Even Karl Marx was also critical of romantic notion about the so called idyllic , isolated and self contained units of human habitation, remaining indifferent to contemporary upheaval and making and unmaking of empires ⁶. Whether one agree with Gandhian thinking or of Ambedkar the fact is village panchayats, with its several variants across the country – for centuries villages have been the policy making and implementing units in every sphere of life . During colonial rule this autonomous structure of

Experiences have shown that it is too ambitious to take a village a planning unit, not only because of constrains of resources but also because of a population rarely has necessary population threshold to utilize the investment optimally transition brought in by higher order functions. It has also been empirically researched by economists and other social scientist – that because of these market compulsions – investment or functions follows a hierarchical pattern over space – creating a chain of functional and spatial inter –relationship. Generally a cluster of villages have a focal point – at which some functions , which do not exists in surrounding villages, appear. Thus cluster of villages – with such a focal point constitute a functional community, which could be the ideal , lowest unit or micro unit of functional and spatial integration . The concept of functional communities is a dynamic concept moving like oceanic circle taking in its fold more functional complexities creating hierarchies of focal points as well and reaching to the level of well defined economic region. The economic region theoretically may consist of few villages , block, districts , states and even countries – but the social and economic purpose is the context that determine the size of region. However, homogeneity in resource endowment and social and economic structure forms the rock and bottom of the process of delineating economic regions (Israd, 1982)

Overview of Literature

Uttarakhand, spread over an 53483 square kilometers, accommodating little more than 10 million population accounts for about one fourth (23 percent) of the total population of Indian Himalayan Region (IHR). The state ranks second in terms of total population and density of population and fourth in terms of geographical area among the states of IHR ⁷ The average of decadal growth Population (2001-11) of state about 19.17 percent is higher than the national average (17.64 percent) and average of IHR –viz 18.79 percent.(Appendix 1.). Uttarakhand has two distinct geophysical and economic zone- (1) The predominately mountainous rural north –with monotonous subsistence agrarian economy. The Northern region accounts for about 86 percent of the area and 40 percent population (Appendix-2) Eleven out of the total thirteen districts of the state, are fully and partially in this region. ⁸ (2) The plain southern region, with much diversified economy, urbanization and infrastructure vis-à-vis the northern region. The social and cultural mosaic of this region resembles more with plains of northern India. These regions have altogether different set of potentials and problems – requiring diverse development strategies with well defined interconnects. However, failures to evolve development strategies – capable to strengthen and diversify livelihood option and deliver basic services in the mountainous region has serious social- economic and environmental implications – which transgress the regional and state boundaries have repercussion to the plains of Ganga - Yamuna and even far beyond that to the entire Indian subcontinent.

Taking the average figures for the states as a whole , it a fact that economy of the state, since 2000 , after the formation of state , is growing at pace faster pace, than the national average ⁹ . The macro data of the composition of state domestic product make one to believe that that economy of the state is on the path of transformation from subsistence to diversified, with a strong manufacturing base. The sector wise com-

position state domestic product, indicate the share of primary sector is contracting and that of secondary is increasing at a good speeds.¹⁰ As a consequence the per capita Net State Domestic Product(NSDP) which was Rs 16232 at the current prices in 2000-01, about 91 percent of the Per Net National Product (NNP) at the time of formation state has consistently increased and in most of the year has been larger then NNP, to the extent that and in the year 2012-13 it increased to was (Rs 90843) , about 132 percent of NNP (Government of Uttarakhand , 2013). It also fact that among the Himalayan state the contribution of Uttarakhand in the GDP (at the prices of 2004-05) of India in the year 2010-11was (0.71 percent) was more than its neighbouring Himachal Pradesh (0.53), and Jammu and Kashmir (0.051) and many other Himalayans states (Government of India Central Statistical Services , 2012)

The above mentioned macro data masks the various contradictions, paradoxes , stark regional inequalities and abject poverty and the process of lagging behind in human development. However, the disaggregated analysis, reveal that The chasm of development between mountainous north and relatively plain south and poverty and monotonous nature of mountainous economy. For example out of the thirteen district, in the year 2008-9 five districts - viz. Haridwar (22.87percent), Dehra Dun (18.3), US Nagar (13.19) and Nainital (10.08) accounts for about 65 percent of the total Net State Domestic Product of the state and none of the remaining districts could individually contribute more than 7 percent in the total Net State Domestic Product (Government of Uttarakhand Directorate of Economics and Statistics, 2011).Moreover, there are vast differences in the per capita district domestic product of districts. For example , in the year 2008-09 ,at the prices of 1999-2000) per capita district product was about Rs 33711 but mountainous districts Ruderperiyag(Rs 16,186) and Bageshwar (Rs 14980) were not even to the half mark of it. Likewise, in the District **Development Product (2009-10)** index constructed by the state government assuming 100 the value for the state as whole, the all districts situated in valley and plains in the south, viz Dehra Dun (121.62) Udham Singh Nagar (113.53) Haridwar (113.45) and Nainital (110.93)- have are more than state average and all the 9 districts of mountainous north in invariably all case is below the average. maximum being 91.04 for District Chamoli to 61.52 lowest for district Bageshwar . (Government of Uttarkhand, Planning Department, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Not dated). The diversification of economy and growth is concentrated in few pockets of plains. If one take case of registered manufacturing which, as per the macro data is the most dynamic sector of the economy of the state and is thriving on various incentives to the special category state , finds that it is concentrated in the plain and valley area.For example the share of registered manufacturing in district domestic product of Haridwar is about 30 percent and US Nagar 6.6 percent but in mountain district registered manufacturing barring the exception of the districts which does not have plain area and rail links contribution of this activity in the Net Domestic Product does not account even for one percent. ¹¹ (Government of Uttarkhand, Planning Department, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Not dated) The matter of concern is that despite strong agriculture base, Uttarakhand is an average state in terms of per capita agricultural production and yield per hectare. The per capita food production in the state is little more than 2 quintals and yield per hectare is also approximately 2 tones. If the plain and valley districts are excluded from these data the condition will worsen further. This is because there have not been much innovation in agriculture, and the much awaited diversification towards horticulture, and other activities having the prefix of green or bio has to make headway. As a results the contribution of Uttarkhand is less than one percent in the total national agricultural production (Government of India, Planning Commission , 2009, p. 91).

The economy of the mountainous region, is almost stagnant –as far its productivity and capacity to generate employment opportunities is concern. Empirical researches has shown that per hectare agricultural production in Mountainous region of

Uttarakhand has declined over last century (Whittaker, 1984, p. 15)¹² which could be attributed to lack of public investment in agricultural infrastructure and more importantly deterioration of Himalayan eco system. The state monopolization of land resources, commercial extraction of forests i.e. treating forest as timber mine and encouraging expansion of arable land at the cost of forest and expanding arable land at the expense of forest to increase revenue, was initiated by British Colonial ruler. This policy brought structural change in economic and social structure of the region with multifaceted disastrous consequence to the ecology, economy and socio-cultural fabric of the region. Little was done after independence to mitigate these adverse consequence and evolve alternative policy of land resource management. (Juyal & Tyagi, 2011) As was in the British Colonial period so is today – government is the largest owner of land resources – about 63 percent land resources of the state, excluding Haridwar district, are owned by state as reserve forest, civil forest and cantonment forest, with no or negligible entitlement of people. Only a small proportion of land (about 17 percent) has been reported as Net Sown Area and under horticulture, about 4 percent land is under community forest and pasture. This small proportion of land supports, forms the livelihood base almost entire rural population. About 6 percent of the total reported area is cultivable waste and little more than one percent is fallow land, which could be utilized for expanding livelihood base with appropriate policy intervention.

As a matter of fact these data too are not true reflective of the pressure on land, as most of the arable land is in valleys and in the altitude below 1400 meters. With increase in altitude the availability of arable land tends to decline to the extent that in the community development blocks situated above 1400 meters arable land accounts just one or two percent of the total area. Thus despite being a low density region – the human and cattle pressure on arable land in the Himalayan region is much more than that is in the Indo-gangetic plains (A.D.Moodie, 1980).¹³. The non farm employment opportunities are scanty as a result around 80 percent work force is engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry – which is unable to provide food security even to the dependent population, because of various ecological, institutional and technological rigidities. Studies reveal that three fourth peasant households in the mountain region of Uttarakhand, could hardly meet their three months food grain requirement from own production. These studies have also pointed out that there is acute underemployment in mountainous region. On an average a male agriculturist has to sit idle for more than six months in a year, and the incidence of underemployment is acute – increasing to 10 months in tiny holding of less than one hectare, which accounts for about 70 percent in Uttarakhand (Juyal, 1984)

The much advertised tourism sector- with huge potential of generating employment and providing relief to the people from grinding poverty because of its high multiplier effect¹⁴ and in fact around 20 million tourists visit Uttarakhand but this fails to enough generate the employment and income largely because of tourism activities are concentrated in few pockets, the leakage effect because not only much of the inputs used in the tourism activities are procured from outside but also most of the surplus generated in not ploughed back. Moreover it is documented that tourism activities in at many place are not only eating the vital of the resource base by being obstructive to the scenic beauty, panoramic view and landscape on which it thrives but also detrimental to fragile ecology and environment and in some cases this destructive process has reached to the threatening level like in Mussoorie that legal ban has been imposed on expansion of built up areas. (Ramchandran & Ramchandran, 2001) However, this does not happen every where in the state, many centres of pilgrimage and tourist attractions because of physical sprawl – and the recent. As consequence of lack of employment opportunities as mentioned in problem statement, large number of male migrate to plains – leaving women and children. These migrant labour regularly remit a significant portion of their income

to the their families left at home. Without these remittance, the food security of mountains would be in danger. (R.S.Bora, 1996). Despite this inflow of remittance the percentage of poor living below poverty line in most of the mountain districts is much more than districts of plain region. For example, in 2004-05 compared to 44 percent and 45 percent people living below poverty line in rural areas of Haridwar and US Nagar District, in district Bageshwar and Tehri Garhwal the proportion of people living below poverty line was 72 and 61 percent respectively (Government of India, Planning Commission, 2009, p. 196 table 4.3)

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