



The Assessment of Human Development Indicators in Iran

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Abstract:

One of the major crises that people are encountered with is injustice. Many governments have as their most important slogan, social justice, and equal access to the people, all the facilities necessary for a healthy life and dignity. This paper considers the improvement of human development indicators in the provinces of Iran. The results obtained show that despite relatively good progress, the overall level of human development still needs to be worked on. The research methods used are descriptive – analytical; theoretical concepts of human development are applied to human development indicators and trends in Iran.

Key words: Social justice, human development indicators, deprivation, Iran

Introduction

One of the important indicators that are used to determine the degree of development in the countries is human development index. Human development, namely improving the quality of life or advanced living standards of people in a country or region (Azar 2008, 55). To improve the planning system and its position in the development process, it is

inevitable to take advantage of the key indicators from the economic, social, cultural and political fields. In this regard economists relate the development issues from the developing countries to the economic growth (GDP) as the best indicator of economic development. But the experience of countries in the past decades showed that although economic growth is a necessary condition, it is not a sufficient one for improving the lives of people (Asefzadeh 2006 21). But insufficient measure of per capita income and economic growth, determined some economists to turn their attention to the variables including the social and human dimensions. New approaches to development were introduced during the '80s and '90s, in which development is measured not only based on the financial measures of income inequality and unemployment, but it is considered a multidimensional process, taking into account the social structure, the population trends and local and national institutions (Taghvai, 2004, 32). One of the key indicators that will be used in determining the degree of development of countries is Human Development Index, while the main objective of human development is to improve the quality of life for individuals (Roshan 2005, 61). The purpose of this study is to determine, from this perspective, the positioning of Iran globally and the level of human development in the provinces of Iran.

Materials and Methods

Methods used for this research are: a review, a descriptive approach - analytical and theoretical concepts of human development, and application of human development indicators and trends in Iran. Source data are obtained from the Statistical Yearbook of various years, the office of President, Vice-President of Strategic Planning, and Human Development Report (HDR) in 2011.

Human Development Index (HDI)

This index, used in the reports, applies globally, regionally and nationally (Zahid Ghanbari 2000, 66). The combined measure reflecting the average achievement of a

country is based on three basic aspects: longevity, knowledge, and standard of living. Measurement of each of these components is as follows:

Longevity or life expectancy is measured at birth; knowledge is a combination of the adult literacy rate and the combined gross enrollment ratio for primary education, school, high school and college, while the standard of living is measured by (PPP) per capita or income. To calculate the human development index, we use the following formula:

$$\frac{L_{\max} - L_c}{L_{\max} - L_{\min}}$$

L max represents the highest life expectancy, l min represents the lowest life expectancy in all countries surveyed, and Lc, the life expectancy rate in a particular country, which is to be compared with others. In other contexts, this formula is used for each specific criterion (Salhnsb 1998, 79).

The average of the three important elements, human development index, is calculated on a scale from zero to one (zero minimum and one maximum) in each community. If the Human development Index is 0/8 it indicates "high" values; between 0/5 and 0/8, it indicates "moderate expansion" and less than a 0/5 - the lowest (Plan and Budget Organization 2006, 3).

Results and discussion

In recent years increased pensions represents the growth of the human development index in Iran. For example, the increased index in 1991 was 0/670, while in 2007 was 0/788. However, the GDP index in 2007 is equal to 0/730, the education index - 0/851 and the life expectancy - 0/782. The life expectancy has increased from 0/755 in 2006 vs.0/782 in 2007. The education index follows a relatively similar trend and has been upgraded from 0/849 in 2006 vs. 0/851 in 2007.

The increase occurred in the above-mentioned components has led to a Human Development Index improvement from 0/777 in 2006 to 0/788 in 2007. It seems that this growth is mainly the result of improved oil revenues and is also the effect on the Iranian economy.

Table - GDP per capita (PPP) and the Human Development Index ranking (HDI) in selected countries.

Country	GDP per capita	HDI	Rank PPP	Rank HDI	The gap between PPP-HDI
Qatar	36632	%875	9	35	-26
Austria	36368	%948	10	15	-5
United Arabic Emirates	34109	%868	16	39	-23
Sweden	34735	%956	15	6	+9
Kuwait	20886	%891	36	33	+3
Hungary	20047	%874	38	36	+2
Saudi Arabia	16505	%812	46	61	-15
Argentina	16080	%869	49	38	+11
Libya	12848	%818	57	56	+1
Chilean	12811	%867	58	40	+18
Iran	8535	%759	79	94	-15
Panama	8593	%812	76	62	+14

Reference: World Bank, 2007

However, indicators of human development and the mismatch between the years 1992 and 2007 show a significant discrepancy between the overall index and the index shown above. The large differences in the level and dispersion of the provinces in terms of human development indicators can be seen.

Based on a comparison of classification in the country's first National Human Development Report of the Islamic Republic of Iran, provinces in 1992 are separable into three different groups: the first group of provinces with more than 0/750: Tehran, Qom, Isfahan, Shiraz, Yazd, Gilan, Semnan and center; group II, with an index of 0/750 to 0/650: Kermanshah, Khuzestan, Kerman, Mazandaran, East Azarbaijan, Bushehr, Ardebil, Khorasan, Hormozgan, Lorestan and Ilam; a third group of provinces with low human development below 0/650: the provinces of West Azarbaijan, Zanjan, Hamedan, Beautiful and Boyer Ahmad, Kurdistan and Sistan and Baluchestan. According to the Human Development Index of the table by the Vice President of Strategic Planning and Control (former

Budget and Planning), the human development index in Tehran, Isfahan, Qazvin, Gilan and Yazd is higher than in other provinces, due to the high indices of income, level of education and better life expectancy in the province. Human Development Index in Sistan-Baluchistan, Kurdistan and other provinces is lower, induced by low levels of education and health indicators such as life expectancy. Human Development Index in the two provinces is less than 0/67.

However, the human development index in the poorest provinces in the last decade has seen a growing trend, compared to provinces with higher human development index. The growth pole provinces have become capable to process the social and economic changes for the other provinces as well, they have the potential to increase the share of the poorest provinces in terms of investment, freedom of action, in the areas of decision making, encouragement of private sector activities, in the area of decentralization, decision making, and appropriate incentives for the production and economic activity.

In these circumstances, it is hoped that the development will happen smoother and more consistent in the whole country. The human development index, education index and life expectancy are in better condition than the income index. In 2006, the difference is visible at the national level and in the provinces. Provincial low income, lack of investment in economic infrastructure are major reasons for the failure to improve the livelihoods of poor communities and low-income groups. Due to the increase of per capita income, economic indicators are expected to improve slightly provinces and hence to offer better conditions for human development. There are limitations in the field of human development index states of the country, the lack of statistics on income and household expenditure being associated with this.

Conclusions

In this regard, the development effort of government and non-governmental organizations for the humanitarian needs of the people is necessary. To have an increasing life expectancy requires fundamental changes in the health system as well. Similarly, it is necessary to have a literacy program to increase

the literacy rate for adults in the various regions of Iran. However, nowadays, with only cosmetic changes in this sector, the rate cannot be raised to a considerable extent. As a result, there is an increasing need to invest in human development indicators of macroeconomic and fiscal management to trigger fundamental changes in the structure of society. Evaluation and statistics provided by international organizations show that human development indicators display a positive growth in Iran. According to such statistics, Anshan Iran's development is from 0/571 in 1975 compared to 0/759 in 2005. Sub-components of the index also show that changes in GDP, equivalent to 0/730, an education indicator of 0/851 and the life expectancy of 0/782. Due to the increase of national income per capita in 2007, the life expectancy of 0/755 in 2006 increased to 0/782 in 2007. The education index of 0/849 in 2006 increased to 0/851 in 2007, this leading to a growth of the human development index from 0/777 in 2006 to 0/788 in 2007.

Despite modest improvements in human development indicators in the balanced distribution of resources among the provinces, a positive outcome of development has tended to prevail in provinces and territories, these already having better social and economic conditions. The periphery tends to follow the models developed mainly in the center of Iran. In fact, the pursuit of human development indicators, including measures of social justice in the country, is clearly a growing trend.

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