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Regional Variation in the Education Sector of Bangladesh

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Abstract

Regional variation of different sectors is a common phenomenon in developing countries like Bangladesh due to economic, social and geographical factors. Education is a basic need as well as an important indicator of the development of a country, also has a regional variation on its distribution of the facilities. The study has assessed the regional variation in the education sector at district levels in Bangladesh. Through formal regionalization, the regional variation in the education sector has been assessed on the basis of some selected criteria like primary and secondary school enrollment, the number of primary and secondary schools, teacher-student ratio and literacy rates. The data were collected from BBS, BANBEIS, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education. The z-score method was used to standardize the data. The obtained composite index values were classified in equal class interval method and manual class interval method. The study found that spatial variation in the education sector is evident in the analysis of primary and secondary education conditions of Bangladesh. It is seen that “higher than average scored” region on the basis of the quality of education are mostly clustered in north-western (Thakurgaon, Rajshahi, Meherpur, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Dinajpur, Panchagarh) and southern-coastal (Jhalokathi, Pirojpur, Bagerhat) parts of the country. “Average region” has formed a belt continuing from the northeastern part to the southwestern part of the country. Two of the three districts of the extremely low region are scattered in the southern border (Cox's Bazar) and central parts (Narayanganj) of Bangladesh. Thus, the quality of education is very acute in the haor-prone northeastern part and hill tract areas where attention is required for development in this sector. The study has limitations to research in-depth to find out the causes of regional variation across Bangladesh. To reduce inequality among different regions of the country, the findings of this study may help policymakers to formulate education policy.

Keywords: *Regional variation , Formal Regionalization , Quality of Education*