

Original Article

Sustainable Development and Economic Equity in Kalyana Karnataka: A Pathway to Progress

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Abstract

Kalyana Karnataka, previously known as the Hyderabad-Karnataka region, comprises the districts of Bidar, Kalaburagi, Yadgir, Raichur, Koppal, Vijayanagar, and Ballari. This region is a significant area in Karnataka, India, characterized by its historical, cultural, and socio-economic diversity. Despite its rich heritage, the region faces significant developmental challenges, including poverty, unemployment, and inequality. This research article explores the interplay between sustainable development and economic justice in Kalyana Karnataka, highlighting strategies and policies for equitable growth while addressing environmental sustainability and social inclusion. The study emphasizes the need for a multidimensional approach to address systemic disparities and promote inclusive development. By analyzing the socio-economic status, infrastructure deficits, and policy implementation gaps, the article identifies actionable solutions to bridge inequalities. It also evaluates the role of government interventions like Article 371(J) and community-led initiatives in fostering economic empowerment and environmental sustainability. Through case studies of successful projects, the research underscores the potential of collaborative efforts in transforming the region into a model for balanced growth. To commemorate the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the liberation of Hyderabad and to instill the flame of patriotism in the minds of the youth, the Government of India decided to celebrate September 17 every year as Hyderabad Liberation Day. In 1948, when the state of Hyderabad was officially merged into India, some parts of it were included in the state of Karnataka. In 2019, the Hyderabad-Karnataka region was officially renamed as Kalyana-Karnataka. Ultimately, the study advocates for strengthening governance, enhancing education and healthcare, and leveraging local resources to ensure long-term prosperity and justice for all.

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While these initiatives have led to measurable improvements in areas such as education and public health, substantial gaps remain in achieving sustainable development and economic justice. The pursuit of sustainable development in Kalyana Karnataka is further complicated by environmental concerns, including resource depletion, land degradation, and water scarcity. These challenges call for a balanced approach that integrates economic growth with environmental conservation and social equity. Economic justice—defined by equitable access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making—is central to this vision.

This study aims to explore the interplay between sustainable development and economic justice in Kalyana Karnataka. By analyzing socio-economic indicators, infrastructure gaps, and policy implementation, it seeks to identify actionable strategies for promoting inclusive growth. Furthermore, the research highlights the role of community-led initiatives, government interventions, and innovative solutions in addressing systemic disparities and fostering long-term prosperity. In the subsequent sections, the paper delves into the socio-economic status of the region, evaluates existing policies, and proposes evidence-based recommendations to bridge inequalities and unlock the region's developmental potential. By focusing on collaborative governance and sustainable practices, this study aspires to present a roadmap for transforming Kalyana Karnataka into a model for balanced and inclusive growth.

Objectives:

1. To analyze the current socio-economic status of Kalyana Karnataka.
2. To identify key challenges in achieving sustainable development in the region.
3. To evaluate policies and programs aimed at economic justice.
4. To propose recommendations for fostering sustainable and inclusive growth.

Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data:

Quantitative Analysis: Statistical data from government reports, census records, and economic surveys.

Qualitative Analysis: Interviews with stakeholders, including policymakers, local leaders, and community members.

Case Studies: Examination of successful initiatives in the region that promote sustainable development and economic justice.

Socio-Economic Overview Of Kalyana Karnataka

Kalyana Karnataka, comprising six districts in the northern part of Karnataka—Bidar, Kalaburagi, Yadgir, Raichur, Koppal, Vijayanagar, and Ballari—faces significant socio-economic challenges. Recent reports highlight that Yadgir, Raichur, Kalaburagi, and Koppal are among the poorest districts in the state, with high poverty levels and low human development indices. The region's economy is predominantly agrarian, with limited industrial development, leading to low per capita income and high unemployment rates. Additionally, the area struggles with inadequate infrastructure, including poor healthcare facilities, limited access to quality education, and insufficient sanitation services, contributing to the region's overall underdevelopment.

To address these disparities, targeted interventions are essential. Implementing specialized schemes focusing on education, skill development, and infrastructure improvement can enhance human capital and economic opportunities. Strengthening local governance structures is also crucial to ensure effective implementation of development programs and to empower communities to actively participate in their own upliftment. By focusing on these areas, Kalyana Karnataka can work towards bridging the development gap and fostering sustainable socio-economic growth.

A collection of socioeconomic variables is used to determine how behind a place is in relation to others. Using a range of indicators, numerous studies have brought attention to the Kalyana Karnataka Region's developmental difficulties. The Parliamentary Standing Committee recognised these conclusions and proposed special status for the area, citing Article 371-J of the Constitution. It is well acknowledged that indicators play a crucial role in planning and tracking advancement towards attaining developmental goals. As essential instruments for achieving the Millennium Development Goals and their successor, the

Sustainable Development Goals, governments around the world are placing more and more importance on indicator frameworks and monitoring systems.

It is essential to regularly evaluate the socioeconomic growth of the area using a specific set of indicators in order to formulate and put into practice plans that aim to lessen regional disparities. A strong framework of indicators that is in line with the objectives and targets of regional development acts as a management tool to direct the distribution of resources and the formulation of strategies. Clause 12 of the Board Order 2013 states that the Board must utilise suitable indicators and consider the overall state development levels in order to periodically evaluate the relative levels of development across sectors in the region. The Board is additionally empowered by Clause 19 of the Board Order 2013 to get vital data from different State Government ministries, local organisations, and authorities in order to efficiently monitor these socioeconomic indicators.

Status of Kalyana Karnataka Region Based On Human Development Index

Regional development is evaluated using the Human Development Index (HDI), a multifaceted indicator. By separating qualitative from quantitative growth, human development offers a more complete perspective, according to the argument that emerged from criticism of using per capita income as the only indicator of development. While showing disparities among regions and groups, the HDI focusses on three main dimensions: income, education, and health. Nevertheless, it was observed that the Board in charge of regulating the Kalyana Karnataka (KK) Region's development had not put in place a system to routinely check the region's HDI data.

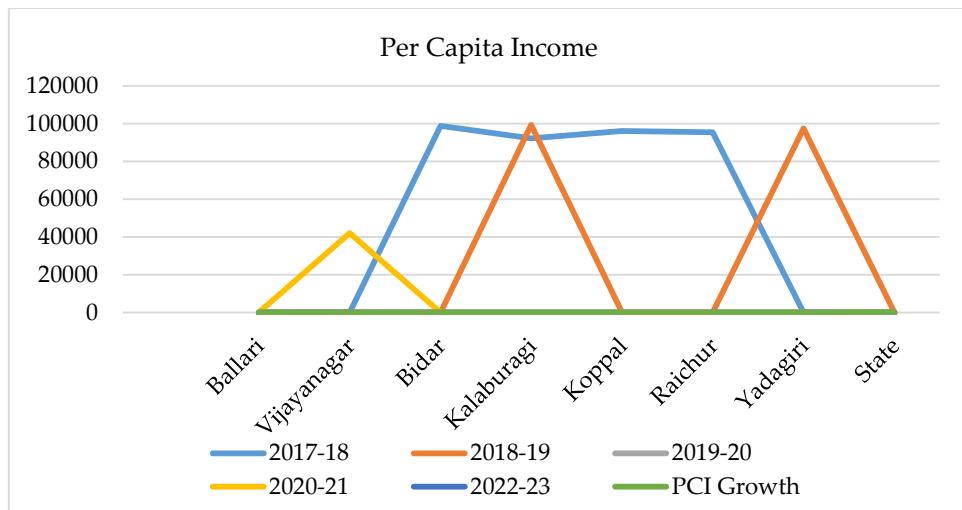
Per Capita Income

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) devised three key indicators that are used to compute HDI, and one of them is per capita income (PCI). For the years 2015–16 and 2022–23, an audit of the KK Region's PCI examined the discrepancy between its districts' PCI and the state average. The analysis's notable disparities highlighted the six districts' economic underdevelopment in the area. Table 2.2 displays the PCI trends from 2015–16 to 2022–23.

Table 1: Per Capita Income (PCI)

K K. Districts.	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2022-23	PCI Growth
Ballari	1,50,319	1,61,715	1,73,529	1,73,529	2,78,538	60.02
Vijayanagar	-	-	-	42,083	1,59,868	03.26
Bidar	98,754	1,00,234	1,11,750	1,11,750	1,52,141	47.99
Kalaburagi	92,098	99,322	1,00,446	1,00,446	1,39,361	50.03
Koppal	96,036	1,00,497	1,10,886	1,10,886	1,52,489	57.66
Raichur	95,451	1,05,654	1,16,389	1,16,389	1,52,489	63.66
Yadagiri	1,03,677	97,353	1,12,937	1,12,937	1,53,247	63.68
State	1,88,765	2,05,697	2,20,002	2,22,002	3,04,474	76.82

(Source: Economic Survey of Karnataka)



Sustainable Development Goals Indicator Framework

The United Nations established the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), commonly known as the Global Goals, in 2015 to address important global issues such as promoting peace and prosperity by 2030, protecting the environment, and reducing poverty. Encapsulated in 17 goals and 169 targets, these objectives cover social, economic, and environmental aspects and provide a thorough framework for successful policymaking. Translating these global goals into local action in Kalyana, Karnataka, requires the active participation of elected leaders from Panchayati Raj Institutions, Urban Local Bodies, district administrations, and frontline workers. Increasing awareness among stakeholders is crucial for promoting ownership, ensuring that the SDGs are localised, and influencing behavioural changes that are necessary for sustainable and equitable development.

Under Article 371-J, the Kalyana Karnataka Board is mandated to address socio-economic disparities and foster regional development, aligning its policies and strategies with the SDGs. However, the Board has yet to develop a strategy for achieving the SDGs in the region, nor has it mapped existing government schemes against SDG targets to identify and address gaps. Moreover, data collection and analysis using backwardness indicators, whether based on the Nanjundappa Committee or SDG frameworks, have been neglected. The Government of India's National SDG Indicator Framework (NIF) provides a robust mechanism for monitoring progress, but the Board has not utilized this

framework to track advancements in sustainable development.

To promote economic equity within the region, a composite SDG index disaggregated by districts and taluks is essential. Such an index would enable tracking progress on individual goals and offer a comprehensive measure of development across the region. Despite the potential for fostering competition and accountability among sub-regions, no such index has been developed. Additionally, Kalyana Karnataka has significant potential for environmental SDG initiatives, such as wind power generation and eco-tourism, which can contribute to economic growth while preserving the environment. The absence of targeted interventions in these areas highlights the need for proactive measures to bridge development gaps and ensure sustainable and equitable progress in the region.

Health and Development in Kalyana Karnataka

Health and development are inextricably intertwined and have a variety of effects on one another. Differences in economic development and unequal access to high-quality healthcare services are frequently the causes of regional health disparities. In order to evaluate and enhance health results in undeveloped areas, NITI Aayog's Aspirational Districts Programme established 13 important indicators under the Health and Nutrition topic. When compared to the rest of the state, the performance of a few of these metrics in the Kalyana Karnataka (KK) Region reveals substantial gaps that require attention.

Quality of Care for Pregnant Women

Reducing avoidable maternal and infant mortality requires putting women's and children's

health and wellbeing first. Every woman, child, and adolescent should have access to high-quality healthcare throughout their lives, according to the global vision. The time following childbirth is especially important for moms and babies to ensure good health outcomes.

Ante Natal Care

The KK Region continues to face ongoing issues, according to a review of Ante Natal Care (ANC) statistics. The KK Region's percentage of expectant mothers who received at least three ANC checks in 2014–15 was far lower than the state average. Despite considerable improvement, the region's percentage of pregnant women obtaining four or more ANC checks by 2020–21 remained below the state norm. In order to improve outcomes for women and newborns, these patterns highlight the necessity of focused measures to increase the

region's access to and quality of maternal healthcare services.

Table 2: Ante Natal Care (ANC) for pregnant women in Kalyana Karnataka Region during 2015–2016 and 2020–2021

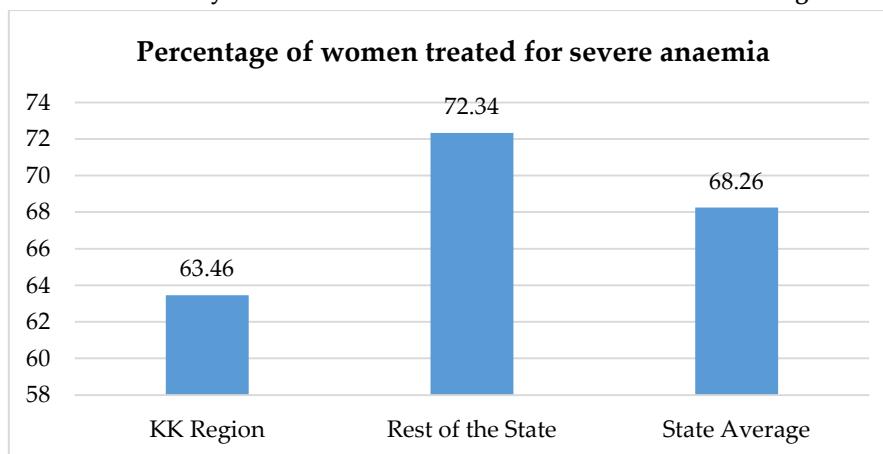
Region	2015-16 (A N C)	2020-21 (A N C)
KK Region	86.27	87.31
Rest of the State	97.99	90.32
State Average	95.23	89.6

Source: Data obtained from Health and Family Welfare Department

Women treated for severe anaemia

As seen in Chart 2.8 below, Audit found that the KK Region had the lowest percentage of women treated for severe anaemia, at 62.47 percent, compared to the state average of 71.34 percent.

Chart 2. Analysis of women treated with severe Anaemia in KK Region



Source: Data obtained from Health and Family Welfare Department

Demographics and Economy

As per the 2011 Census, the region had a population of approximately 11.29 million, with a density of 260 people per square kilometer. The literacy rate stood at 54.24%, significantly lower than the state average of 67%, indicating substantial educational challenges. The region also has a high percentage of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, contributing to its socio-economic complexities.

Economically, Kalyana Karnataka is predominantly agrarian, with agriculture employing about 75% of the labor force. The major crops include cotton, jowar, groundnuts, rice, sunflowers, and cereals. However, the region faces

challenges such as low per capita income, inadequate infrastructure, and high poverty levels. For instance, the per capita income in the Kalaburagi division was the lowest in the state at ₹56,648 in 2012-13, compared to ₹1.09 lakh in Bengaluru. Additionally, the region has a high infant mortality rate and malnutrition among women and children, highlighting the need for comprehensive development initiatives.

The percentage of institutional deliveries in each of the six districts of the Kalyana Karnataka (KK) Region increased, according to a study of data from the family health surveys conducted in 2015–16 and 2019–20. Nonetheless, institutional delivery rates in five of the six districts remained below the

state average. This disparity is largely attributed to the insufficient availability of Primary Health Centres (PHCs), First Referral Unit (FRU) facilities, and qualified medical professionals, as detailed in subsequent sections.

Despite receiving a larger share of funds from the Board, as discussed in Kalaburagi district exhibited a decline of 2.4% in institutional deliveries during the NFHS-5 period, making it the least-performing district in the state. Similarly, while

institutional birth rates in Raichur and Koppal districts showed marginal improvements, these districts ranked as the second and third least-performing in the state during the NFHS-5 period. These findings emphasize the urgent need for equitable allocation of resources and focused interventions to strengthen healthcare infrastructure and improve maternal and child health outcomes in the region.

Table 3: Percentage of Institutional births in KK Region

KK Districts	NFHS 4. 2015-2016	NFHS5. 2019-2020	Increase
Kalaburagi	92.1	87.6	-3.2
Raichur	78.6	87.8	9.4
Koppal	85.9	91.2	6.3
Yadagiri	90.8	94.6	3.1
Ballari	87.1	95.7	9.8
Bidar	98.2	99.6	1.2
State Average	95.02	97.03	3.4

Conclusion

The study of sustainable development and economic justice in Kalyana Karnataka reveals a region with immense potential for growth, yet burdened by historical inequalities and systemic challenges. Despite significant government initiatives and programs aimed at fostering equitable growth, the region continues to face barriers related to social inequality, resource management, and environmental degradation. Achieving sustainable development in Kalyana Karnataka requires an integrated approach that balances environmental conservation, economic growth, and social equity. Strengthening policies to address issues such as unemployment, illiteracy, and healthcare disparities, particularly in marginalized communities, is essential. Empowering local populations through participatory governance, skill-building programs, and access to education can help bridge the gap between policy and implementation. From an environmental perspective, sustainable practices in agriculture, renewable energy adoption, and water conservation hold the potential to address the ecological concerns of the region while simultaneously creating new livelihood opportunities. These efforts must be supported by technology-driven solutions and community-based approaches to ensure long-term success.

Economic justice, as a cornerstone of sustainable development, demands fair distribution of resources and opportunities. Special attention should be paid to caste- and gender-based inequalities that persist in the region. Policies focusing on inclusivity—such as providing better access to education, vocational training, and microfinance—can uplift disadvantaged groups and bring them into the mainstream economy. While challenges persist, Kalyana Karnataka has shown promising signs of progress through successful case studies and government-backed development initiatives. The establishment of the Kalyana Karnataka Regional Development Authority (KKRDA) and targeted investments in infrastructure and social welfare indicate a positive trajectory for the region. However, these efforts need to be scaled up, with better accountability, community engagement, and innovation in policy implementation.

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Conflicts of interest

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