

Elections: On Basic Socio-economic Indicators, How Do Haryana and J&K Perform?

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(This is a series of two articles written from the shared findings of the Access (In)Equality Index, produced by the Centre for New Economics Studies, OP Jindal Global University, critically analysing the status of access inequity in four election states, ie, Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana, Maharashtra and Jharkhand.)

As the elections in Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir draw near, it becomes crucial to evaluate the performance of respective governments in ensuring their respective state population's access to opportunities for their citizens. The question we ask/assess here is to what extent have any meaningful strides been made in improving access to basic amenities like healthcare, education, socio-economic security, and legal recourse? How effectively are the state administrations tackling the entrenched inequalities within their regions?

The progress—or the lack of it—in these areas provides a window into how governments are prioritising the needs of their populations. Are they narrowing the gap between the privileged and the marginalised, providing access to all, or are they allowing disparities to widen further?

Also Read

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The data on Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana for this article is drawn from a recent study [based on an index constructed by the Centre for New Economic Studies \(CNES\) at OP Jindal Global University.](#)

Although “access” in general means a way of approaching, reaching, or entering a place, as the right or opportunity to reach, use or visit, it is here (in the AEI index) broadly conceptualised to encompass the “4As” – availability, approachability, affordability and appropriateness.

Our index includes five fundamental pillars of assessment for states across India:

1. Access to basic amenities
2. Access to healthcare
3. Access to education
4. Access to socio-economic security
5. Access to legal recourse

For Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana, we analyse their current access (in)equality scenario and the progress made with respect to five key areas.

Also Read

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Jammu and Kashmir

The upcoming elections in Jammu and Kashmir are historically significant, marking the first in a decade after losing its ‘statehood’ and special status under Article 370 in 2019.

Scheduled in three phases between September and October, they come at a critical juncture for the region.

Among union territories, Jammu and Kashmir has been the worst-performing union territory overall, with a composite index score score of 0.33. Compared to other states too, it would be placed just above Bihar as the second worst-performing, among the lowest performers.

On measuring access to basic amenities, Jammu and Kashmir ranked last with a score of 0.37, well below the union territory median of 0.56. Only 42.7% of its population resides in *pucca* houses, and just 45% of households have access to clean cooking fuel.

Figure 1 helps us understand how Jammu and Kashmir fares in comparison to other union territories in terms of access to basic amenities.

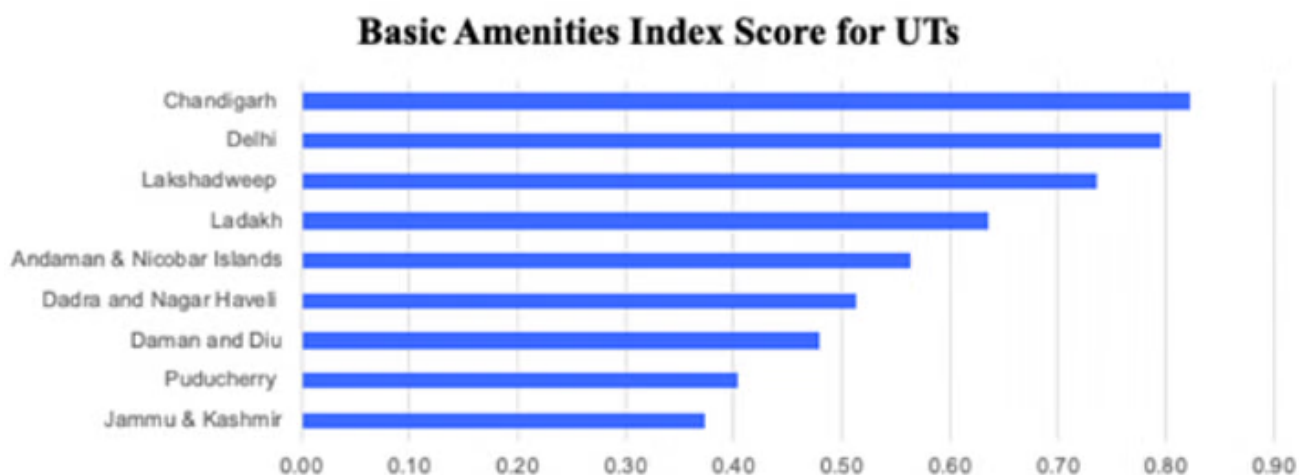


Figure 1: Basic Amenities Index Score for UTs

Source: [Access \(In\)Equality Report 2024](#)

The education sector paints a similarly bleak picture, with Jammu and Kashmir performing the worst, as only 29.7% of schools have functional internet and a low net enrolment ratio of 31%. Surprisingly, in healthcare, the region performs comparatively better, ranking seventh among nine UTs, with 92.4% institutional births and 80.9% of the mothers having at least four antenatal visits, shedding light on the improved maternal care infrastructure over the years, Figure 2 helps unpack how well Jammu and Kashmir performs in comparison to other union territories in terms of access to health.

On the socio-economic front, Jammu and Kashmir fared well, ranking third, with 95.3% of the population having bank accounts, However, on the social front, only 31.3% of the disabled population received public assistance.

Health Index Score for UTs

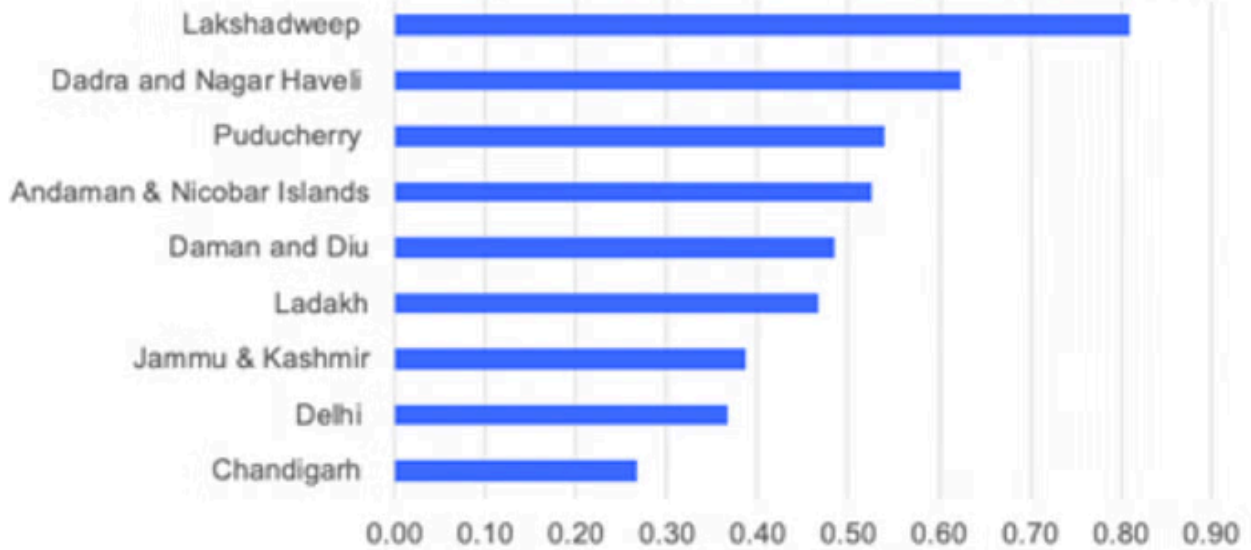


Figure 2: Health Index Score for UTs

(Source : [Access \(In\)Equality Report 2024](#))

The legal recourse landscape presented mixed outcomes. While the total number of police stations stood at 250, women made up only 3.3% of the police force.

Overall, Jammu and Kashmir presents a mixed landscape, with progress in some sectors offset by significant shortcomings in others. While the union territory struggles with access to basic amenities and education, it has shown improvements in healthcare and financial inclusion.

Also Read

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The Haryana Story

Turning to Haryana, which is also set to hold elections next month, the state has emerged as one of the top performers, ranking seventh overall. Its rank improved from being 11th in 2021 to seventh in 2024 indicating immense progress in increasing access to opportunities and

reducing disparities. In terms of access to basic amenities, Haryana ranked fourth, with 76.5% of households living in *pucca* houses and 100% of eligible individuals covered under the National Food Security Act.

Figure 3 shows how Haryana performs compared to other states on the pillar of access to basic amenities.



Figure 3: Basic Amenities Index Score for States

(Source: [Access \(In\)Equality Report 2024](#))

However, the healthcare landscape paints a less favourable picture, with Haryana ranking 19th. Child mortality stands at 38.7%, and only 25.7% of the population is covered by any form of health insurance. The pupil-to-teacher ratio is concerningly high at 25:1, while the average drop-out rate is favourably low at 5.9%.

At the front of socio-economic security, 91.9% of the population has access to banking services and 12.42 digital transactions take place on per capita basis which is much higher than the national average.

On legal recourse, while the state boasts of having 500 functional e-courts, it faces challenges with a ratio of only one officer per 163 inmates and overcrowding of prisons. Figure 4 looks at how the state performs compared to others. There are critical gendered issues around 'access' here which warrant a separate conversation (more details on data accessible from the report [here](#)).



Figure 4: Legal Recourse Index Score for States

(Source : [Access \(In\)Equality Report 2024](#))

For Haryana, while its overall performance has been commendable on this pillar’s relative performance to others (and other states), there remain specific areas that require closer attention and targeted intervention. Despite its strong showing in basic amenities and financial inclusion, pressing concerns persist in healthcare and education.

Conclusion

While Jammu and Kashmir struggles with access to basic amenities and education, it has shown improvements in healthcare and financial inclusion. Haryana, though a top performer overall, faces significant issues in healthcare, education, and legal recourse.

Moving forward, both states would need to prioritise infrastructure improvements, healthcare reforms, and educational advancements to improve their ‘access’ performance. Addressing these gaps through targeted policy interventions will be crucial for ensuring more inclusive and equitable growth.

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