



## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL INDICATORS AMONG BRICS AND SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES

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### Abstract

The present study tries to find out the position of BRICS countries and South Asian countries in terms of social indicators. The present study finds out that the performance of India in social indicators is worst among BRICS nations despite of highest growth of India among these nations. This paper analyze IMR (Infant Mortality Rate) of India is more than other BRICS nations and even greater than of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Infant mortality rate of India is only lesser than of Pakistan. Out of pocket health expenditure in India is more than other BRICS nations except Russia. It suggests that government expenditure on health in India is lesser than other BRICS nations and this is the reason that households have to make expenditure to get medical facilities, treatment by their out of pocket. This paper also finds that GER in secondary schools in India is far below than other BRICS countries and even far below than Sri Lanka, but GER in secondary schools in India is higher than of Pakistan and Bangladesh. This paper also finds that literacy rate of males and females in BRICS country in almost same except India. Male literacy rate in India is higher than the female literacy rate. The reason for gender inequality in terms of education in India is the discrimination for females in most of the families.

**Keywords:** BRICS, Infant Mortality Rate, Out of Pocket Health Expenditure, Gross Enrolment Ratio.

### Introduction

BRICS countries are in the limelight from past few years as countries among BRICS constitute fastest growing economies in the world. Considering the fact that today India is the fastest growing economy among BRICS countries and in the world, therefore it will be quite interesting to compare the social indicators of India with other BRICS nations. This paper will also compare the performance of social indicators of India with its neighbouring countries. It has been said that there is need to increase the public expenditure in health and education in India. Today, Public expenditure on Health is less than 3% of GDP in India and in education it is just above 3% of GDP in India. But government expenditure in India in health and education is quite low as compare to other BRICS countries and also very lesser than of Advanced Countries.

### Literature Review

Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen, (2013) "An Uncertain glory: India and its contradictions" compared the performance of India's social indicators specially Education and Health with other BRIC nations and found that despite India's highest growth among BRIC nations, India is falling behind in terms of social Indicators as compare to other BRIC nations. They also found that India is also lagging behind as compare to Bangladesh, Sri Lanka in health indicators and education indicators but is ahead of Pakistan.

Geeta Gandhi Kingondon, (2007) "The progress of school education in India" found India performed better compared to Bangladesh and Pakistan but is lagging behind other BRIC countries especially China. Considering the primary education India is now at par with other BRIC countries in terms of enrolment ratio in primary schools. But She found that attendance and retention rates are very low as compare to other BRIC nations and enrolment in secondary education is far below the enrolment rates in other BRIC countries especially China.

Rama Baru et al, (2010) "Inequities in Access to health services in India: Caste, Class and region" found that even after the economic reforms the health sector did not perform well in India. Its performance was very uneven. Ironically inequalities in health sector has increased overtime and even widened across states, between rural and urban areas, and within communities in India.

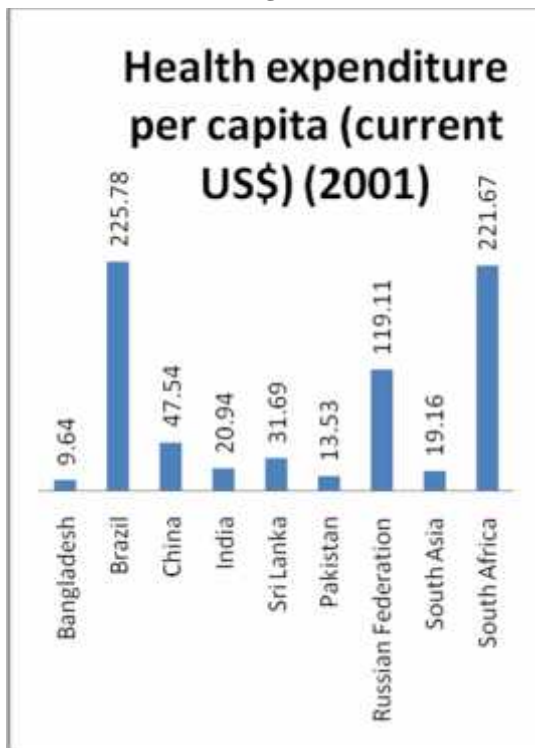
### Data

We have taken data from World Bank for BRICS countries and some of the South Asian countries for the country wise comparison of social indicators especially education and health. The period of study is from year 2001 to 2015.

**Results**

**Comparison of health indicators among BRICS Countries and some of South Asian Countries**

**Figure 1**



**Figure 2**

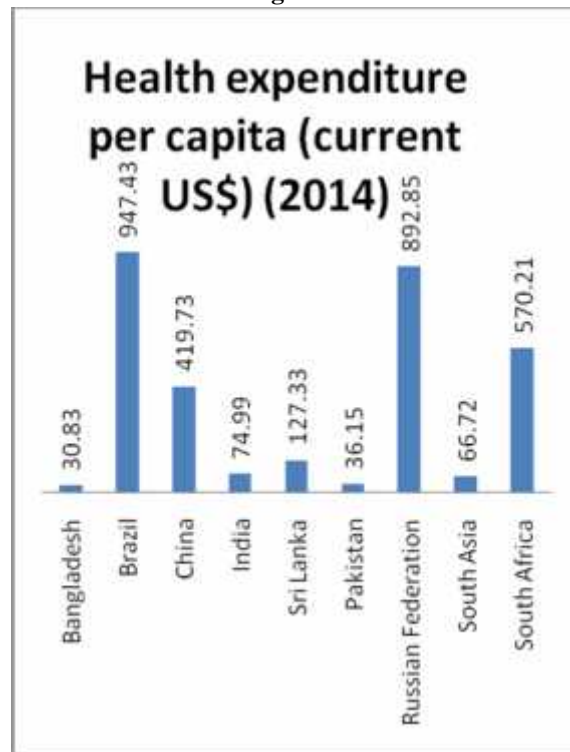


Figure 1 and 2 explain the per capita health expenditure of BRICS countries and some of South Asian countries. From the above figures, it has been clearly seen that the per capita health expenditure has been increased from year 2001 to 2014. The reason for increased per capita health expenditure is the increase in the per capita Income because with the increase in per capita income expenditure also increases and also the government expenditure on health also increased.

But figure 2 suggests that despite of increased in per capita expenditure in India; its per capita expenditure on health is very less as compare to all other BRICS countries even in year 2014. Per capita health expenditure of India is also less than Sri Lanka but is more than of Pakistan and Bangladesh.

**Figure 3**

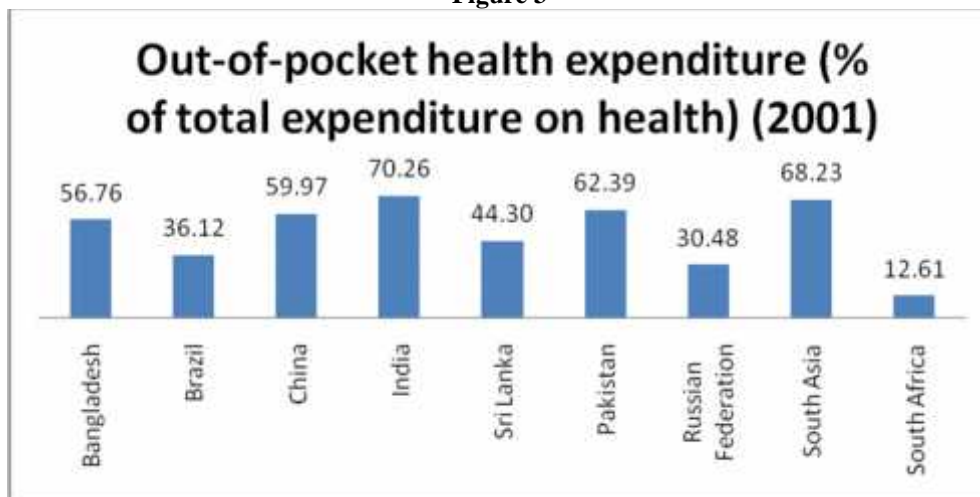


Figure 4

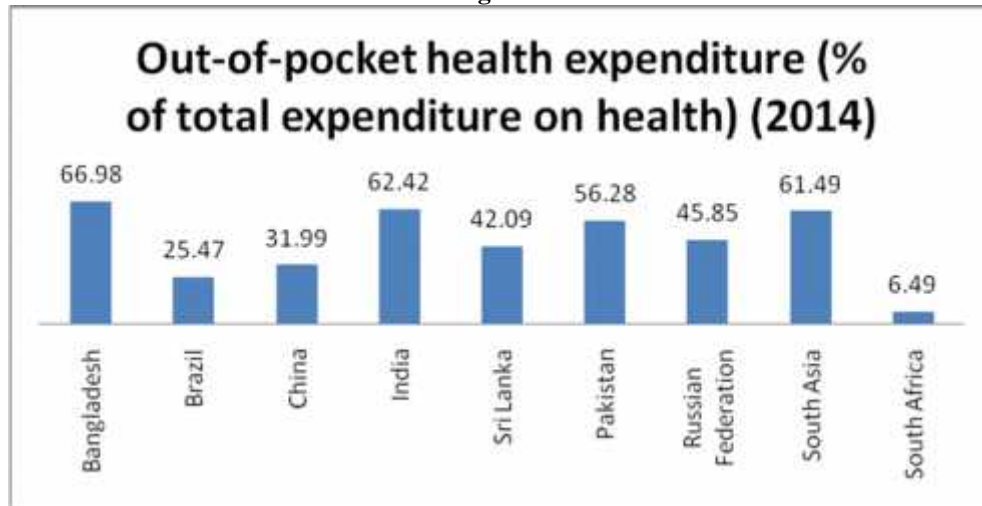


Figure 3 and Figure 4 explains the out of pocket health expenditure. The out of pocket health expenditure in India has reduced from 70.26% to 62.42% from year 2001 to 2013. The out of pocket expenditure in India has reduced because government expenditure on health has increased and accordingly it helps households and save their out of pocket expenditure.

But it can be seen in figure 4 that the out of pocket health expenditure in India is more than other BRICS nations except Russia. It suggests that government expenditure on health in India is lesser than other BRICS nations and this is the reason that households have to make expenditure to get medical facilities, treatment by their out of pocket.

Figure 5

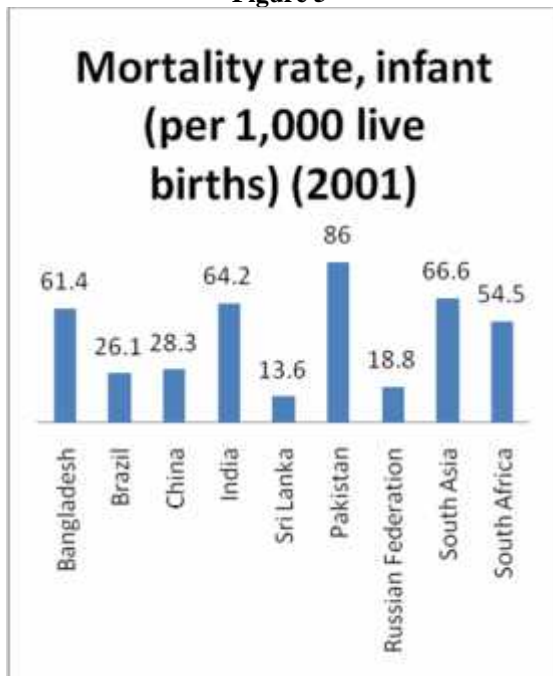


Figure 6

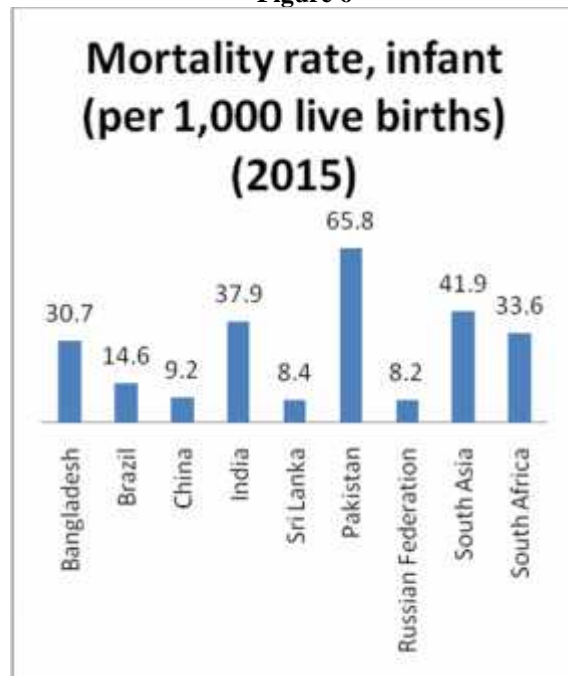


Figure 5 and 6 describe the infant mortality rate of BRICS nations and some other south Asian nations. The infant mortality rate has been declined in all the above mentioned countries from period 2001 to 2015. Medical facilities have improved and are continuously increasing and it resulted in decline in the infant mortality rate. But, the infant mortality rate in India is more than the other BRICS nations and even greater than of Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Infant mortality rate of India is only lesser than of Pakistan.

**Comparison of Education indicators among BRICS Countries and some of South Asian Countries**

**Figure 7**

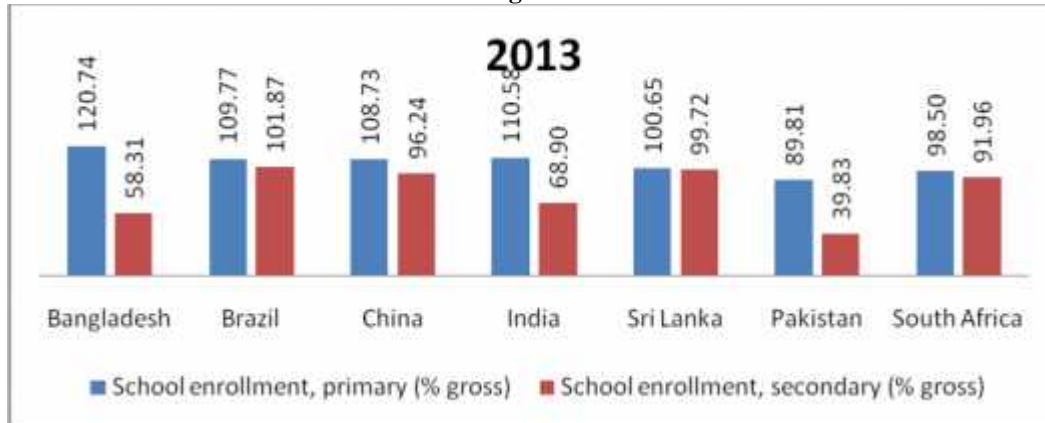


Figure 7 explains the gross enrolment ratio in primary schools and gross enrolment ratio in secondary schools. Gross enrolment ratio in primary schools in India is at par with the GER (gross enrolment ratio) in primary schools in other BRICS nations and also at par with Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and is higher than of Pakistan. But the above figure also suggests that the GER in secondary schools in India is far below than other BRICS countries and even far below than Sri Lanka, but GER in secondary schools in India is higher than of Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The above result is in contrast with what the theory suggests. The theory suggests that the higher the education, higher is the level of income. But if higher education leads to high income then why there is lesser GER in secondary schools than of primary schools in India? Why there is drop out from secondary schools? There are two factors as suggested by Geeta Gandhi Kingdon, (2007) “The progress of school education in India” and these factors are demand side and supply side. The supply side factor is that the number of secondary schools in India is only around one-fourth of primary schools. This lead to drop out of students specially of girls students because some parents of girls student do not allow their daughter to go to the schools which are located far from their homes. Secondary schools are at more distance because their number is only around one fourth as compare to primary schools. The demand side factor for drop out is the income constraint of households. India is a country with the poverty rate more than 28% and most of the families cannot afford to send their children to schools for more than 5 years.

**Figure 8**

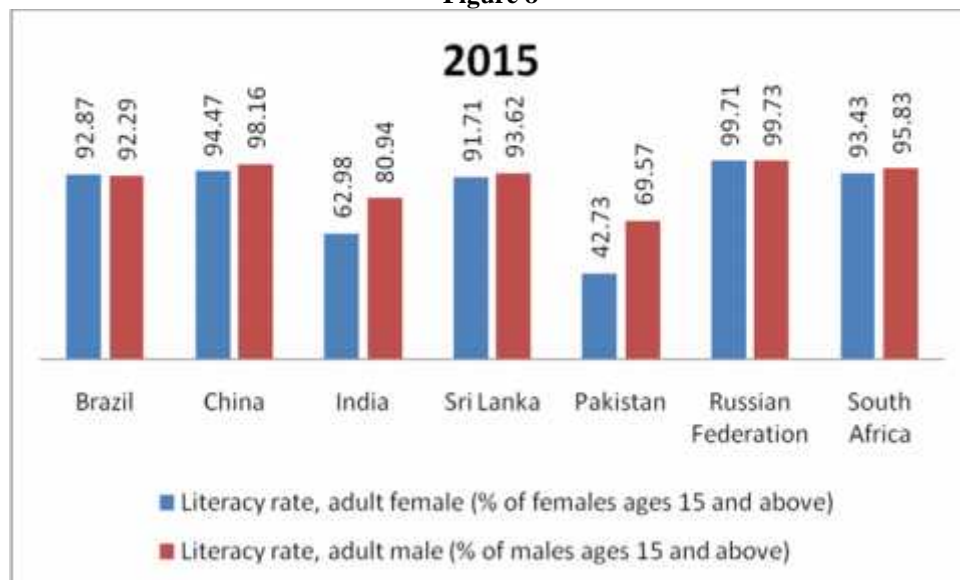




Figure 8 explains male and female literacy rates in BRICS countries and some of south Asian countries. The objective is to find out the gender inequality in the above countries. The figure suggests that the literacy rate of males and females in BRICS country is almost the same except India. Male literacy rate in India is higher than the female literacy rate. The reason for gender inequality in terms of education in India is the discrimination for females in most of the families.

### **Conclusion**

The above discussion suggests that India is falling behind in terms of social indicators specially health and education as compared to other BRICS nations i.e. Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa. In fact, Sri Lanka is also ahead of India in all social indicators and also even Bangladesh is ahead of India in most of the social indicators. So, for overall development the level of education and health should be increased. Currently, Public expenditure on Health is less than 3% of GDP in India and in education it is just above 3% of GDP in India. But government expenditure in India in health and education is quite low as compared to other BRICS countries and also very lesser than of Advanced Countries. So, there is a need to increase in the public expenditure in Health and education in India.

### **References**

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4. World Bank Database.