Region-Related Equity

Region-related disparity is of two major kinds: urban-rural disparity and regional disparity within countries. Each of these is considered here in turn. This section also presents a case study of the PRC, comments on the scale and nature of urban poverty, and identifies policy implications.

Urban-Rural Disparities

Tables 23-28 show that literacy and enrollment rates are in general higher in urban regions across countries and over time. Gender, income, and regional equity problems are often closely related to one another. This means that rural poor females are the most vulnerable group. For example in Afghanistan, Nepal, and Pakistan, the literacy rates for males in urban regions were about twice those in rural regions in 1980. For females, the rates were respectively 9.5 times, 4.3 times, and 5.3 times those of rural regions in these countries (Table 23).

The gap in school completion rates is also wide. Referring to the rate of secondary school completion in DMCs, Table 24 shows that in 1980 the completion rates of males in urban areas were three to five times those of their rural counterparts. Whereas the completion rates of females in urban areas were three to ten times those of their rural counterparts, the urban/rural

Table 23: Literacy Rates by Region and Gender in Selected DMCs, 1970s and 1980s

	Circa 1970						*Circa 1980*					
	Male			*Female*			*Male*			*Female*		
Country	*U %*	*R %*	*U/R*	*U %*	*R %*	*U/R*	*U %*	*R %*	*U/R*	*U %*	*R %*	*U/R*
Afghanistan	43.8	18.7	2.3	16.5	0.6	27.5	52.3	26.3	2.0	20.8	2.2	9.5
Bangladesh	57.9	34.6	1.7	33.2	11.5	2.9	58.0	35.5	1.6	34.1	15.3	2.2
India	72.4	40.6	1.8	45.5	13.0	3.5	76.4	47.3	1.6	51.9	17.6	2.9
Indonesia	87.7	65.5	1.3	66.2	40.1	1.7	91.1	73.2	1.2	75.9	52.2	1.5
Korea, Rep. of	98.0	91.5	1.1	90.7	73.4	1.2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Malaysia	80.1	64.1	1.2	55.3	36.8	1.5	88.1	74.3	1.2	72.0	53.0	1.4
Nepal	73.4	26.1	2.8	27.4	2.3	11.9	59.7	29.6	2.0	33.0	7.6	4.3
Pakistan	50.1	22.0	2.3	28.9	4.2	6.9	56.9	26.6	2.1	35.9	6.8	5.3
Philippines	94.0	79.6	1.2	91.3	75.3	1.2	94.1	77.6	1.2	92.3	76.1	1.2
Sri Lanka	90.6	85.1	1.1	80.3	65.1	1.2	95.6	89.3	1.1	90.8	78.6	1.2
Thailand	93.7	86.1	1.1	81.9	68.4	1.2	—	—	—	—	—	—

— Data not available.
U = Urban population; R = Rural population; U/R = Urban/Rural ratio.
Note: Data refer to population 15 years old and over.

Source: ADB 1993, 140-5.

Table 24: Population that has Completed Secondary School by Region and Gender, Selected DMCs, 1970s-1990s

	Circa 1970						Circa 1980						Latest					
	Male			Female			Male			Female			Male			Female		
Country	U %	R %	U/R	U %	R %	U/R	U %	R %	U/R	U %	R %	U/R	U %	R %	U/R	U %	R %	U/R
Korea, Rep. of	26.6	11.9	2.2	14.6	2.6	5.6	41.5	22.1	1.9	26.7	7.7	3.5	39.8	26.8	1.5	32.3	13.1	2.5
Indonesia	13.6	1.8	7.6	9.0	0.5	18.0	21.4	4.3	5.0	11.9	1.7	7.0	32.0	7.2	4.4	18.6	3.0	6.2
Malaysia	—	—	—	—	—	—	4.9	1.7	2.9	2.9	0.8	3.6	—	—	—	—	—	—
Philippines	15.8	4.4	3.6	10.6	2.3	4.6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Viet Nam	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	20.3	4.3	4.7	15.2	2.8	5.4
Afghanistan	6.6	1.6	4.1	2.6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bangladesh	—	—	—	—	—	—	16.4	5.1	3.2	5.7	0.6	9.5	—	—	—	—	—	—
India	17.0	4.6	3.7	7.1	0.6	11.8	37.1	8.6	4.3	17.8	1.7	10.5	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nepal	—	—	—	—	—	—	23.4	6.1	3.8	10.9	0.7	15.6	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pakistan	—	—	—	—	—	—	38.8	6.2	6.3	32.1	0.7	45.9	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sri Lanka	2.2	1.5	1.5	2.1	1.2	1.8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Vanuatu	—	—	—	—	—	—	8.2	1.7	4.8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

— Data not available.
U = Urban population; R = Rural population; U/R = Urban/Rural ratio.
Note: Data refer to population 20 years old and over.

Source: ADB 1993, 152-7.

Table 25: Population of University Graduates by Region and Gender in Selected DMCs, 1970s-1990s

	Circa 1970						Circa 1980						Latest					
	Male			Female			Male			Female			Male			Female		
Country	U %	R %	U/R	U %	R %	U/R	U %	R %	U/R	U %	R %	U/R	U %	R %	U/R	U %	R %	U/R
Korea, Rep. of	12.7	2.0	6.4	2.6	0.2	13.0	16.1	3.1	5.2	4.9	0.5	9.8	16.9	4.1	4.1	5.7	0.9	6.3
Indonesia	3.0	0.2	15.0	0.9	—	—	5.0	0.5	10.0	2.1	0.2	10.5	5.3	0.7	7.6	1.9	0.2	9.5
Malaysia	—	—	—	—	—	—	3.8	0.7	5.4	1.2	0.2	6.0	—	—	—	—	—	—
Philippines	23.6	4.2	5.6	18.7	3.8	4.9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Viet Nam	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	10.0	1.7	5.9	4.7	0.8	5.9
Afghanistan	5.7	0.3	19.0	0.3	0.3	1.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bangladesh	—	—	—	—	—	—	7.6	6.4	1.2	1.7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
India	6.3	0.5	12.6	1.6	—	—	10.8	1.5	7.2	4.1	0.2	20.5	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nepal	—	—	—	—	—	—	7.9	0.5	15.8	2.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pakistan	—	—	—	—	—	—	7.5	0.8	9.4	2.5	0.1	25.0	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sri Lanka	2.4	0.6	4.0	1.1	0.2	5.5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Solomon Islands	—	—	—	—	—	—	11.1	2.7	4.1	8.7	1.1	7.9	—	—	—	—	—	—

— Data not available.
U = Urban population; R = Rural population; U/R = Urban/Rural ratio.
Note: Data refer to population 25 years old and over.

Source: ADB 1993, 161-6.

completion ratio was as high as 45.9 times in Pakistan and 15.6 times in Nepal. It is not surprising that the urban-rural gap is even wider in tertiary enrollments. In India and Pakistan, the tertiary enrollment rates of females in urban areas were respectively 20.5 and 25.0 times those of females in rural areas (Table 25).

Looking at India specifically, illiteracy in rural areas exceeds that in urban areas, but the pattern is reversed in enrollments. Moreover, females accounted for 80.1 percent of rural illiteracy, whereas the corresponding proportion of male illiteracy was just about half in 1981. Referring to education enrollments,

it is also clear that the higher the level of education, the wider the gap between urban and rural areas. In terms of male enrollments, the urban/rural ratio was 1.2 at the secondary level. It rose to 3.2 at the matriculation level, and further to 3.8 at the diploma level. The urban-rural gap was even wider among females. The urban/rural ratio was 2.2 at the secondary level. It rose to 7.4 at the matriculation level, but dropped slightly to 5.0 at the diploma level. Despite a small decrease in the urban-rural gap, the gap among females was still obviously wider than that among males at the diploma level (Table 26).

Nevertheless, in some countries urban-rural differences in education access are minimal. For example, enrollment rates are close to equal between urban and rural areas at a ratio of 1.1:1 in the Philippines and Sri Lanka across age groups, 1.1:1 in Viet Nam at the primary level, and 1.2:1 in Cambodia at the literacy level. In the Philippines, however, survival rates are higher in urban areas than in rural areas at an urban/rural ratio of 1.4:1. Moreover, the urban poor have slightly better education opportunities than the rural poor (Balisacan 1996, 526). The Republic of Korea has achieved parity between urban and rural enrollments, but this only applies to the school level. The urban-rural gap emerges in tertiary enrollments at a ratio of 2.4:1 (Table 27).

Regional differences in enrollments are also more obvious among females at higher levels of education. Inequality in access to education is not only higher in rural than urban regions, but also seems to have increased over time (Gertler and Rahman 1994, 155-6; Jayaweera 1991, Appendix 1, 2; Maitra, 1985; McDonald 1995, 26).

It is interesting to note that the Philippines, in respect to higher education female enrollments, has a far higher proportion of enrollments from rural

Table 26: Education Level of Population by Residence in India, 1981

	Male			*Female*		
Level of education	***U%***	***R%***	***U/R***	***U%***	***R%***	***U/R***
Illiterate	34.2	59.2	0.6	52.2	80.1	0.6
High school	42.4	34.5	1.2	35.6	16.5	2.2
Matriculation level	16.9	5.3	3.2	9.3	1.3	7.4
Diploma	0.7	0.2	3.8	0.2	0.04	5.0

U = Urban population; R = Rural population; U/R = Urban/Rural ratio.

Source: United Nations 1995, 29.

Table 27: Student Enrollment Rate by Education Level and Region in the Republic of Korea, 1985

Level of education	***Urban (%)***	***Rural (%)***	***Urban/Rural***
Primary school	100.6	104.4	1.0
Middle school	98.6	99.8	1.0
High school	89.7	80.0	1.1
University/College	44.9	18.6	2.4

Source: Chung and Oh 1994, 326.

backgrounds in most regions. Table 28 shows that the rural/urban ratio could be as high as 7 in Region X, but that Regions III and V and the National Capital Region (NCR) were approaching equality. The better universities are situated

Table 28: Percentage of Female Students from Urban and Rural Backgrounds by Region in the Philippines, 1970s and 1980s

	1975/76			*1980/81*			*1985/86*		
Region	***U%***	***R%***	***U/R***	***U%***	***R%***	***U/R***	***U%***	***R%***	***U/R***
Region I	15.0	46.5	0.32	14.9	41.6	0.36	17.5	38.3	0.46
Region II	18.2	40.5	0.45	19.0	44.7	0.43	19.8	45.1	0.44
Region III	28.1	27.5	1.02	29.4	29.1	1.01	35.4	30.2	1.17
Region IV	23.6	43.8	0.54	27.2	39.7	0.69	26.0	41.8	0.62
Region V	32.0	28.0	1.14	32.8	56.9	0.58	31.3	31.0	1.01
Region VI	23.7	39.5	0.60	26.3	38.9	0.68	24.0	38.3	0.63
Region VII	18.7	31.4	0.60	21.8	34.6	0.63	22.3	35.5	0.63
Region VIII	10.4	54.7	0.19	11.3	52.3	0.22	10.2	50.9	0.20
Region IX	14.7	40.9	0.36	21.5	32.5	0.66	23.3	33.8	0.69
Region X	6.8	52.8	0.13	7.1	50.2	0.14	9.1	48.9	0.19
Region XI	17.2	52.9	0.33	18.0	53.5	0.34	18.7	51.6	0.36
Region XII	21.5	45.9	0.47	20.8	43.3	0.48	20.0	45.9	0.44
National Capital Region	27.9	28.4	0.98	27.4	34.5	0.79	31.5	29.9	1.05

U = Urban population; R = Rural population; U/R = Urban/Rural ratio.

Source: Based on data from Mendez 1990, 127-8.

Box 6: "Education is Useless": Pressure for Rural Schooling in the PRC

In the PRC, the costs of rural schooling began to climb as the advantage of nonattendance rose under the new household responsibility system. Peasant families were given more incentives and more opportunities to make money in the 1980s. Their economic well-being suddenly depended on using their children to provide working hands on private family land.

One result was the appearance of available youth waiting to be engaged in lucrative occupations. In order to become rich, the youth farmed the land, were employed by the newly flourishing rural factories, or learned particular skills. The desire of each family for instant wealth was reflected in a prevailing attitude that education was useless, tasteless, and profitless, especially when peasant parents saw how much and how quickly money could be earned by a family business. Education was seen as a waste of time and money compared with the benefits of early employment.

As the rural reform gathered strength, household-run industries flourished in rural areas. Low-paid child labor became very common in many suburban and rural areas during the 1980s. Rural factory managers were eager to employ school dropouts and other youths.

Moreover, the closure of many rural schools made it difficult for children to pursue an education. Closures increased the distance between schools and homes; and instead of spending money on bus fares or boarding, many rural children moved into the suburbs or cities. Girls commonly found employment as domestic servants, and boys worked in newly expanded enterprises.

Source: Yang 1992, 101.

in the NCR. In 1975/76 and 1980/81, the urban/rural ratios among females were 0.98 and 0.79 respectively, but rose to 1.05 in 1985/86. This was probably a result of both the Government's deconcentration policy and the increased cost of staying in Metropolitan Manila (Mendez 1990, 128).

Regional Disparity within Countries

Beyond the urban-rural division, particularly in large countries, are other types of regional disparities. These disparities can be based on geographic location, for example the hills versus Terai of Nepal, the coastal versus inland regions in the PRC, and the lowlands versus uplands in the Lao PDR. In Nepal, the Central Development Region has the highest concentration of university graduates, with one graduate per every 102 population. The graduate/population ratios in the other regions are much lower: 1:261 in the Eastern Development Region, 1:563 in the Mid-Western Development Region, and 1:542 in the Far Western Development Region (Bajracharya, Thapa, and Chitrakar 1997, 21). In respect of female enrollments, the Central Development Region alone has one fifth of the total higher education places in the country, leaving the other regions with very low proportions of higher education enrollments. In the peripheral regions such as the Mid-Western and Far Western Development Regions, almost no females enter tertiary institutions and in 1985 their enrollments accounted for only 5.8 percent and 2.7 percent, respectively, in secondary schools (Shrestha, Pradhan, Ghimier, and Singh 1990, 87). Moreover, as shown in Table 29, the hill region far exceeds the Terai in all sorts of higher education.

In India, women's share of earned income in Kerala is only 12 percent, while their share in Himachal Pradesh is 38 percent, and in Maharashtra 30 percent. In Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Karnataka, their shares are over 25 percent. Yet Kerala ranks highly in education terms because the disparity between its female and male adult literacy rates is the lowest among the 16 states. The female literacy rate in Kerala is 81 percent, only 11 percentage points lower than that for males. Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh have GDI values so low that they can be compared only with impoverished countries such as Haiti, Nepal, and Yemen (UNDP 1996, 34).

Table 29: Female Enrollments in Higher Education by Geographic Region in Nepal, 1980 and 1985
(frequency)

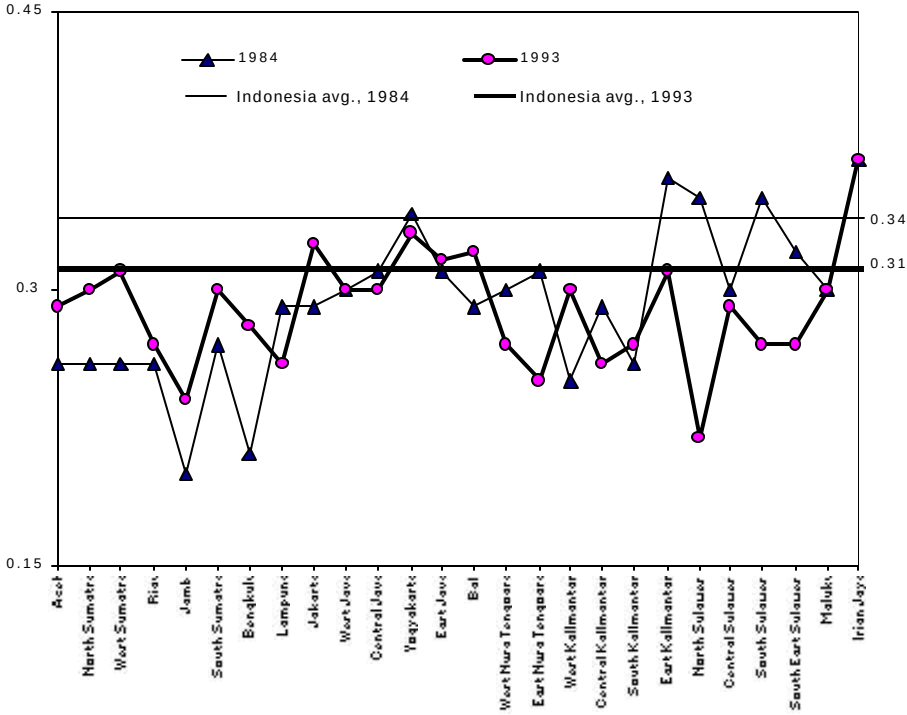
	1980				*1985*			
	Certificate	*Post-graduate*			*Certificate*	*Post-graduate*		
Region		*Bachelor*		*Total*		*Bachelor*		*Total*
Hills	4,834	1,101	388	6,223	9,641	1,917	609	12,167
Terai	318	—	—	318	449	13	—	462

— Data not available.

Source: Shrestha, Pradhan, Ghimier, and Singh 1990, 74.

In Indonesia, as shown in Figure 3, regional differences in Gini coefficients continue to exist. Although some provinces show improvement in income equality, others have worsened. Moreover, as shown in Figure 4, regional differences persist despite a general decline in illiteracy across regions. School enrollment rates in the age group of 7-12 exceed 90 percent in almost all provinces. Java and Bali are well above the average primary graduate rate of 68 percent, while all of the eastern islands are below or near the average. The lowest completion rates are in East Nusa Tenggara, and Irian Jaya. Likewise, Sumatra and Jakarta have significantly less illiteracy than the national average, along with parts of Kalimantan and Sulawesi. Illiteracy rates are highest in West Nusa Tenggara and Irian Jaya. Bali and parts of Java continue to have higher than average illiteracy, which is consistent with the still-high numbers of the poor in these regions (World Bank 1996b, 115). This seems to correlate with regional disparities in terms of income poverty. In 1993, the incidence

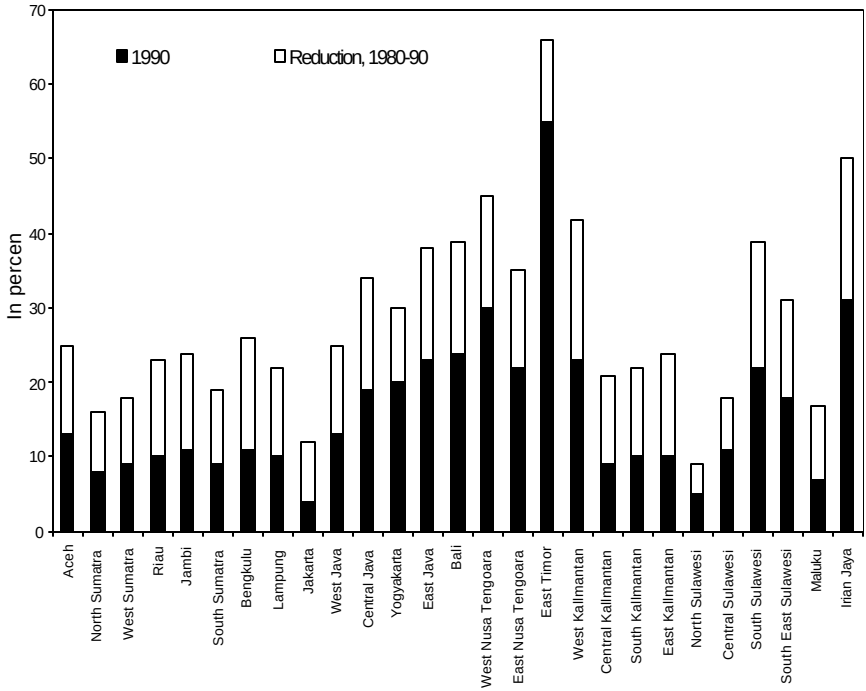
Figure 3: Provincial Gini Coefficients in Indonesia, 1984 and 1993



Notes: Estimates for Maluku and Irian Jaya were the same in 1983 and 1993.
No data are available for East Timor.

Source: World Bank 1996b, 99.

Figure 4: Provincial Illiteracy in Indonesia, 1980 and 1990



Note: Data for East Timor refer to 1985.

Source: World Bank 1996b, 115.

of income poverty was less than 10 percent in Jakarta, Yogyakarta, and Bali, but over 40 percent in East Nusa Tenggara, Iran Jaya, and West Kalimantan. Such disparities are also observed in the regional human development indices (UNDP 1997, 43).

Reasons for Regional Disparities: The Case of the PRC

The case of the PRC is illustrative for exploring the issue of regional disparities. The PRC is one of the four countries in the world, together with Brazil, Nigeria, and Egypt, with the greatest regional disparities. The PRC has a regional disparity coefficient much wider than that of India.

Table 30: Per Capita Budgeted Expenditure in Primary Schools in Selected Provinces in the PRC, 1988-1990
(yuan)

Province	*1988*	*1989*	*1990*
Beijing	217.8	246.0	289.7
Zhejiang	102.8	119.9	132.0
Shanxi	74.1	78.8	92.4
Shandong	58.7	68.3	77.1
Hubei	45.1	46.4	61.5
National Average	77.4	90.9	105.4

Source: Cheng 1995, 59.

The relative GDP per capita disparity between the richest and the poorest regions also began to widen: GDP per capita of Shanghai was 7.3 times that of Guizhou in 1990, and grew to 9.9 times in 1994. Similarly, Guangdong's was 3.1 times that of Guizhou in 1990, and it rose to four times in 1993. As an extreme case, the per capita of the richest town Zhuhai (a special economic zone) is 86 times that of the poorest county, Qinglong in Guizhou (Hu, Wang, and Kang 1995, 60-61). In most provinces, the per capita national income in the city proper is two to four times that of the suburban county (Cui 1995, 251). The regional disparity in economy is easily linked to differences in education expenditure, which is most clearly seen in primary education. As primary education is basically a local endeavor, local economic strength is a significant determinant of the amount of education expenditure. As Table 30 shows, per capita budgeted expenditure in primary schools is much higher in Beijing and Zhejiang than in Shandong and Hubei, and Beijing's expenditure is 4.7 times that of Hubei.

A number of factors contribute to the regional differences. The introduction of the open door policy has led to the establishment of special economic zones and opening up of the coastal regions. These zones and open regions have been given more autonomy for experimenting with the free market economy. As a result, the share of industrial output of the eastern coastal regions in the total increased from 59 percent in 1978 to 64 percent in 1991, whereas the share of the western regions declined from 14 percent to 12 percent (Yeh 1995, 179). Moreover, human poverty is far more pervasive in the remote interior provinces of the west (with an HPI of 44 percent) than on the coast (with an HPI of 18 percent) (UNDP 1997, 23). The average income of the farmers in the eastern regions is also notably higher: in 1980, it was Y217 in the eastern regions and Y181 in the central regions; in 1995, the respective incomes were Y2,127 and Y1,403. Whereas a farmer's income in the eastern regions was 1.2 times that in the central regions in 1980, it grew to 1.5 times in 1995 (Sun and Liang 1997, 107). Another factor was the region's proximity to the political center, which has become another attraction for foreign investments. The result is that the remote areas suffer. In 1990, Shanghai and Beijing attracted foreign investment of $177 million and $106 million, comparable to that of the open economic zones such as Guangzhou ($117 million) and Shenzhen ($349 million). The outlying regions have become explicitly disadvantaged, for example $30 million in Qingdao and $27 million in

Shenyang, although both are classified as extra-large cities in the PRC (Sun and Liang 1997, 174).

A phenomenon related to regional development is the emergence of a large floating population in the regions with fast economic growth. In the mid-1990s, the floating population was about 80 million, and it was estimated that 120 million more would leave rural regions for work in the cities (UNDP 1996, 94). The brain drain toward the cities has increased pressure on developments in the rural regions.

In terms of education access and equity, causes of regional differences vary. One factor is a matter of 'center and periphery'. For example, because of their historical significance as political and cultural centers, Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin have become centers for education provision, and have therefore created a concentration of higher institutions. Concomitant with this is their enjoyment of a quite highly qualified population. For example, per 10,000 population in the late 1980s and early 1990s, there were approximately 190 tertiary students in Shanghai, 160 in Beijing, and 70 in Tianjin, versus a national figure of 23. Moreover, Beijing, Tianjin and Liaoning possess 24 percent of the natural sciences specialists, and 31 percent of the research and development personnel of the country (Hook and Lee 1998, 152). This implies that the regions distant from the political centers are more deprived in education provision.

Another factor for regional disparity relates to the pace of economic development in different regions. Regions that are better developed economically may also achieve a higher proportion of educated population. As Table 31 shows, Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong Province, achieved a ratio of 546 higher education graduates per 10,000 population in 1990, and Shenzhen, a special economic zone, achieved a ratio of 447. They were very close to Shanghai's ratio of 653, quite far from Beijing's 930, but well above the national ratio of 142 and the Guangdong provincial ratio of 134.

Box 7: Regional Disparity in Education in the PRC

The PRC has major disparities in education opportunities, resources, school facilities, teacher qualifications, and school achievements. Factors in these disparities include the government policy of differential regional development. Egalitarian principles may not be easily carried out in the face of other needs of the country, such as developing keypoint schools. The idea of keypoint schools is hardly egalitarian, in the sense of deliberately concentrating the best facilities and teachers in a few schools. The policy has been criticized since its implementation, but is considered necessary by the Government to speed up national development.

City population control is another conspicuous factor leading to the bright students of the fringe areas being deprived of opportunities to study in the best urban schools. Further, the differences in average annual income of workers in the cities and counties, as a result of rapid economic development, lead to education inequalities based on families' socioeconomic backgrounds.

Source: Lee and Li 1995, 73.

Table 31: Education Attainment of Selected Regions in the PRC, 1990
(per 10,000 population)

Region	*Higher education graduates*	*Secondary graduates*
Guangdong	134	3,197
Pearl River Delta	267	4,037
Guangzhou	546	4,378
Shenzhen	447	6,275
Zhuhai	256	4,436
Five other cities of Pearl River Delta	91	3,577
Beijing	930	4,953
Shanghai	653	5,122
PRC (as a whole)	142	3,138

Source: Liu, Wong, Sung, and Lau 1992, 88.

Table 32: Urban/Rural Ratio in Primary and Secondary Enrollments in the PRC, 1994

Primary	*Urban/ Rural rate*	*Junior secondary*	*Urban/ Rural rate*	*Senior secondary*	*Urban/ Rural rate*
1	0.16	1	0.29	1	2.01
2	0.16	2	0.29	2	2.10
3	0.16	3	0.32	3	2.02
4	0.17	4	0.39		
5	0.19				
6	0.31				
Total	0.18		0.30		2.04

Source: Adapted from *China Education Statistical Yearbook* 1994, 56-7, 78-9.

Ignoring the present semi-urban areas (i.e., townships), enrollments in cities versus rural areas provides a quick insight into educational access in the PRC. At the primary level, the rural-urban gap in enrollment rates has narrowed considerably, such that the headcount ratio of urban to rural pupils (see Table 32) more closely reflects the relative population shares of children in the appropriate age range. However, a sharply contrasting pattern appears at higher levels of schooling. By the senior secondary (noncompulsory) level, total urban enrollments are more than double those in rural areas. Nearly all provinces and municipalities achieve primary enrollments above 96 percent, the exceptions being the two remote and very poor provinces, Tibet (52.4 percent) and Qinghai (83.9 percent). Moreover, the remote and poor regions have significantly higher dropout rates, with the highest in Guizhou (8.0 percent) and Tibet (7.0 percent), compared with 0.9 percent in Zhejiang. At the secondary level, figures are 15.0 percent in Qinghai, 14.4 percent in Gansu, 13.9 percent in Ningxia, and 10.3 percent in Tibet. These figures compare with the national average of 4.7 percent. A similar picture can also be found in repetition rates (Wu 1995, 81, 82, 100).

A third factor relates to regional histories. For example, within Guangzhou (Canton), the historical significance of the central region has become the root for different education provisions compared with the large city region. Despite provincial government efforts to alleviate regional differences, there is a high demand for education in the central region, and a reluctance for people to

move to other regions or to send their children elsewhere for education. In 1989, the average annual per capita education expenditure in primary and secondary schools was Y1,053.5 in the central region, compared with Y796 in the newly developed cities and Y397 in the counties (Lee and Li 1995, 72).

Reports from other DMCs suggest a similar picture. An ADB report on human development in the Lao PDR (1996b, 22) points out that inequities in education are higher in remote, mountainous, and plateau areas than in low-land areas. Gender disparities are also greater among the Midland Lao and the Upland Lao communities than among the Lowland Lao communities. The disparity is larger in poorer communities where living conditions are harsh. These patterns are reflected in sharp urban-rural disparities in per capita education subsidies.

The pressure on rural and female enrollments caused by migration is also found in other Asian countries. Referring to the case of India, Todaro (1997) points out that individuals with higher levels of education will face wider urban-rural real income differentials and higher probabilities of obtaining modern sector jobs than those with lower levels of education. Hence it is more likely for educated rural migrants to go to urban areas, for better employment and personal development. This explains the high percentage of illiterates in rural areas, the majority of whom are females. Hence it is expected that the migration rate for males – who are more readily able to secure an education – to urban areas is much higher than that for females. Similar scenarios can also be found in Fiji Islands, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu, where rural to urban migration is mainly a male movement, leaving women to maintain both the family and subsistence production (ADB 1996d, 23).

Urban Poverty

Despite general deprivation in rural areas, opportunities in urban areas are not necessarily better. In South Asia in 1990, while 47 percent of the rural populace

Table 33: Gini Index in Rural and Urban Areas in Selected DMCs, 1970s and 1980s
(percent)

	Circa 1976		*Circa 1980*		*Circa 1984*		*Circa 1986*	
Country	***Urban***	***Rural***	***Urban***	***Rural***	***Urban***	***Rural***	***Urban***	***Rural***
Bangladesh[a]	51	44	42	36	35	35	36	37
Indonesia[b]	36	31	36	31	32	28	32	26
Korea, Republic of[c]	42	33	41	36	37	30	35	29
Philippines[d]	44	45	—	—	44	38	43	38
Sri Lanka[e]	51	49	44	42	62	56	—	—

— Data not available.
[a] Data refer to 1981, instead of 1980.
[b] Data refer to 1987, instead of 1986.
[c] Data refer to 1985, instead of 1984; 1988, instead of 1986.
[d] Data refer to 1971, instead of 1976; 1985, instead of 1984; 1988, instead of 1986.
[e] Data refer to 1978, instead of 1976; 1985, instead of 1984.

Sources: Chang 1991, 6; Quibria 1994, 84, 399; Quibria 1996, 97, 436.

Box 8: Access and Equity in Education in the Philippines

Overall access to education in the Philippines is biased toward learners in the NCR and in relatively developed regions in Luzon, the Visayas, and Mindanao; and to relatively urbanized and affluent communities within each region. Middle- and upper-class children have greater access to education than children of poor families. Participation rates of the school-aged groups at each level of formal education have consistently increased over the years, reaching an average of 95 percent, 60 percent, and 30 percent of the total school age populations for elementary, secondary, and tertiary education, respectively, at the turn of the 1990s. However, these participation rates varied across regions, with lower rates in less developed regions and relatively depressed communities within each region.

Access to better equipped schools and adequate learning resources was more likely in economically advantaged regions, private sectarian schools in urban communities, and for children of upper-class families. Disparities in access between developed and less developed regions, urban and rural communities, and rich and poor children were exacerbated by policies and practices within the education system, indicated by the following conditions:

- incomplete primary and/or elementary schools in depressed and geographically isolated communities;
- predominance of underqualified teachers and personnel in depressed communities;
- concentration of post-secondary education programs in the NCR and urban communities;
- concentration of tertiary institutions and access to tertiary level programs in Luzon, especially in the NCR;
- inequitable and uneven dispersal of nonformal education programs in the country;
- limited access to education opportunities among minorities;
- special education programs for gifted children, and for physically and mentally handicapped children, concentrated in the NCR and scarcely available in other regions; and
- limited and unequal access to early childhood programs of children in rural and depressed communities.

Source: Philippines 1997, 185-6.

lived in income poverty, the urban populace living in income poverty also accounted for 36 percent (UNDP 1997, 42). Table 33 shows that Gini indices are higher in urban areas than in rural areas, across countries and time, despite the state of economy or whether income inequalities within the country are widening or narrowing.

The Republic of Korea has achieved improvements in rural wage levels, and the disparity between the urban and rural areas has been reduced. According to a 1989 household survey, the average income of a rural farmer household was 103 percent of the average urban employee household, compared with 75.6 percent in 1970; the improvement in rural economic

conditions was clearly enormous. However, associated with this was a problem of urban poverty. Gini coefficients in urban areas dropped from 0.39 in 1980 to 0.34 in 1989, and in rural areas from 0.35 to 0.29, so although both urban and rural Gini coefficients declined, urban income inequality continued to be wider than that of rural areas. Studies in the Republic of Korea projected that absolute poverty would continue to decrease, but that the problem of relative poverty would become more serious (Chang 1991, 4, 6, 9).

Statistics from Indonesia show that unemployment rates are higher in urban areas than in rural areas across education levels and genders. In the early 1980s, the average urban unemployment rate was 2.9 percent for males and 3.5 percent for females; and the rural unemployment rate was 1.1 percent for males and 2.1 percent for females (Daroesman 1985, 179). Urban unemployment was clearly more acute than rural unemployment, and females' unemployment rates were higher than males' in both urban and rural areas. However, the urban-rural difference among the females was less obvious than that among the males. The private components of primary school costs are two to three times higher in urban schools than in rural schools. Moreover, the costs in urban schools in Jakarta are 6.5 times higher than the national urban average while the costs in rural schools in Jakarta are 3.9 times higher than the national rural average (Table 34). This suggests that the living and education expenses are higher in urban areas, and so is the risk of unemployment. In Viet Nam, urban fees are higher than rural ones; and the fees increase steadily through the grades. In 1993, urban charges were between 1.2 and 1.5 times those of rural areas (Table 35).

Table 34: Percentage of Private Components of Primary School Costs in Indonesia, 1989
(percent)

	Public schools	*Private schools*	*Urban schools*	*Rural schools*	*Urban/ Rural*	*Total*
Jakarta	29.0	91.9	88.2	26.6	3.3	39.0
Other Java	9.3	48.7	30.2	8.6	3.5	10.0
Outside Java	3.5	12.6	8.5	3.5	2.4	4.2
Indonesia (as a whole)	7.8	30.0	13.4	6.8	2.0	8.8

Source: Bray 1996, 36.

Table 35: Official Fees for Grades 6-12 in Viet Nam, 1993
(dong per student)

	Per month		*Per year*[a]		*Urban/ Rural*
Grade	*Urban*	*Rural*	*Urban*	*Rural*	
6	3,000	2,000	27,000	18,000	1.50
7	4,000	3,000	36,000	27,000	1.33
8	5,000	4,000	45,000	36,000	1.25
9	6,000	5,000	54,000	45,000	1.20
10	7,000	5,000	63,000	45,000	1.40
11	8,000	6,000	72,000	54,000	1.33
12	9,000	7,000	81,000	63,000	1.29

[a] Monthly fees are paid for a nine-month school year.

Source: Bray 1996, 17.

Policy Implications

Regional disparities exist everywhere, and there is no simple remedy for them. Sometimes, attempted remedies cause other problems. For example, regions identified as disadvantaged may wish to maintain this identity to retain eligibility for preferential policies such as tax reductions, special subsidies, and student quotas. Even centrally planned economies have been unable to eliminate regional disparities, while liberalization of economies has generally enlarged disparities. Many factors are of course involved, but the focus of discussion here is confined to relationships between disparities and education.

In the PRC, the complexity of regional disparities in education is not confined to distribution of resources. Although national higher institutions are concentrated in major cities, residents of these cities complain about their relative disadvantage in entering the national key universities because special quotas are given to the disadvantaged regions. However, the disadvantaged regions do not necessary "gain" from these quotas, as sending the top students to the national key universities may contribute to a brain drain. For example, Hayhoe (1995, 85-6) reports that Hubei and Hunan respectively send about 8,000 and 10,000 of their best students to national universities every year. The brain drain poses a formidable problem for these regions.

Focusing on education, many of the issues and policy implications are common to those in the previous section, i.e., special help given to the poor. Additional policy considerations in relation to those discussed in this section include:

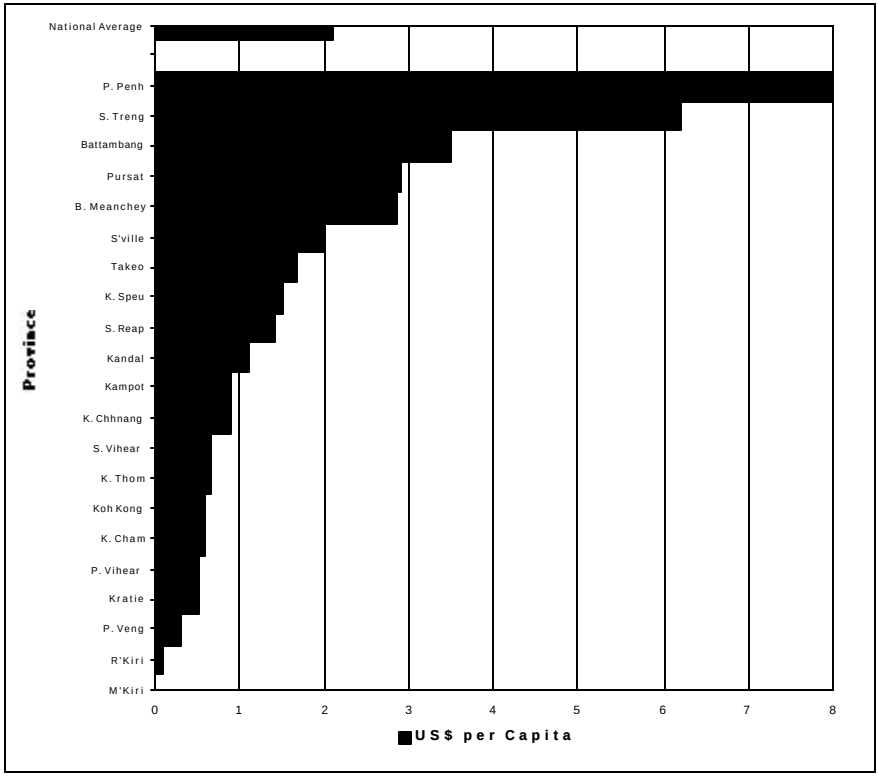
(i) *Enhancing relevance and improving the quality of schooling.* This is particularly important for rural areas, as a major cause for school nonattendance, apart from school factors, is that parents and children do not see the relevance of schooling to their daily lives, work, and job opportunities. A successful experience in a poor rural region, the County of Conghua in Guangzhou, is to emphasize vocational and technical education, and provide the type of skill training that is relevant to the needs of the region. Moreover, the local government encourages the schools to establish close relationships with urban keypoint schools, asking them to send good teachers and provide training to local teachers and administrators, as a means of enhancing the quality of schooling. As a result, their lower secondary enrollment rate rose from 62.6 percent in 1986 to 95.0 percent in 1988 (Lee and Li 1995, 77).

(ii) *Building partnerships and mobilizing local resources.* Part of the solution to regional disparities in education is collaboration between central and local governments to solve the problems of local schooling. Bangladesh is testing an approach for developing community schools, in which the Government pays construction costs and contributes to the teacher's salary, whereas the community provides the land and assumes overall responsibility for the school's operating expenses. In Pakistan, Education Foundations have been established in every province and at the national

level. Such foundations raise 50 percent of the cost of opening a new school from the private sector, an NGO, or a community organization.

(iii) *Improving efficiency in distribution of aid across regions.* As noted, government subsidies can benefit the nonpoor more than the poor if governments are not careful in the mechanisms of distribution of subsidies. External aid can easily fall into the same trap. According to an ADB study of human development in Cambodia (1996a, 84), despite greater need for aid in the disadvantaged areas, education assistance has been disproportionately directed to the more developed areas of the country. The per capita aid received in Phnom Penh can be many times higher than that in the other regions (Figure 5). This means that while needy groups have no or very little access to aid, there may be problems of management and delivery of aid in the regions where aid is concentrated. Governments need to pay special attention to divert aid to the more needy regions.

Figure 5: NGO Education/Training Assistance, per Capita, by Province in Cambodia, 1995



Source: ADB 1996a, 84.