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GOVERNANCE DEVELOPMENT IN HARYANA: ASSESSING PUBLIC POLICY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTCOMES UNDER THE BJP-LED GOVERNMENT, 2015–2025

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between governance and socio-economic development has become an important area of inquiry in the study of contemporary Indian states. Governance reforms, however, do not necessarily translate uniformly into improved development outcomes, as their effects are mediated by institutional capacity, policy implementation, public-service delivery and regional socio-economic conditions. Against this background, the present study examines the governance–development nexus in Haryana during 2015–2025, with particular attention to public policy interventions and their relationship with socio-economic outcomes under the BJP-led government. The study adopts a longitudinal mixed-method research design combining secondary statistical data, government reports, policy documents and empirical literature. Governance is examined through dimensions including administrative effectiveness, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, digital governance and policy implementation, while socio-economic development is assessed through economic growth, employment, education, health, gender development, rural development and infrastructure indicators. The study further incorporates district-level variations to examine whether development outcomes have been spatially uniform across Haryana. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques are proposed to identify trends, associations and differences across the study period, supplemented by qualitative analysis of policy implementation and institutional processes. Rather than assuming a direct causal relationship between government policies and development outcomes, the study considers alternative influences, including national economic conditions, centrally sponsored programmes, the COVID-19 pandemic,

demographic changes and pre-existing policy trajectories. The study seeks to contribute to the literature on sub-national governance in India by connecting institutional processes and public policy with measurable socio-economic outcomes over a decade. It also highlights the importance of implementation capacity, regional variation and evidence-based assessment in understanding the relationship between governance and development in Haryana.

KEYWORDS: Governance; Public Policy; Socio-Economic Development; Haryana; BJP

INTRODUCTION

Governance has increasingly become central to the study of development because the quality of public institutions influences how effectively governments formulate policies, mobilise resources and deliver services to citizens. Economic growth, by itself, does not necessarily translate into improvements in education, health, employment, gender equality or access to basic services. The institutional processes through which public policies are designed and implemented therefore matter considerably for understanding development outcomes. In this context, governance is not limited to the functioning of formal government institutions; it also encompasses administrative effectiveness, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, participation and the capacity of institutions to convert policy objectives into tangible public outcomes.

The governance–development relationship becomes particularly significant at the sub-national level in a country as diverse as India. States differ substantially in their economic structures, administrative capacities, demographic characteristics, social conditions and development trajectories. Consequently, national-level development indicators may conceal important variations in the way policies are implemented and experienced at the state and district levels. State governments play a particularly important role because several areas that directly affect citizens' everyday lives, including health, education, agriculture, rural development, local governance and infrastructure, involve substantial state-level responsibilities. Examining governance at the state level can therefore provide a more grounded understanding of how public policy interacts with socio-economic development.

Haryana presents an important case for examining this relationship. The state occupies a distinctive position within India's political economy. It has developed a relatively strong agricultural and industrial base and has benefited from its geographical proximity to the National Capital Region. At the same time, Haryana has experienced significant social and regional disparities. Differences in income, employment, education, health, gender-related

indicators and access to public infrastructure have remained important dimensions of its development experience. The coexistence of comparatively strong economic performance with persistent social and spatial disparities makes Haryana particularly relevant for analysing whether economic and administrative changes are accompanied by broader improvements in socio-economic development.

The period from 2015 to 2025 provides an appropriate temporal setting for such an examination. During this decade, Haryana witnessed a range of policy and administrative initiatives covering digital governance, welfare delivery, rural development, infrastructure, education, health, employment, agriculture and investment. The period also included substantial changes in the wider policy environment, including the expansion of digital public administration, implementation of major national welfare programmes, economic disruptions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent recovery. These developments make it necessary to examine the decade as a changing policy environment rather than treating all observed outcomes as the consequence of a single factor.

The political context is also relevant to the study. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) formed the government in Haryana following the 2014 state assembly election and subsequently continued in government after the 2019 election. The period under consideration therefore provides an opportunity to examine the relationship between a relatively continuous political-administrative framework and changes in public policy and socio-economic indicators. The purpose of this study, however, is not to presume that observed improvements or setbacks were exclusively produced by the government in office. Development outcomes are influenced by multiple factors, including Union government policies, private investment, national economic conditions, demographic changes, earlier policy interventions and unexpected shocks. The study consequently approaches the BJP-led period as an empirical period of investigation rather than as a predetermined explanation of development.

An important issue in governance research is the distinction between policy formulation and policy outcomes. The announcement of a programme does not necessarily indicate successful implementation, just as increased expenditure does not automatically demonstrate improved service delivery. The effectiveness of a governance system depends partly on administrative capacity, institutional coordination, financial resources, monitoring mechanisms and the ability to reach intended beneficiaries. The same policy may therefore produce different outcomes across districts or population groups. A meaningful assessment of governance requires attention to this implementation dimension.

Existing scholarship has generated substantial knowledge about governance, decentralisation, public policy and development in India. Studies have examined individual policy interventions, welfare programmes, institutional reforms and sector-specific outcomes. Similarly, research on Haryana has addressed issues such as agricultural development, industrialisation, gender disparities, education, health, rural development and local governance. However, these strands of research are often considered separately. There remains scope for an integrated assessment that examines governance and public policy alongside a broader set of socio-economic outcomes over an extended period. In particular, a systematic longitudinal examination of Haryana covering 2015–2025 can help identify changes across sectors while also drawing attention to differences between districts.

A further limitation of relying exclusively on state-level averages is that aggregate indicators can obscure substantial internal variation. Haryana's districts differ in their economic structures, levels of urbanisation, demographic characteristics, agricultural dependence, industrialisation and access to public infrastructure. Consequently, a state-wide improvement in an indicator does not necessarily imply that all districts or social groups experienced comparable changes. Incorporating district-level evidence is therefore important for understanding the geographical dimension of the governance–development relationship.

The present study addresses these issues through a longitudinal mixed-method approach. It examines major governance and public-policy interventions during 2015–2025 and assesses their relationship with selected socio-economic indicators. Governance is conceptualised through dimensions such as administrative effectiveness, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, digital governance and policy implementation. Socio-economic development is examined through economic growth, employment, education, health, gender development, rural development and infrastructure. Quantitative evidence is complemented by analysis of policy documents, government reports and relevant academic literature. Where data permit, descriptive and inferential statistical techniques are employed to identify trends, associations and variations across the study period and geographical units.

The study is guided by a central proposition: governance can influence development through the institutional capacity to formulate, implement and deliver public policies, but the relationship is neither automatic nor uniform. Policy implementation operates within a broader economic, social and political environment. Accordingly, the study also considers alternative explanations, including centrally sponsored programmes, national economic trends, the COVID-19 pandemic, demographic change and the effects of policies introduced before the study period. This approach is intended to avoid attributing every change in socio-

economic indicators to state-level governance and instead provide a more cautious assessment based on available evidence.

The study addresses six principal questions. First, how did governance and public-policy priorities evolve in Haryana between 2015 and 2025? Second, what major policy interventions characterised the period? Third, what changes occurred in the state's principal socio-economic indicators? Fourth, what association can be identified between governance-related interventions and development outcomes? Fifth, to what extent did outcomes vary across districts? Finally, what institutional and implementation factors may help explain these variations?

The principal objective is therefore to assess the governance–development relationship in Haryana during 2015–2025 through a systematic examination of policy interventions, institutional processes and measurable socio-economic outcomes. More specifically, the study seeks to examine governance reforms, analyse major public-policy interventions, assess changes in selected development indicators, identify district-level variations, examine statistical relationships where appropriate and identify institutional constraints affecting implementation.

The study contributes to the existing literature in three ways. First, it brings governance and socio-economic development into a common analytical framework rather than treating them as separate areas of inquiry. Second, it adopts a longitudinal perspective covering a decade of policy and development changes in Haryana. Third, it incorporates district-level variation to recognise that development outcomes are not necessarily spatially uniform. In doing so, the study seeks to provide an evidence-based account of the governance–development nexus at the sub-national level.

Literature Review

Governance has become one of the central concepts through which contemporary relationships between the state, public policy and development are understood. Earlier approaches to development frequently placed greater emphasis on economic resources, capital formation and aggregate growth, while the institutional processes through which public resources were allocated and policies implemented received comparatively less attention. The institutional turn in development studies substantially altered this understanding. Governance came to encompass not merely the formal structures of government but also the processes through which authority is exercised, policies are formulated, administrative decisions are implemented and public institutions interact with

citizens. From this perspective, development outcomes are shaped not only by the availability of resources but also by the institutional capacity to use those resources effectively.

The World Bank's approach to governance reflects this broader institutional understanding. Its Worldwide Governance Indicators conceptualise governance through dimensions including voice and accountability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, political stability and control of corruption (World Bank, 2026). These dimensions underline the fact that governance cannot be reduced to administrative efficiency alone. Institutional responsiveness, accountability and the capacity to implement policy are also relevant to understanding government performance. At the same time, governance indicators require careful interpretation. Cross-national indicators provide useful comparative measures, but their application to sub-national political systems can be difficult because state-level governance operates within national legal, fiscal and institutional structures. The World Bank's governance framework is therefore more useful for identifying analytical dimensions than for mechanically transferring international governance scores to the study of Haryana.

The idea of good governance has similarly been associated with accountability, transparency, participation, responsiveness, effectiveness and inclusiveness. These principles are particularly important in development administration because the existence of public programmes does not itself establish that public institutions are responsive or effective. A government may allocate considerable resources to a programme without achieving its intended outcomes if administrative capacity is weak, implementation is uneven or intended beneficiaries encounter barriers in accessing services. Governance therefore needs to be examined through the institutional processes connecting policy intentions with actual outcomes.

Institutional theories of development provide an important intellectual foundation for this argument. North (1990) conceptualised institutions as the formal and informal rules structuring political, economic and social interaction. From this perspective, institutional arrangements influence incentives, reduce or increase uncertainty and shape the behaviour of political and economic actors. Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson (2001) subsequently placed institutions at the centre of explanations for long-term differences in economic development. Although their analysis is historical and cross-national, its broader implication is relevant to sub-national governance: development cannot be fully explained by resources or economic conditions without considering the institutions governing their use.

The relationship between bureaucratic organisation and development provides another dimension of the institutional literature. Evans and Rauch (1999) demonstrated that

characteristics associated with professional and meritocratic bureaucracies were related to economic performance across countries. Their work suggests that administrative institutions are not neutral conduits through which political decisions simply pass. The organisation, professionalisation and capacity of bureaucracy can influence the quality of implementation. This insight is particularly relevant to studies of Indian states, where similar national policies can produce different outcomes depending on state and local administrative capacities.

Fukuyama (2013) advances this discussion by distinguishing the scope of state functions from the capacity of institutions to perform those functions. A government may assume responsibility for a wide range of sectors while lacking sufficient administrative capacity to implement its commitments effectively. Conversely, relatively capable institutions may deliver particular services efficiently even where the scope of government activity is narrower. This distinction between institutional scope and institutional strength is especially useful for evaluating governance because it discourages the assumption that the number of programmes or the size of expenditure is equivalent to institutional effectiveness.

State capacity consequently provides an important bridge between governance and development. In practical terms, it includes the ability to raise and allocate resources, coordinate departments, collect and use information, implement programmes, enforce rules and deliver public services. The significance of state capacity becomes especially apparent in sectors such as education, healthcare, welfare and rural development, where outcomes depend on extensive administrative networks extending from state capitals to districts, blocks and villages. Research on public-service delivery in India similarly stresses that the quality of state institutions can affect poverty reduction, human-capital formation and citizens' access to essential services.

Yet institutional capacity alone does not explain the entire development process. Development is multidimensional and cannot be evaluated only through aggregate economic growth. Sen's (1999) capability approach provides an important theoretical basis for broadening the concept. Sen views development in terms of expanding people's substantive freedoms and capabilities rather than merely increasing income. Education, health, participation, economic opportunity and social security are therefore constitutive dimensions of development rather than secondary consequences of economic expansion. This perspective is particularly important for a state such as Haryana, where relatively strong economic indicators can coexist with variations in social, gender and regional outcomes.

The Sustainable Development Goals further reinforce this multidimensional conception of development. Rather than treating economic growth as an isolated objective, the SDG

framework integrates poverty reduction, health, education, gender equality, infrastructure, inequality, institutional quality and environmental sustainability. India's SDG monitoring framework similarly uses multiple indicators to assess state-level progress, illustrating the growing importance of multidimensional measurement in evaluating development (NITI Aayog, 2021). The relevance for the present research is methodological as well as conceptual: Haryana's development experience cannot be captured through GSDP or per-capita income alone.

The connection between governance and development nevertheless remains theoretically complex. Strong institutions may facilitate development by improving policy coordination, reducing administrative uncertainty and strengthening service delivery, but the relationship is not necessarily linear. Development can itself increase administrative resources, educational attainment, citizen expectations and institutional capacity. Governance and development may therefore interact rather than operate through a simple one-directional causal relationship. This is one reason why a longitudinal study needs to distinguish between association and causal attribution.

Public-policy scholarship provides further insight into this problem by demonstrating the difference between policy formulation and implementation. Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) showed that the implementation process can substantially alter the relationship between policy intentions and final outcomes. Programmes that appear coherent at the design stage may encounter coordination problems, administrative delays, inadequate resources or conflicting organisational incentives during implementation. The greater the number of institutions and decision points involved, the more complicated the implementation process can become.

This implementation gap has particular significance within India's federal structure. Development programmes frequently involve interaction between the Union government, state governments, district administrations and local bodies. A centrally sponsored programme may be financed jointly, implemented through state departments and delivered through local administrative institutions. As a result, the outcomes associated with a programme cannot always be attributed exclusively to one level of government. This institutional overlap is essential to the interpretation of Haryana's development trajectory between 2015 and 2025. Improvements in housing, sanitation, drinking water, health insurance or rural infrastructure, for example, may reflect combinations of national programmes, state initiatives, local implementation and household-level responses.

Decentralisation provides another important strand of literature for understanding this institutional relationship. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments sought to deepen democratic decentralisation by strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions and urban local bodies. The underlying expectation was that institutions closer to citizens could improve responsiveness, participation and the identification of local development needs. However, decentralisation scholarship demonstrates that transferring formal responsibilities does not necessarily transfer adequate financial, administrative or technical capacity.

Bardhan and Mookherjee (2006) emphasise that the developmental consequences of decentralisation depend upon the institutional environment in which local governments operate. Local accountability can potentially improve responsiveness, but local political capture, limited fiscal autonomy and weak administrative capacity can constrain these benefits. This observation is particularly important for Haryana because Panchayati Raj Institutions constitute a major interface between state development policies and rural communities. State-level governance reforms may therefore produce different results depending upon local institutional conditions.

Recent research on local governance in India continues to demonstrate the importance of institutional arrangements for the provision of public goods. Evidence from urban governance, for example, suggests that formal local governmental structures can influence access to certain public facilities, although the size and character of these effects vary across services and institutional settings. Such findings strengthen the case for examining governance not only at the state level but also through the institutional channels connecting state policies to local outcomes.

The relationship between governance and public-service delivery is equally central to the Indian literature. Citizens experience governance most directly through schools, health facilities, social-protection systems, revenue administration, local infrastructure and administrative services. The effectiveness of these services depends upon institutional design as well as the behaviour and capacity of frontline administrative organisations. Consequently, governance should be evaluated partly through the extent to which administrative systems translate public expenditure and policy commitments into accessible services.

This distinction between expenditure and outcomes is analytically important. Increased expenditure on education does not automatically imply improved learning, just as the expansion of healthcare infrastructure does not necessarily guarantee improved health outcomes. Institutional utilisation, quality, staffing, accessibility and local conditions all

mediate the relationship between resources and results. A high-quality governance assessment must therefore avoid equating inputs with outcomes.

Digital governance has added a further layer to these debates. India's administrative transformation over the past decade has increasingly relied upon digital identity, electronic payments, online public services, digitised records and data-driven welfare administration. Digital systems potentially reduce transaction costs, enable faster information exchange, facilitate monitoring and make government services less dependent upon physical administrative offices. The growth of digital public infrastructure has therefore altered the mechanisms through which citizens interact with the state.

Yet the literature also warns against treating digitalisation itself as evidence of improved governance. The developmental effects of digital administration depend on connectivity, digital literacy, institutional reliability and the capacity of individuals to correct errors. Masiero and Buddha (2021), examining digital social welfare, demonstrate how data-driven systems can produce forms of exclusion when identification, banking or administrative records do not correspond accurately with the circumstances of beneficiaries. Their work is particularly valuable because it shifts attention from the efficiency of digital systems to the experience of those governed through them.

Digital governance therefore contains both enabling and exclusionary possibilities. It may increase transparency and reduce administrative delays, but it can also transfer administrative burdens onto citizens who must navigate technological systems. This suggests that the appropriate question is not simply whether services have been digitised, but whether digitalisation has improved accessibility, reliability, transparency and responsiveness for different categories of citizens. Contemporary assessments of India's digital transformation similarly acknowledge significant expansion while noting that the depth of adoption and institutional integration remains uneven across sectors.

This debate is especially relevant to Haryana because digitalisation has occupied an increasingly visible place in the state's administrative architecture. However, the expansion of digital platforms needs to be examined against actual service-delivery outcomes. A digitally available service may represent an administrative innovation, but its governance significance ultimately depends upon accessibility, usage, processing time, grievance resolution and citizen experience. The present study therefore treats digital governance as one component of institutional capacity rather than as an outcome in itself.

Welfare governance represents another major interface between public institutions and socio-economic development. Social-protection programmes can reduce vulnerability by

supporting income, food security, housing, healthcare, employment and other basic needs. However, their effectiveness depends on identifying beneficiaries accurately, ensuring administrative accessibility and delivering benefits reliably. Welfare governance therefore illustrates the broader distinction between policy coverage and substantive outcomes.

The expansion of direct transfers and digital beneficiary databases in India has created new possibilities for monitoring and administrative coordination, but it has also generated questions concerning exclusion, documentation and grievance redressal. Research on digital welfare consequently encourages a more nuanced understanding in which administrative efficiency and social inclusion are examined simultaneously. For the present study, welfare programmes are therefore not evaluated solely through beneficiary numbers. Wherever data permit, the analysis considers whether programme expansion corresponds with observable changes in relevant socio-economic indicators.

Governance and human development are similarly interconnected. Education and health influence productivity, employment opportunities, social mobility and individual capabilities. Public institutions play a particularly important role because access to these services cannot be explained exclusively through market mechanisms. The quality and geographical distribution of public schools, health facilities and associated infrastructure therefore become important indicators of state capacity.

Education presents a particularly complex relationship between governance inputs and development outcomes. School construction, enrolment and expenditure are important, but educational outcomes also depend on teacher availability, attendance, learning quality, household circumstances and social inequalities. Recent policy-oriented work in India increasingly stresses the importance of moving from access-oriented measures towards quality and learning outcomes, including attention to district-level needs. This suggests that the educational dimension of the Haryana study should distinguish between expansion in infrastructure and improvements in substantive educational outcomes.

Health governance raises comparable issues. Healthcare outcomes depend on infrastructure, medical personnel, public-health capacity, preventive services, nutrition and household behaviour. They are also sensitive to shocks. The COVID-19 pandemic is therefore particularly significant for any assessment covering 2015–2025. It disrupted healthcare, economic activity, employment and education simultaneously and placed unusual pressure on administrative systems. Treating the decade as a uniform period would consequently risk overlooking a major structural interruption.

Gender constitutes another critical dimension of the governance–development relationship. Feminist development scholarship has long challenged the assumption that aggregate economic growth automatically produces gender equality. Improvements in household income or state-level output can coexist with inequalities in labour-force participation, educational opportunities, health, asset ownership and political representation. Gender-sensitive governance therefore requires examining whether institutions and policies address unequal access to opportunities and public resources.

This issue has particular relevance in Haryana because gender has historically constituted an important dimension of the state's development debate. Changes in female education, health, political participation, labour-force participation and demographic indicators cannot simply be inferred from economic growth. They require independent empirical analysis. A multidimensional governance assessment should therefore examine whether improvements in aggregate development indicators are accompanied by reductions in gender-based disparities. Women's political participation is also relevant to governance because representation can influence the social composition of decision-making institutions. Reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions has substantially increased descriptive representation in rural local government across India. However, the literature distinguishes between descriptive representation and substantive influence. Formal representation may increase women's presence without necessarily eliminating social, economic or institutional barriers to independent decision-making. For Haryana, where local governance forms an important part of rural administration, this distinction is relevant to understanding inclusive governance.

Rural development constitutes another central dimension of Haryana's socio-economic structure. Despite rapid industrialisation and urbanisation in parts of the state, agriculture and rural livelihoods remain important. Rural development, however, should not be equated narrowly with agricultural output. It encompasses roads, drinking water, sanitation, housing, electricity, employment, education, healthcare, digital connectivity and institutional participation. These services frequently require coordination between multiple departments and levels of government, making rural development a useful test of governance capacity.

The literature on decentralisation reinforces this point by demonstrating that rural development outcomes are often shaped by interactions between higher-level policy design and local implementation. Panchayats may participate in identifying beneficiaries, maintaining infrastructure or implementing development programmes, but their ability to do so depends upon fiscal resources, administrative authority and technical capacity. Consequently, state-level expenditure alone may not explain variation in rural outcomes.

Economic development remains an essential part of the governance–development relationship. Haryana's proximity to Delhi and the National Capital Region, its agricultural base and the expansion of industrial and service activities have given the state a distinctive economic structure. Yet economic transformation can also create uneven geographical development. Districts integrated into major urban and industrial corridors may experience patterns of investment, employment and infrastructure that differ substantially from predominantly rural districts.

This spatial dimension is important because aggregate state-level statistics can conceal internal inequality. If growth is concentrated in a small number of highly urbanised districts, increases in state per-capita income may not adequately represent conditions across the entire state. District-level analysis therefore becomes necessary for understanding whether development has been spatially broad-based. This is one of the principal reasons the present study does not rely exclusively on state averages.

The Sustainable Development Goal framework also supports this territorial approach. NITI Aayog's work on SDG localisation recognises that national and state-level goals ultimately require implementation through sub-national institutions and localised monitoring systems. More recent research examining Indian states through multidimensional SDG frameworks likewise demonstrates that development performance involves interconnected capabilities rather than isolated indicators. These approaches support the use of multiple social, economic and institutional indicators in evaluating Haryana.

Haryana's development trajectory has also attracted increasing policy attention because relatively high economic performance does not eliminate the need to examine sustainability, inclusion and human development. Recent NITI Aayog analysis of Haryana explicitly treats the state's longer-term development prospects through multiple dimensions, combining income, sustainable-development performance and human-development considerations rather than relying on economic growth alone. This multidimensional approach reinforces the central argument of the present study: development performance should be evaluated across economic and social outcomes rather than through a single aggregate measure.

A further issue emerging from the literature concerns the relationship between governance reforms and political evaluation. Studies of government performance can easily become descriptive inventories of programmes or politically framed assessments of success and failure. Such approaches present methodological difficulties because the existence of a policy is not equivalent to its effectiveness, while an observed improvement during a government's tenure does not necessarily establish causation. A stronger analytical strategy requires

specifying the mechanisms through which governance is expected to influence outcomes and then examining whether the available evidence is consistent with those mechanisms.

This problem is especially significant for the present study because the period from 2015 to 2025 largely overlaps with BJP-led governments in Haryana. Political continuity makes the period analytically useful, but it does not eliminate alternative explanations. Union government programmes operated throughout the period; private investment contributed to economic change; national macroeconomic conditions affected employment and growth; technological developments altered service delivery; and the COVID-19 pandemic produced an extraordinary disruption. Policies initiated before 2015 may also have generated outcomes during the study period because development interventions frequently operate with time lags. Consequently, the study needs to distinguish carefully between temporal association and causal attribution. If an indicator improves between 2015 and 2025, the first defensible conclusion is that an improvement occurred during the period. Establishing that a particular state policy caused the change requires additional evidence concerning timing, implementation, exposure and plausible alternative explanations. This distinction is central to the methodological credibility of the paper.

Another limitation in the existing literature is fragmentation between sectoral studies. Research on Haryana frequently examines agriculture, industrialisation, education, gender, local government, health or welfare separately. Such sector-specific work provides valuable evidence but makes it difficult to evaluate whether institutional changes are associated with a broader pattern of development. Governance scholarship, meanwhile, may focus on administrative reform without connecting those reforms systematically to measurable socio-economic outcomes. Bringing these literatures together can therefore generate additional analytical value.

There is also a measurement problem. Governance concepts such as accountability, transparency and responsiveness are difficult to quantify directly at the state level. Cross-country perception indices cannot simply be reproduced for Haryana. The present study therefore requires context-sensitive operationalisation. Government effectiveness can be examined through implementation and service-delivery indicators; digital governance through availability and accessibility of public services; responsiveness through grievance and citizen-service mechanisms; inclusiveness through distribution and coverage; and development through observable economic, health, education, employment, gender, rural and infrastructure indicators. Such operationalisation does not eliminate measurement limitations,

but it makes the relationship between abstract concepts and empirical evidence more transparent.

The review also indicates that district-level institutional variation deserves greater attention. Haryana currently comprises 22 districts, but these districts differ considerably in urbanisation, economic structure and development conditions. A governance system operating through a common state-level policy framework may therefore generate different outcomes in different local contexts. District-level comparison provides a way of investigating this heterogeneity without assuming that the entire state follows a single development trajectory.

Taken together, the literature supports an analytical sequence in which governance influences development through intermediate institutional mechanisms. Governance arrangements affect administrative capacity and policy implementation; implementation shapes public-service delivery and citizens' access to programmes; and these processes may contribute to economic and social outcomes. Yet every stage is affected by contextual factors. Fiscal resources, administrative capacity, demographic characteristics, local institutions, national programmes, market conditions and external shocks can strengthen or weaken the relationship.

The resulting governance–development relationship can therefore be represented conceptually as **governance institutions → policy formulation → implementation capacity → public-service delivery → citizen access → socio-economic outcomes**. This sequence is not intended as a deterministic causal chain. Rather, it identifies mechanisms that can be investigated empirically. It also provides a theoretical basis for selecting indicators and interpreting statistical relationships in the later sections of the study.

Despite the extensive literature on governance and development, three gaps remain particularly important for the Haryana case. First, much governance research is conducted at national or cross-national levels, while systematic state-level assessments connecting institutional processes with multiple development outcomes remain comparatively limited. Second, studies of Haryana frequently examine particular sectors or programmes without integrating economic, human, gender, rural and institutional dimensions within a common longitudinal framework. Third, state-level averages can obscure substantial district variation, while policy evaluations sometimes insufficiently distinguish changes occurring during a government's tenure from changes demonstrably attributable to its policies.

The present research addresses these gaps by examining the governance–development nexus in Haryana across the decade from 2015 to 2025. It conceptualises governance through administrative effectiveness, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, digital

governance, institutional capacity and policy implementation. Development is treated as multidimensional and examined through economic growth, employment, education, health, gender development, rural development and infrastructure. The analysis further incorporates district-level variation wherever comparable data are available.

The contribution of the study is therefore not to determine in advance whether the governance record of the BJP-led government should be characterised positively or negatively. Rather, it develops an empirical framework through which the relationship between governance interventions and socio-economic outcomes can be examined systematically. Policies are evaluated through implementation and measurable outcomes rather than through announcement alone, while development indicators are interpreted in light of alternative institutional, economic and demographic explanations.

This approach also contributes to the wider literature on Indian federalism and sub-national development. India's states operate within a common constitutional system but display substantial variation in administrative capacity, economic structure and social outcomes. Haryana provides a useful case through which to investigate how a decade of relative political continuity interacts with public policy, institutional implementation and socio-economic change. By integrating longitudinal and spatial analysis, the study seeks to move beyond both purely descriptive policy accounts and overly aggregated assessments of state development.

The literature ultimately suggests that governance should be judged analytically through the institutional processes connecting public authority with citizen outcomes. Economic growth remains important, but it is insufficient as a standalone measure. Likewise, digitalisation, programme expansion or increased expenditure cannot independently demonstrate effective governance. A more convincing assessment requires examining whether institutional reforms and public policies correspond with improvements in service delivery, human capabilities, economic opportunities and social inclusion, while recognising variations across sectors and districts.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The present study adopts a longitudinal mixed-method research design to examine the relationship between governance, public policy and socio-economic development in Haryana during the period 2015–2025. A longitudinal design is appropriate because the study is concerned not merely with the status of development at a particular point in time but with

changes and trends occurring over a decade. The period provides sufficient temporal scope for examining policy interventions, institutional changes and subsequent developments across different socio-economic sectors.

The quantitative component of the research focuses on measurable indicators of governance and socio-economic development, while the qualitative component examines policy documents, government reports, administrative initiatives and relevant scholarly literature. The integration of these two forms of evidence is intended to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the governance–development relationship. Quantitative data can demonstrate whether indicators changed over time, whereas qualitative evidence can assist in interpreting the institutional and policy processes associated with those changes.

The study does not assume that all changes observed between 2015 and 2025 resulted from policies implemented by the Haryana government. Instead, it treats the period as an empirical window within which governance reforms, policy interventions and socio-economic changes are examined alongside other relevant factors. This distinction is important because development outcomes may reflect the combined influence of state policies, Union government programmes, private economic activity, demographic changes, previous policy interventions and external shocks.

Study Area

The geographical scope of the study is the **state of Haryana, India**. Haryana provides an appropriate setting for examining the governance–development nexus because of its distinctive economic structure, significant agricultural base, industrial development, proximity to the National Capital Region and substantial variation in socio-economic conditions across its districts.

The state is not treated as a homogeneous administrative and developmental unit. Where reliable and comparable data are available, the study incorporates district-level analysis to examine differences in economic development, employment, education, health, gender-related outcomes, rural infrastructure and access to public services. This approach allows the research to examine whether state-level trends are broadly distributed or whether substantial geographical differences remain.

Period of the Study

The principal period of investigation is **2015–2025**. The selection of this period reflects the study's interest in examining governance and development during a decade characterised by substantial administrative, welfare, digital and infrastructure interventions in Haryana.

The period is also analytically significant because it includes major changes in the wider national and state policy environment. In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted economic activity, employment, education and healthcare during 2020–2022. Consequently, the pandemic is treated as an important contextual factor rather than being ignored when interpreting longitudinal trends.

Where appropriate and where comparable data exist, observations preceding 2015 may be used as a **baseline or contextual reference**. Such observations will not automatically be interpreted as a counterfactual benchmark because the study does not employ a formal experimental or quasi-experimental design.

Nature and Sources of Data

The study primarily relies on secondary data obtained from official government sources, recognised statistical institutions, policy documents and peer-reviewed academic literature. The preference for official and systematically collected datasets is intended to improve the reliability and comparability of the empirical analysis.

Major sources include publications and datasets of the Government of Haryana, Haryana Economic Surveys, Statistical Abstracts, Census of India, NITI Aayog, the Reserve Bank of India, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Periodic Labour Force Survey, National Family Health Survey, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Rural Development and other relevant Union and state government departments.

Policy documents, budget documents, departmental reports, programme guidelines and official administrative publications are used to identify major governance interventions and understand their institutional objectives. Peer-reviewed research is used to provide theoretical and empirical context and to compare the Haryana experience with broader scholarship on governance and development.

Governance and Public Policy in Haryana, 2015–2025

The period from 2015 to 2025 represents an important phase in the evolution of governance and public policy in Haryana. During this period, the state government increasingly

emphasised administrative digitisation, integrated welfare delivery, institutional monitoring, service-delivery reforms, infrastructure development, industrial facilitation and targeted programmes for economically vulnerable households. The governance architecture also became progressively more data-oriented, with digital platforms being used to identify beneficiaries, process applications, monitor service delivery and integrate information across departments. These changes are important for understanding the governance–development nexus because they indicate a shift from conventional departmental administration towards increasingly integrated forms of state intervention. At the same time, the existence of a policy or digital platform does not itself establish effective implementation or improved developmental outcomes. The empirical question is therefore whether these institutional changes improved the capacity of the state to formulate, coordinate and deliver public policy.

Administrative Reform and Citizen-Centric Service Delivery

One of the significant features of Haryana's governance reforms during the study period was the expansion of time-bound and digitally enabled citizen-service delivery. Haryana had already enacted the Haryana Right to Service Act, 2014, but the 2015–2025 period witnessed a broader institutionalisation of the principle that specified public services should be delivered within prescribed time limits. The Right to Service framework provides designated officers and grievance-redressal mechanisms and establishes institutional responsibility for delays in notified services. The framework therefore represents an attempt to transform service delivery from an administrative discretion into a more predictable institutional process. The official consolidated list of notified services demonstrates the extension of time-bound service obligations across departments.

The significance of such reforms lies in their potential to reduce administrative uncertainty and improve accountability. However, formal notification of services should not be equated with effective accountability. The developmental importance of the Right to Service framework depends upon citizens knowing about their entitlements, submitting applications successfully, receiving decisions within prescribed periods and having accessible mechanisms for appeal or grievance redressal. Consequently, in the present study, administrative reform is treated as a governance input whose developmental significance must ultimately be assessed through service-delivery performance rather than through legislation alone.

Digital Governance and the SARAL Platform

Digitalisation became one of the most visible dimensions of administrative reform during the period under consideration. The Haryana government's SARAL platform was designed as a unified citizen-service system based on the ServicePlus framework. According to the state government's official description, SARAL sought to digitise more than 545 services and schemes across 44 departments, boards and corporations. The platform allows citizens to submit applications, track their status and access information concerning government services. It also incorporates mechanisms for monitoring departmental performance through a Service Delivery Index.

From a governance perspective, SARAL is significant because it potentially changes the relationship between citizens and public administration. Instead of requiring citizens to approach multiple departments separately, a common platform creates a more integrated interface between the state and the citizen. Such integration may reduce transaction costs, increase procedural transparency and generate administrative data that can be used for monitoring. In theoretical terms, this represents a movement from fragmented departmental administration towards a more networked and information-intensive model of governance.

Nevertheless, digitalisation creates both opportunities and limitations. The availability of an online service does not necessarily mean that all citizens possess the digital literacy, connectivity or resources required to access it. Elderly persons, economically disadvantaged households, persons with disabilities and citizens in areas with weaker digital infrastructure may continue to depend on intermediaries or physical service centres. Digital governance should therefore be evaluated in terms of both administrative efficiency and inclusiveness. The relevant question is not merely whether a service has been digitised, but whether digitisation has improved accessibility, transparency and timely delivery for different categories of citizens.

Data-Centred Welfare Governance and the Parivar Pehchan Patra

Another important institutional development during the period was the increasing use of household-level administrative data in welfare governance. The Parivar Pehchan Patra (PPP), or Family ID system, became an important component of Haryana's welfare-administration architecture. Rather than treating welfare beneficiaries exclusively through separate departmental databases, the system seeks to create a common household-level identification framework through which eligibility for different schemes can be assessed.

The integration of welfare schemes with the PPP is evident in schemes such as the Mukhya Mantri Vivah Shagun Yojana, for which the official department states that applications are linked with the Family ID and submitted through the SARAL platform. The emergence of such systems reflects a broader transformation in welfare administration from application-centred delivery towards data-supported identification and targeting.

The potential governance benefits include reduction of duplication, improved beneficiary identification and greater administrative coordination. However, data-centred welfare systems also create important questions concerning data accuracy, exclusion, privacy, grievance redressal and the ability of citizens to correct administrative records. If an individual's household or income information is incorrectly recorded, digital targeting may reproduce the error across multiple programmes. Thus, the effectiveness of data-driven governance depends not only on database integration but also on institutional mechanisms for correction, transparency and appeal.

Welfare Governance and the Antyodaya Approach

The welfare-policy architecture of Haryana during this period increasingly focused on identifying economically vulnerable households and connecting them with multiple forms of state assistance. The Mukhyamantri Antyodaya Parivar Utthan approach illustrates this shift. The programme framework was designed around identification of low-income families and linking them with employment, self-employment, skill development, credit and other government interventions.

Official state material describes the programme as an effort to raise the annual income of the poorest households and connect identified families with livelihood and social-support opportunities. Earlier implementation material also records the use of Antyodaya Gram Utthan Melas to connect vulnerable families with schemes and credit-related opportunities.

Analytically, this represents a shift from welfare as the provision of isolated benefits towards welfare as a coordinated package of interventions. The intended mechanism is important: household identification is followed by institutional linkage to employment, credit, skills or social-security programmes. If implemented effectively, such a model can address multiple dimensions of deprivation simultaneously.

However, the existence of convergence mechanisms does not necessarily demonstrate successful income transformation. A rigorous assessment must distinguish between the number of families identified, the number receiving assistance, the value of benefits transferred, employment or enterprise generated, and actual changes in household income and

multidimensional deprivation. The present research therefore treats Antyodaya-oriented governance as an institutional intervention whose developmental effects need to be examined through independent outcome indicators.

Health Governance and Expansion of Social Protection

Health policy during the period also demonstrated increasing integration between state-level welfare initiatives and broader health-protection programmes. Haryana's implementation of Ayushman Bharat and the subsequent expansion of coverage through the state's Chirayu framework illustrate this process. The official Ayushman Bharat Haryana system identifies Antyodaya families with annual household income below ₹1.80 lakh as eligible for inclusion under the expanded state mechanism.

The significance of such programmes for governance lies in the institutionalisation of financial protection against health expenditure. Health insurance or entitlement systems can potentially reduce the financial burden associated with hospitalisation and improve access to publicly supported healthcare. Yet coverage should not be treated as synonymous with health outcomes. The effectiveness of health governance depends on beneficiary awareness, hospital availability, quality of treatment, claims processing, geographical accessibility and the ability of poorer households to actually utilise entitled services.

This distinction is important for the present study because governance effectiveness is conceptualised as more than programme expenditure. The chain of analysis is instead understood as policy design → institutional implementation → beneficiary access → service utilisation → developmental outcome. A policy may be well designed but produce limited developmental effects if implementation or utilisation remains weak.

Education and Human-Capital Governance

Education remained another major field of public policy during the period. Governance interventions included school infrastructure, teacher deployment, digital education, monitoring systems and initiatives associated with improving educational access. The broader policy environment was also influenced by national reforms such as the National Education Policy, 2020, which required state-level implementation and adaptation.

The governance significance of educational policy lies in the state's role in providing the institutional infrastructure through which human capital is developed. Schools, teachers, curriculum, digital resources and monitoring mechanisms constitute governance inputs,

whereas attendance, retention, learning outcomes, transition to higher education and employability represent outcomes.

This distinction is particularly important in Haryana because educational performance varies across districts and between rural and urban populations. Consequently, aggregate enrolment figures cannot provide a complete assessment of educational governance. A meaningful evaluation must examine whether increased administrative and financial inputs have been accompanied by improvements in learning and equitable access.

Employment generation became increasingly prominent in the state's development-policy framework as Haryana confronted the dual challenge of maintaining industrial competitiveness and expanding employment opportunities for a growing working-age population. The Haryana Enterprises and Employment Policy, 2020 replaced the earlier Enterprises Promotion Policy, 2015 and established a policy framework intended to support enterprises, employment and investment. The official notification states that the 2020 policy came into effect from January 2021 for a five-year period.

The policy framework is significant because it connects economic governance with employment outcomes. Enterprise promotion, regulatory simplification, technology adoption, investment support and sectoral incentives can potentially influence employment through expansion of productive economic activity. The state's MSME-related policy framework also includes schemes concerning technology acquisition, environmental compliance, market development, quality certification and other forms of enterprise support.

Nevertheless, the relationship between industrial policy and employment is not automatic. Investment can increase output without producing proportionate employment if production becomes more capital-intensive. Similarly, employment may be generated in one district while economic benefits are concentrated elsewhere. For this reason, the empirical analysis must examine employment indicators alongside investment and output rather than treating policy announcements as evidence of employment creation.

Industrialisation and Economic Governance

Haryana's location adjacent to Delhi and its integration with the National Capital Region have historically provided significant advantages for industrialisation and services. During 2015–2025, state policy continued to emphasise investment facilitation, enterprise promotion and institutional reforms intended to improve the business environment.

The Haryana Enterprises and Employment Policy, 2020 is particularly relevant to this period because it replaced the 2015 policy and established a new five-year framework beginning in

2021. The policy can therefore be understood as part of a broader attempt to connect regulatory governance with economic development.

From the perspective of the governance–development nexus, the important mechanism is reduction of institutional transaction costs. Faster approvals, standardised procedures, digital documentation and clearer regulatory processes can reduce uncertainty for firms and facilitate investment. However, the ultimate development effect depends on whether improved regulatory processes translate into actual investment, enterprise survival, productivity and employment. These outcomes are influenced by factors beyond state policy, including national economic conditions, interest rates, global demand, private-sector decisions and the structural advantages associated with Haryana's location.

Infrastructure development provides another example of the increasing digitisation of governance. The Haryana Engineering Works Portal was developed as an integrated platform for engineering-related works and tender processes. The portal describes itself as a standardised and paperless environment for interaction between government departments and contractors, while also providing citizens with information concerning infrastructure projects. It incorporates information on tenders, estimates, works and contractual bills.

The governance relevance of the portal extends beyond administrative convenience. Public works involve substantial expenditure and multiple stages of decision-making, including project estimation, tendering, allotment, execution and payment. Digitisation of these processes can create an auditable information trail and potentially reduce opportunities for procedural opacity. The portal also provides a citizen-facing component intended to promote transparency and participation in infrastructure development.

The portal should nevertheless be interpreted as an institutional mechanism rather than direct evidence of improved infrastructure outcomes. Transparency of tender information and digital processing may improve governance conditions, but the quality and durability of roads, buildings, irrigation infrastructure or other public assets depend on project design, contractor performance, supervision, maintenance and financial management. Thus, infrastructure governance must ultimately be evaluated through both administrative indicators and physical outcomes.

Agriculture and Rural Governance

Agriculture remained central to Haryana's political economy during the study period. Governance interventions increasingly sought to integrate farmers into digital systems for crop registration, procurement, compensation and access to agricultural services. Such

systems potentially reduce the number of physical interactions required between farmers and government agencies and can facilitate the collection of crop-level information.

The digitisation of agricultural administration also reflects the broader transition towards data-supported governance. The use of digital records can facilitate targeting of compensation and other benefits, while integrated platforms can improve coordination among departments. At the same time, agricultural governance faces structural constraints arising from groundwater depletion, crop diversification challenges, market conditions, farm-size differences and environmental pressures. Consequently, improvements in administrative delivery should not be confused with resolution of deeper structural problems in the rural economy.

The rural dimension is particularly important because Haryana's economic growth has not been geographically uniform. Districts with stronger industrial, urban or NCR linkages have different development opportunities from predominantly rural districts. This provides an important basis for the district-level component of the present research.

COVID-19 and Adaptive Governance

The COVID-19 pandemic constitutes a major intervening factor in any assessment of Haryana's governance between 2015 and 2025. The pandemic disrupted economic activity, education, healthcare, mobility and employment, while simultaneously increasing demand for social protection and digital public administration. The period therefore provides an important test of administrative adaptability.

Digital platforms became particularly important when conventional face-to-face administrative interactions were restricted. Online applications, digital welfare delivery, health-related information systems and remote educational mechanisms became more significant during the pandemic. However, the pandemic also exposed inequalities in digital access and the vulnerability of households dependent on informal employment.

Methodologically, COVID-19 should therefore be treated as an external shock rather than simply another policy period. Economic and social indicators before and after 2020 cannot be interpreted without accounting for the exceptional disruption caused by the pandemic. In the statistical analysis, this issue will be considered when interpreting longitudinal trends and when examining associations between governance indicators and development outcomes.

Changing Architecture of Governance

Taken together, the policy developments between 2015 and 2025 indicate a broader transformation in the architecture of governance in Haryana. The transformation was not limited to the creation of new schemes; it involved changes in how the state attempted to identify beneficiaries, deliver services, monitor administrative processes and connect different departments.

Four interconnected features are particularly relevant. First, governance became increasingly digital, with platforms such as SARAL providing common interfaces for citizens and departments. Second, governance became increasingly data-centred, with household and beneficiary information being used to identify eligibility and coordinate welfare interventions. Third, governance became increasingly performance-oriented, with service-delivery monitoring, time-bound mechanisms and digital tracking systems creating greater emphasis on measurable administrative outputs. Fourth, governance became increasingly **convergence-oriented**, with programmes seeking to connect households with multiple schemes rather than treating each welfare intervention as an isolated activity.

These developments are consistent with the theoretical framework proposed in this study, in which governance affects development through institutional capacity and policy implementation. The institutional chain can be expressed as: Governance capacity → policy formulation → administrative coordination → implementation → service delivery → citizen access → socio-economic outcomes.

The important analytical qualification is that each stage can introduce implementation gaps. Strong policy design may be weakened by administrative capacity constraints; administrative capacity may not guarantee equitable access; and improved access may not necessarily generate the intended socio-economic outcome. The governance–development relationship should therefore be understood as a mediated rather than automatic relationship.

Critical Assessment of the Governance Trajectory

The governance reforms undertaken during 2015–2025 indicate an increasingly integrated model of public administration, but the available evidence does not justify treating institutional reform itself as proof of developmental success. The expansion of SARAL, the use of PPP-based identification, the strengthening of welfare convergence, digital tendering and enterprise-policy reforms demonstrate changes in administrative mechanisms. Their developmental significance depends upon whether these mechanisms reduced exclusion,

improved service quality, strengthened accountability and contributed to measurable improvements in socio-economic conditions.

There are also important tensions within this model. Digital governance may improve efficiency while creating new forms of exclusion for citizens with limited digital access. Data integration may improve targeting while increasing the consequences of inaccurate records. Welfare convergence may reduce fragmentation while simultaneously increasing dependence on a centralised database. Industrial facilitation may improve investment conditions while leaving questions concerning the distribution and quality of employment unresolved. Infrastructure digitisation may increase procedural transparency without necessarily guaranteeing high-quality public assets.

These tensions are important because they prevent the analysis from becoming a simple account of government programmes. A governance–development study must examine both institutional innovation and implementation consequences. The relevant question is therefore not whether Haryana introduced governance reforms, but whether these reforms altered the capacity of public institutions to deliver development more effectively, equitably and responsively.

Governance as an Intervening Mechanism Between Policy and Development

The evidence reviewed in this section supports the conceptualisation of governance as an intervening mechanism between policy decisions and socio-economic outcomes. Economic and social development does not occur simply because governments announce programmes. Policies require administrative institutions, financial resources, information systems, frontline officials, local institutions and mechanisms of accountability before they can affect citizens.

The Haryana case illustrates this mechanism particularly clearly. Digital service platforms can connect citizens with government schemes; household-level databases can facilitate beneficiary identification; time-bound service mechanisms can establish administrative responsibility; enterprise policies can influence the regulatory environment; and digital infrastructure-management systems can increase procedural transparency. These interventions create institutional conditions through which development policies can operate.

At the same time, the existence of these mechanisms does not establish a causal relationship between the governance reforms and subsequent development indicators. Economic growth, employment, poverty, health and education are jointly influenced by state policy, Union government programmes, private-sector activity, demographic characteristics, national economic conditions and historical institutional structures. The next sections therefore

examine the actual socio-economic outcomes associated with the 2015–2025 period and subsequently test the relationship statistically.

The state combines relatively high levels of economic development with substantial intra-state variation, a strong industrial and agricultural base, rapidly expanding digital administration and persistent social and spatial inequalities. These characteristics make it possible to examine not only whether development indicators changed during the period, but also whether improvements were broad-based and whether governance mechanisms were associated with differences in development outcomes across sectors and districts.

Socio-Economic Development Outcomes in Haryana, 2015–2025

The assessment of the governance–development nexus requires an examination of whether changes in administrative institutions and public policy were accompanied by measurable changes in socio-economic conditions. Development in Haryana during 2015–2025 cannot be adequately represented through a single indicator such as Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP). Economic expansion, employment generation, poverty reduction, education, health, gender development, rural welfare and access to basic services represent distinct but interconnected dimensions of development. Accordingly, this section examines the principal socio-economic outcomes associated with the study period while recognising that observed improvements cannot automatically be attributed to the policies of a single state government. State-level outcomes are shaped by Union government programmes, private investment, national economic conditions, demographic change, technological transformation, institutional legacies and extraordinary events such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Economic Growth and Structural Transformation

Haryana entered the 2015–2025 period with an economy characterised by a relatively high level of per capita income, a strong agricultural base and increasingly important industrial and service sectors. Over the subsequent decade, the state experienced substantial expansion in nominal economic activity. Data compiled from the Department of Economic and Statistical Affairs indicate that Haryana's GSDP at current prices increased from approximately ₹5.0 lakh crore in 2015–16 to more than ₹10.8 lakh crore in 2023–24. The state's nominal per capita income also increased considerably over the same period. These changes indicate sustained expansion in the monetary value of production and average income, although nominal increases must be interpreted alongside inflation and changes in population.

The longer-term evidence also demonstrates that the state's economy has continued to diversify away from exclusive dependence on agriculture. Agriculture and allied activities remain important because of Haryana's agricultural productivity and rural economic structure, but industry and services have progressively acquired greater weight in state value added. The 2023–24 estimates placed services as the largest component of Haryana's Gross State Value Added, followed by industry and agriculture. This structural transformation is consistent with Haryana's integration with the National Capital Region, its manufacturing base, logistics networks, automobile and ancillary industries, information and business services, and expanding urban centres such as Gurugram and Faridabad.

The real-growth trajectory, however, was not uniform. Economic activity was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, after which growth resumed. The 2024–25 advance estimates indicated real GSDP growth of approximately 7.6 per cent, compared with 7.8 per cent in 2023–24 according to the Haryana Economic Survey. This suggests continued expansion but also demonstrates why the analysis should distinguish between long-term structural growth and year-specific fluctuations.

From a governance perspective, the important issue is not simply that Haryana's economy expanded, but whether institutional reforms and public investment contributed to an environment capable of supporting such expansion. Industrial facilitation, infrastructure development, digital approvals, land and business-related services, transport connectivity and public investment potentially affect the transaction costs faced by firms and citizens. Nevertheless, economic growth also reflects private investment, proximity to Delhi, national policies, global economic conditions and sector-specific dynamics. Consequently, the observed relationship should be interpreted as an interaction between governance capacity and wider economic forces rather than as a direct causal effect of state policy.

Per Capita Income and Economic Welfare

Per capita income provides a more informative measure of average economic resources than aggregate GSDP because it incorporates population. Haryana's per capita income increased substantially during the study period. Estimates reported by the Department of Economic and Statistical Affairs show that per capita income at current prices rose from approximately ₹1.65 lakh in 2015–16 to around ₹3.25 lakh in 2023–24. At constant 2011–12 prices, the corresponding increase was from approximately ₹1.38 lakh to ₹1.88 lakh, demonstrating that a significant part of the increase was real rather than simply the result of inflation.

Year	Haryana Per Capita Income at Current Prices (₹)	Haryana vs India	Rank / Position*
2015–16	1,64,963	94,797	3rd
2016–17	1,84,982	1,04,880	3rd
2017–18	2,08,437	1,15,224	3rd
2018–19	2,23,022	1,25,946	—
2019–20	2,32,530	1,32,341	—
2020–21	2,25,137	1,27,244	—
2021–22	2,65,163	1,50,906	—
2022–23	2,90,461	1,69,145	—
2023–24	3,24,958	1,88,892	3rd among major states
2024–25 (Q)	3,58,171	2,05,324	3rd
2025–26 (A)	3,95,618	2,19,575	—

This distinction is important for evaluating the governance–development relationship. An increase in nominal income alone does not necessarily imply a proportional improvement in living standards. Constant-price estimates provide evidence of real expansion, but per capita income remains an average measure and can conceal substantial differences between districts, occupations and social groups. Haryana's high-income areas, particularly those integrated into the NCR economy, coexist with rural and economically disadvantaged areas where household opportunities and access to public services differ considerably.

The implication is that economic development in Haryana should be examined through both aggregate and distributive indicators. The subsequent district-level analysis is therefore necessary to determine whether state-wide improvements have been broadly distributed or concentrated in particular geographical and economic regions.

Employment and Labour-Market Outcomes

Employment represents one of the most important tests of whether economic growth is translated into opportunities for the population. The Periodic Labour Force Survey provides a consistent source for examining labour-market changes after 2017–18. According to PLFS-based data, Haryana's Worker Population Ratio for persons aged 15 years and above increased from 41.7 per cent in 2017–18 to 47.8 per cent in 2023–24. The increase was not linear: the WPR moved upward during the pandemic period, declined in 2021–22, and subsequently increased to its highest level in the series by 2023–24.

The unemployment picture similarly requires a longitudinal interpretation rather than reliance on a single year's estimate. Haryana experienced relatively high unemployment during the

earlier years of the PLFS series, while the unemployment rate subsequently declined. The available 2023–24 PLFS estimates report a 3.4 per cent unemployment rate for Haryana under the usual-status measure for persons aged 15 years and above. At the same time, youth employment remains a significant issue because young people entering the labour market may face different constraints from the overall working-age population.

The employment evidence therefore presents a mixed but changing picture. Rising WPR indicates increased participation in economic activity, while declining unemployment suggests improved absorption of labour in the later part of the period. However, the quality, security and productivity of employment are equally important. A rise in employment does not necessarily mean a corresponding rise in formal, well-paid or socially protected employment. The governance question consequently extends beyond job numbers to skill formation, industrial diversification, entrepreneurship, labour-market information, women's employment and the capacity of public institutions to connect workers with productive opportunities.

Gender remains particularly important in this context. PLFS 2023–24 data show a substantial gender difference in labour-force participation in Haryana. For persons aged 15 years and above, the combined rural-plus-urban LFPR was 53.3 per cent for men and 18.4 per cent for women in the reported state-level estimates. This gap demonstrates that improvements in aggregate labour-market indicators do not necessarily translate into equal economic participation. The issue is especially relevant to the governance–development framework because women's economic participation is influenced by education, mobility, safety, care responsibilities, employment opportunities, social norms and access to institutional support.

Education and Human Capital

Education represents another central dimension of socio-economic development. During the study period, Haryana continued to maintain a large educational infrastructure covering primary, secondary and senior-secondary schooling. The Department of Economic and Statistical Affairs reports more than 52 lakh students enrolled in the state's school system in 2024–25, while official education statistics also provide district-level information on enrolment, teachers and school infrastructure.

The expansion of educational infrastructure, however, should not be interpreted simply in terms of enrolment. Human-capital development depends upon retention, learning outcomes, teacher availability, transition to higher levels of education and equitable access. The teacher–pupil ratio provides one useful indicator of institutional capacity. Haryana's official

statistical dashboard reports a 2024–25 pupil–teacher ratio of approximately 28 at the primary level, 18 at the middle level and 23 at the senior-secondary level. The same source indicates substantial district variation, demonstrating that state-level averages can obscure local differences in educational capacity.

The UDISE+ system provides additional evidence regarding educational infrastructure and enrolment. For 2023–24, Haryana had more than 23,500 schools and approximately 56 lakh enrolments in the UDISE+ reporting framework. The availability of state- and district-level administrative data has also expanded the capacity for monitoring school infrastructure and educational indicators.

From the perspective of governance, the significance of these developments lies in the increasing use of administrative data and performance monitoring. Nevertheless, improved administrative coverage does not automatically imply improved educational quality. The analytical distinction between inputs, institutional processes and outcomes remains essential. A larger school network may represent increased state capacity, but its developmental significance ultimately depends upon whether students acquire learning, remain in education and successfully transition into higher education or employment.

Health and Human Development

Health outcomes provide another important dimension through which the development consequences of governance can be examined. Haryana's health trajectory during the study period shows improvement in several indicators, although substantial challenges remain. Evidence from the National Family Health Survey and the National Multidimensional Poverty Index indicates reductions in several forms of deprivation between NFHS-4 (2015–16) and NFHS-5 (2019–21).

One particularly important indicator is multidimensional poverty. NITI Aayog's Haryana-specific analysis reports that the state's multidimensional poverty headcount ratio declined from 11.88 per cent in 2015–16 to 7.07 per cent in 2019–21. The corresponding MPI value declined from 0.053 to 0.031. The decline was observed in both rural and urban areas, although rural multidimensional poverty remained higher. In 2019–21, the rural headcount ratio was 8.41 per cent compared with 4.26 per cent in urban areas.

The composition of multidimensional poverty is also analytically significant. In Haryana, nutrition remained one of the largest contributors to multidimensional poverty in 2019–21, while years of schooling, school attendance, maternal health and selected living-standard indicators also contributed. This demonstrates that development deficits cannot be reduced to

household income alone. Improvements in income and infrastructure may coexist with continuing nutritional and human-capital challenges.

Health-service coverage also expanded during the period. National data show an increase in the proportion of households with at least one member covered by health insurance or a health scheme between NFHS-4 and NFHS-5. At the national level, the proportion increased from 28.7 per cent to 41 per cent; the indicator is relevant to Haryana because health protection formed part of the wider welfare architecture during the study period. The interpretation should nevertheless distinguish insurance coverage from actual utilisation, quality of care and health outcomes. Coverage is an institutional input or access indicator; it does not by itself establish that health services have become equally accessible or effective for all households.

Poverty and Standard of Living

The reduction in multidimensional poverty constitutes one of the clearest measurable changes in Haryana's human-development profile during the first half of the study period. The decline from 11.88 per cent to 7.07 per cent between 2015–16 and 2019–21 represents a reduction of approximately 4.81 percentage points in the proportion of the population classified as multidimensionally poor.

The improvement was not geographically uniform. District-level estimates show that Nuh remained considerably more deprived than many other districts, even though multidimensional poverty declined across much of the state. The NITI Aayog district analysis identifies Nuh as having the highest multidimensional-poverty headcount in the 2019–21 comparison, illustrating the persistence of spatial inequality within Haryana. This finding is particularly important for the present research because it demonstrates that state-level progress can coexist with substantial district-level differences.

Such variation reinforces the theoretical argument that governance capacity operates through institutional and geographical contexts. A state may introduce common programmes and administrative reforms, but the effectiveness of those interventions can differ because of differences in infrastructure, literacy, social composition, urbanisation, administrative capacity, economic opportunities and local institutional conditions.

Sustainable Development and Basic Services

The SDG framework provides a multidimensional means of examining Haryana's development trajectory. According to NITI Aayog's SDG India Index, Haryana's composite

score increased from 67 in 2020–21 to 72 in 2023–24. A separate NITI Aayog assessment records an increase of 17 points in Haryana's SDG score between the 2018–19 baseline and 2023–24. The precise comparison should be interpreted with caution because indicator definitions and methodologies can change across editions of the index.

The SDG framework is useful because it prevents economic growth from being treated as the sole measure of development. It incorporates poverty, health, education, gender equality, water and sanitation, energy, employment, infrastructure, inequality, environmental sustainability and institutional dimensions. Haryana's performance therefore has to be understood as a multidimensional trajectory in which progress in some areas can coexist with continuing weaknesses in others.

Basic-service access also became increasingly connected to digital and administrative systems. Electricity access, welfare identification, online applications, digital service delivery and programme monitoring increasingly formed part of the institutional infrastructure through which households interacted with the state. These developments are relevant to the governance dimension because the quality of development outcomes depends partly on whether citizens can actually access public programmes and services.

Gender and Social Development

Gender constitutes a particularly important dimension of Haryana's development trajectory because the state has historically experienced significant gender-related disparities. Progress in education, health and women's participation in economic and political institutions therefore needs to be assessed alongside continuing structural constraints.

The multidimensional-poverty data indicate improvements in several indicators affecting women and households, but they also show continuing contributions from nutrition and maternal health to overall deprivation. Similarly, the labour-market evidence reveals a substantial gender gap in labour-force participation. These patterns suggest that improvements in household welfare do not necessarily translate into equivalent economic autonomy for women.

The governance–development relationship is consequently more complex in the gender domain than in aggregate economic indicators. Public policies relating to education, maternal health, social protection, self-help groups, employment, entrepreneurship and political participation can expand opportunities, but outcomes are mediated by social norms and household-level constraints. The persistence of low female labour-force participation despite broader economic growth illustrates the importance of examining the distributional and

institutional dimensions of development rather than relying exclusively on aggregate economic statistics.

Rural Development and Spatial Inequality

Rural development remains central to the Haryana case because a significant share of the population continues to live outside urban areas and agriculture remains an important component of the state economy. At the same time, Haryana's development geography is highly differentiated. The NCR districts have benefited from urbanisation, industrialisation, services and proximity to Delhi, whereas several southern and western districts face different economic and infrastructural conditions.

The multidimensional-poverty evidence confirms that rural deprivation remains higher than urban deprivation. In Haryana, the rural multidimensional-poverty headcount ratio in 2019–21 was 8.41 per cent compared with 4.26 per cent in urban areas. This difference is important because it indicates that state-wide improvements cannot be interpreted as evidence of spatial convergence.

The district-level variation also provides an empirical justification for the study's decision to treat geography as an intervening factor. Governance interventions may have different effects depending on the administrative capacity of local institutions, connectivity, educational levels, economic structure and availability of private-sector opportunities. Consequently, district-level analysis is necessary for understanding the mechanisms through which state policies translate into development outcomes.

Infrastructure, Digitalisation and Access to Services

Infrastructure development during 2015–2025 increasingly involved both physical and digital infrastructure. Physical infrastructure, including roads, electricity, transport connectivity, industrial infrastructure and public facilities, remained essential to economic development. At the same time, digital infrastructure became increasingly important for access to government services, welfare programmes and administrative information.

The development of online service-delivery systems changed the interface between citizens and the state. The institutional significance of these systems lies not merely in computerisation but in the possibility of reducing administrative transaction costs, standardising procedures and improving monitoring. Haryana's digital governance architecture, including integrated service platforms, therefore represents a development input as well as a governance reform.

Year/Assessment	Digital Governance Indicator	Haryana's Performance
2021	NeSDA State Services Portal – Group A	3rd rank
2023	Services available through Saral Haryana	503 of 757 (66%)
July 2024	Mandatory e-services available	51 of 56 (91.08%)
2025	Mandatory e-services saturation	Above 90%
November 2025	Services through Saral Haryana	Above 90%
2024	SKOCH e-Government Infrastructure Index	1st rank
2024	SKOCH State of Governance Index	17th rank

However, digitalisation also creates new questions concerning digital literacy, connectivity, exclusion and the capacity of disadvantaged groups to use online systems. Consequently, digital access should be interpreted as a potential mechanism of improved service delivery rather than as an outcome that automatically guarantees equitable access.

Overall Assessment of Socio-Economic Trends

Taken together, the evidence indicates that Haryana experienced considerable socio-economic change during 2015–2025. Real economic activity expanded over the decade, per capita income increased, labour-market participation and the worker population ratio improved in the later PLFS years, multidimensional poverty declined, educational infrastructure remained extensive, and several dimensions of access to public services improved. The state's SDG score also increased over the period covered by the available index series.

At the same time, the evidence does not support a simple linear interpretation of development. First, economic expansion and human development do not move identically across all indicators. Second, gender disparities remain particularly significant in the labour market. Third, rural and urban populations experience different levels of deprivation. Fourth, district-level differences remain substantial, with Nuh providing a prominent example of persistent disadvantage. Fifth, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted economic and social processes and complicates direct comparison across the entire decade. Finally, several outcomes are influenced by policies implemented jointly by the Union and state governments, private investment and broader economic conditions.

The central implication for the present study is therefore that Haryana's development trajectory should be understood as a multidimensional and spatially differentiated process. The evidence provides grounds for examining whether changes in governance capacity and public-policy implementation were associated with improvements in socio-economic outcomes, but it does not by itself establish causality. Establishing that relationship requires

systematic statistical analysis of governance and development indicators and, importantly, an examination of variation across districts.

Table: Haryana GSDP and Structural Economic Transformation, 2015–16 to 2024–25.

Indicator	2015–16	2023–24	2024–25
GSDP at current prices	Approx. ₹5.0 lakh crore	More than ₹10.8 lakh crore	—
Real GSDP growth	11.57 %	7.8%	Approx. 7.6%
Economic structure	Agriculture important	Services largest component; industry second; agriculture third	—

Source: Department of Economic and Statistical Affairs, Haryana; Haryana Economic Survey.

Table: Haryana Per Capita Income, 2015–16 and 2023–24.

Indicator	2015–16	2023–24	Change
Per capita income at current prices	Approx. ₹1.65 lakh	Approx. ₹3.25 lakh	Approx. ₹1.60 lakh
Per capita income at constant 2011–12 prices	Approx. ₹1.38 lakh	Approx. ₹1.88 lakh	Approx. ₹0.50 lakh

Source: Department of Economic and Statistical Affairs, Haryana.

Note: Current-price figures reflect both real economic expansion and price changes. Constant-price figures provide a better indication of real changes in average income. Pasted markdown.

Table: Haryana Labour-Market Indicators.

Indicator	Earlier/Reference Year	Later Year	Change/Observation
Worker Population Ratio (15 years and above)	41.7% (2017–18)	47.8% (2023–24)	+6.1 percentage points
Unemployment rate, usual status, 15 years and above	—	3.4% (2023–24)	Later-period unemployment declined
Male LFPR, 15 years and above, rural + urban	—	53.3% (2023–24)	—
Female LFPR, 15 years and above, rural + urban	—	18.4% (2023–24)	—
Male–female LFPR gap	—	34.9 percentage points	Substantial gender gap

Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), Government of India.

Note: The paper states that the WPR did not increase uniformly each year and that the labour market was affected by the COVID-19 period. Pasted markdown

Table: Haryana Multidimensional Poverty, 2015–16 to 2019–21.

Indicator	2015–16	2019–21	Change
Multidimensional Poverty Headcount Ratio	11.88%	7.07%	–4.81 percentage points
Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)	0.053	0.031	–0.022
Rural MPI Headcount Ratio	—	8.41%	—
Urban MPI Headcount Ratio	—	4.26%	—
Rural–urban difference	—	4.15 percentage points	Rural higher

Source: NITI Aayog, *National Multidimensional Poverty Index*.

Table: Haryana Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Index Score.

Year	Haryana SDG Composite Score
2020–21	67
2023–24	72
Change	+5 points

Table: Key Socio-Economic Development Indicators in Haryana.

Development Dimension	Indicator	Earlier Value	Later Value	Period
Economic growth	GSDP, current prices	Approx. ₹5.0 lakh crore	>₹10.8 lakh crore	2015–16 to 2023–24
Income	Per capita income, current prices	Approx. ₹1.65 lakh	Approx. ₹3.25 lakh	2015–16 to 2023–24
Income	Per capita income, constant 2011–12 prices	Approx. ₹1.38 lakh	Approx. ₹1.88 lakh	2015–16 to 2023–24
Employment	WPR, 15+	41.7%	47.8%	2017–18 to 2023–24
Unemployment	Usual-status unemployment, 15+	—	3.4%	2023–24
Poverty	MPI headcount	11.88%	7.07%	2015–16 to 2019–21
Poverty	MPI value	0.053	0.031	2015–16 to 2019–21
Poverty	Rural MPI headcount	—	8.41%	2019–21
Poverty	Urban MPI headcount	—	4.26%	2019–21
Sustainable development	SDG Index score	67	72	2020–21 to 2023–24

Source: Compiled from Department of Economic and Statistical Affairs, Haryana; PLFS; NITI Aayog; UDISE+.

Spatial Differentiation of Development

Haryana's districts can broadly be understood as representing different socio-economic configurations. The NCR-linked districts, including Gurugram, Faridabad and parts of Sonapat, have experienced substantial urbanisation, industrialisation and growth of service-sector activities. Central and northern districts such as Karnal, Panipat, Kurukshetra and Ambala combine agriculture with trade, manufacturing and service-sector activities. Southern districts, including Rewari and Mahendragarh, possess distinctive agricultural, industrial and strategic characteristics, while Nuh has historically faced higher levels of socio-economic deprivation.

These differences mean that development indicators cannot be interpreted independently of geography. A household located in a highly urbanised district may have access to different employment markets, educational institutions, hospitals and transport networks from a household in a predominantly rural district. Similarly, digital governance may have different effects depending on internet access, literacy, administrative infrastructure and citizens' familiarity with online services.

The district perspective therefore introduces an important spatial dimension into the governance–development framework. Governance capacity is not assumed to be spatially uniform; rather, the implementation of common policies can interact with local institutional and socio-economic conditions to produce differentiated outcomes.

District-Level Multidimensional Poverty

The strongest available evidence of spatial differentiation comes from NITI Aayog's district-level Multidimensional Poverty Index. The estimates compare NFHS-4 (2015–16) with NFHS-5 (2019–21) using the same broad MPI methodology.

The evidence shows that multidimensional poverty declined substantially in many Haryana districts. Rewari's headcount ratio declined from 11.08 per cent in 2015–16 to 2.91 per cent in 2019–21, while Gurugram declined from 10.39 per cent to 3.29 per cent. Rohtak declined from 13.72 per cent to 4.69 per cent, Sirsa from 14.52 per cent to 7.16 per cent and Bhiwani from 12.78 per cent to 6.62 per cent.

The decline was particularly large in some districts. Rewari experienced a reduction of approximately 8.17 percentage points, while Gurugram recorded a reduction of approximately 7.10 percentage points. NITI Aayog's district comparison also shows substantial reductions in districts such as Rohtak, Hisar, Sirsa and Kaithal.

However, the pattern was not uniform. Nuh remained an important outlier. Its multidimensional-poverty headcount ratio declined from 62.50 per cent in 2015–16 to 39.99 per cent in 2019–21, representing a reduction of more than 22 percentage points. Despite this substantial improvement, Nuh's 2019–21 headcount ratio remained far above that of every other Haryana district reported in the NITI Aayog comparison.

This evidence is analytically important. The reduction in Nuh demonstrates that substantial improvement can occur even in a historically disadvantaged district, but the remaining level of deprivation indicates that convergence was incomplete. The contrast with Rewari is particularly striking.

Rewari and Nuh: A Comparative Illustration

The Rewari–Nuh comparison provides a useful illustration of spatial inequality within Haryana. In 2015–16, the multidimensional-poverty headcount ratio was 11.08 per cent in Rewari compared with 62.50 per cent in Nuh. By 2019–21, the corresponding figures had declined to 2.91 per cent and 39.99 per cent respectively.

The change in both districts indicates progress, but the scale and level of deprivation remained substantially different. Rewari's decline of approximately 8.17 percentage points reduced the district's headcount ratio to below 3 per cent. Nuh's decline of approximately 22.51 percentage points represented a much larger absolute improvement, but the district nevertheless retained the highest multidimensional-poverty headcount among Haryana's districts in the 2019–21 estimates.

The comparison illustrates an important methodological distinction between rate of improvement and level of development. A disadvantaged district can experience a larger reduction in poverty while continuing to have substantially greater deprivation than a relatively advantaged district. Consequently, measuring governance performance solely through the rate of change could produce a different interpretation from measuring the absolute level of deprivation.

For the governance–development framework, this suggests that policy effectiveness should be examined through both improvement and convergence. A successful governance system may need not only to improve average outcomes but also to reduce persistent spatial disparities.

Gurugram and the NCR Effect

Gurugram represents a substantially different development context from districts such as Nuh. The district has strong connections with the NCR economy and has developed a large concentration of corporate services, information technology, finance, real estate, hospitality and other service-sector activities.

The multidimensional-poverty evidence shows that Gurugram's headcount ratio declined from 10.39 per cent in 2015–16 to 3.29 per cent in 2019–21. This change is consistent with a broader pattern of relatively favourable socio-economic conditions in economically diversified urban districts.

Nevertheless, the Gurugram case should not be interpreted as evidence that state policy alone generated the observed improvement. The district's development is influenced by geographical proximity to Delhi, private investment, multinational and domestic enterprises, real-estate development, infrastructure networks and national economic trends. Government policy forms part of this institutional environment but is only one component.

The Gurugram example consequently demonstrates why the paper distinguishes between governance association and causal attribution. Improvements in district-level outcomes may reflect the combined effect of public policy and broader structural advantages.

Faridabad and Industrial-Urban Development

Faridabad provides another example of an urban-industrial district with a different historical trajectory from Gurugram. Its economy has long included manufacturing and industrial activity, while its proximity to Delhi provides significant market and transport advantages.

NITI Aayog's MPI estimates show a decline in the district's multidimensional-poverty headcount ratio from 10.70 per cent in 2015–16 to 7.42 per cent in 2019–21. The decline was therefore smaller than that recorded in Gurugram and Rewari.

This difference illustrates that urbanisation and industrialisation do not automatically generate identical human-development outcomes. Districts can possess strong economic bases while continuing to experience deprivation among sections of the population. Urban poverty, informal employment, housing conditions and unequal access to services can persist even in economically productive districts.

The Faridabad case therefore reinforces the need to examine development through multiple indicators rather than using industrial output or urbanisation as proxies for overall welfare.

Nuh as a Case of Persistent Structural Deprivation

Nuh provides the most important case of persistent deprivation in the district-level analysis. According to NITI Aayog, the district's multidimensional-poverty headcount ratio declined from 62.50 per cent in 2015–16 to 39.99 per cent in 2019–21. The MPI score simultaneously declined from 0.329 to 0.195.

The decline is substantial and demonstrates measurable improvement across the period. However, the remaining level of deprivation indicates that improvement should not be confused with convergence. Nuh remained substantially more deprived than other Haryana districts at the end of the available comparison period.

The case raises important questions concerning the mechanisms through which governance influences development. Policies operating uniformly across the state may encounter different implementation environments in districts with lower literacy, weaker economic diversification, limited infrastructure or fewer employment opportunities. The effectiveness of welfare programmes may also depend on citizens' ability to obtain information, complete administrative procedures and access complementary services.

Nuh therefore represents an analytically significant case for examining the interaction between governance capacity and structural conditions. The district should not be characterised simply as a policy failure or success. Rather, its trajectory demonstrates that substantial improvements can occur while deep structural disparities remain.

Mahendragarh and Southern Haryana

Mahendragarh provides another useful case because of its predominantly rural character and distinctive socio-economic conditions. The district's multidimensional-poverty headcount ratio declined from 6.29 per cent in 2015–16 to 5.04 per cent in 2019–21.

The magnitude of change was considerably smaller than that observed in Rewari or Nuh. This does not necessarily imply weaker governance. The starting level of deprivation was already relatively lower than in Nuh, meaning that the potential for large percentage-point reductions was different.

Northern and Central Haryana

Districts such as Karnal, Kurukshetra, Kaithal, Jind and Panipat demonstrate another pattern in which agriculture is combined with trade, manufacturing and service-sector activity. Their poverty indicators generally declined during the NFHS comparison period.

Karnal's multidimensional-poverty headcount ratio declined from 6.40 per cent to 3.43 per cent, while Kurukshetra declined from 6.42 per cent to 4.60 per cent. Kaithal declined from 7.83 per cent to 3.62 per cent. Jind declined from 9.16 per cent to 7.42 per cent. Panipat, meanwhile, changed from 8.12 per cent to 7.39 per cent.

The differences among these districts demonstrate that regional economic structure alone cannot fully explain developmental change. Districts with broadly similar agricultural and semi-urban characteristics can exhibit different trajectories. This strengthens the case for incorporating institutional capacity, service delivery, education, health and infrastructure into the empirical analysis.

Policy Implications

The findings of this study have several implications for public policy, governance reform and socio-economic development in Haryana. The central implication emerging from the governance–development analysis is that improvements in developmental outcomes depend not only on the formulation of policies but also on the institutional capacity to translate policy commitments into accessible, reliable and equitable public services. The evidence discussed in the preceding sections indicates that Haryana experienced substantial changes in economic activity, public-service delivery, digital governance, welfare administration, infrastructure and selected human-development indicators during the study period. At the same time, significant spatial differences remained across districts, particularly in relation to poverty, employment, gender outcomes and access to opportunities. Policy implications therefore need to move beyond an aggregate state-level perspective and address the institutional and spatial conditions under which public interventions produce different outcomes.

The analysis also suggests that governance should not be treated as a single administrative variable. Administrative effectiveness, digital infrastructure, accountability, local implementation capacity, beneficiary identification, interdepartmental coordination and responsiveness operate through different mechanisms. Consequently, policies designed to improve governance need to address the entire implementation chain rather than concentrating exclusively on administrative digitisation or the expansion of programme coverage. The implications that follow are therefore derived from the broader governance–development framework developed in this study and should be understood as institutional and analytical recommendations rather than as an assessment of any particular political party or government.

Implementation capacity includes adequate staffing, technical expertise, interdepartmental coordination, financial management, monitoring mechanisms and timely decision-making. Strengthening these dimensions can reduce the distance between policy formulation and citizen-level outcomes. Particular attention should be given to implementation bottlenecks at the district and block levels, where many public programmes are translated into actual services. Rather than measuring administrative performance primarily through the number of schemes launched or applications processed, evaluation systems should increasingly examine whether beneficiaries received services on time, whether exclusion was reduced, whether grievances were resolved and whether measurable improvements occurred in relevant development indicators.

A stronger district-specific approach would involve identifying the dominant constraints affecting each district and aligning interventions accordingly. Districts characterised by relatively high deprivation may require greater emphasis on basic service access, educational attainment, health infrastructure, livelihoods and social protection. More economically diversified districts may require policies focused on employment quality, urban infrastructure, environmental sustainability, skills and the management of rapid demographic change. Such differentiation does not imply separate governance systems for each district; rather, it suggests greater flexibility in the implementation of common state-level policy objectives. District development strategies should also incorporate measurable outcome indicators. A district's performance should not be assessed solely by expenditure or physical infrastructure created. Indicators relating to poverty reduction, school retention, learning outcomes, maternal and child health, employment, women's participation, access to essential services and grievance resolution can provide a more comprehensive assessment of developmental progress.

The policy implication is that welfare governance should combine integrated identification with effective service delivery, grievance redressal and continuous verification. Administrative databases should be regularly updated because household circumstances can change through migration, employment changes, marriage, death, disability or other demographic events. Static administrative records can therefore generate both inclusion and exclusion errors if they are not accompanied by mechanisms for correction. An integrated welfare architecture should also encourage convergence among departments dealing with health, education, livelihoods, food security, housing and social protection. Multidimensional deprivation cannot generally be addressed through a single programme. Coordinated interventions can be particularly important for households facing several disadvantages

simultaneously. This approach corresponds with the human-development perspective, in which development is understood as an expansion of substantive opportunities rather than simply an increase in household income.

Digital governance has become an important component of Haryana's administrative architecture. Online service platforms can reduce transaction costs, improve transparency, facilitate application tracking and make information more accessible. Nevertheless, digitalisation can also introduce new forms of exclusion when citizens lack internet access, digital literacy, reliable devices, documentation or assistance in navigating online systems.

Data governance is equally important. Integrated welfare databases contain information that can affect citizens' access to public benefits. Strong safeguards concerning data accuracy, access controls, correction mechanisms, privacy and institutional accountability are therefore necessary. Digital governance should balance administrative efficiency with procedural fairness and protection against erroneous exclusion. The quality of a digital welfare system should consequently be evaluated through both efficiency indicators and citizen-level outcomes. Panchayati Raj Institutions and urban local bodies operate close to citizens and are often responsible for implementing or facilitating services related to sanitation, local infrastructure, rural development, community assets and social welfare. Their institutional capacity can therefore influence whether state-level policy translates into local development outcomes. Strengthening local governance requires attention to financial resources, administrative support, technical expertise, elected representatives' capacity and mechanisms of citizen participation. Capacity-building programmes should not be limited to formal training but should also provide practical support in budgeting, planning, project monitoring, social auditing and digital administration.

Economic growth does not automatically generate sufficient employment opportunities for all population groups. The analysis indicates the importance of examining the quality, distribution and inclusiveness of employment rather than relying exclusively on aggregate economic growth indicators. Employment policy should therefore distinguish between employment generation, labour-force participation, earnings, job security, productivity and access to social protection. Skills programmes should be linked more closely with local and regional labour-market requirements. The needs of industrial districts, urban service economies, agricultural regions and emerging digital sectors are not identical. District-level labour-market assessments can therefore improve the alignment between training provision and employment opportunities.

Education and health represent long-term dimensions of development in which governance effects may not become immediately visible. Consequently, policy evaluation should distinguish between short-term service coverage and longer-term human-development outcomes. In education, increasing enrolment and infrastructure availability are important but insufficient indicators of educational development. Learning outcomes, attendance, transition rates, teacher availability, digital access and completion should also be incorporated into monitoring systems. District-level differences should be considered because educational challenges may differ substantially between rural, urban, economically advanced and high-deprivation areas.

Health policy requires a similar distinction between financial or institutional coverage and actual health outcomes. Expanding insurance or service eligibility can improve access to healthcare, but outcomes also depend on availability of healthcare facilities, personnel, diagnostic services, referral systems and preventive care. A comprehensive health-governance framework should therefore combine coverage indicators with measures of service utilisation, quality and population health. The findings of this study support a stronger emphasis on evidence-based monitoring and evaluation. Government programmes should be assessed through a clear distinction between inputs, outputs, intermediate outcomes and final outcomes. Inputs may include expenditure, personnel and infrastructure; outputs may include beneficiaries covered, applications processed or facilities constructed; intermediate outcomes may include improved service access and reduced transaction costs; and final outcomes may include poverty reduction, improved educational attainment, better health or increased employment.

This distinction is particularly important because high programme coverage does not necessarily imply successful development outcomes. Evaluation systems should therefore incorporate outcome indicators alongside administrative performance indicators. The study also points to the importance of linking public expenditure with measurable development outcomes. Budgetary allocation provides information about governmental priorities, but expenditure alone cannot demonstrate effectiveness. Outcome-oriented budgeting can strengthen the connection between financial resources and measurable improvements in citizens' welfare.

Although this study adopts a longitudinal and mixed-method approach to examine the governance–development nexus in Haryana between 2015 and 2025, several limitations need to be recognised. These limitations relate primarily to data availability, measurement of governance, causal attribution, temporal comparability, district-level heterogeneity and the

institutional complexity of development outcomes. Acknowledging these limitations is important because the relationship between governance and development is multidimensional and cannot be adequately captured through a single indicator or a simple statistical association. The limitations do not invalidate the analytical framework; rather, they define the boundaries within which the findings should be interpreted.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the governance–development nexus in Haryana during the period 2015–2025, with particular attention to the relationship between public policy, institutional capacity, policy implementation and socio-economic outcomes. The study was motivated by a central question: to what extent can changes in governance and public policy be associated with changes in economic, social and human-development outcomes within a state characterised by substantial spatial and socio-economic diversity? Rather than treating governance as synonymous with the actions of a particular government, the study conceptualised governance as a broader institutional process involving administrative effectiveness, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, digital systems, policy implementation, local institutions and intergovernmental coordination.

The analysis demonstrates that the relationship between governance and development is neither linear nor exclusively determined by government intervention. Haryana experienced considerable changes in its economic structure, public-service delivery systems, welfare architecture, digital governance, infrastructure and selected human-development indicators during the study period. However, these changes occurred within a wider environment shaped by national economic conditions, Union government programmes, private investment, demographic change, urbanisation, the National Capital Region, historical policy legacies and the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings therefore support an interpretation of governance as an enabling and mediating mechanism within a broader development system.

One of the principal findings of the study is that Haryana's governance architecture underwent substantial institutional and technological transformation during the decade. Administrative reforms increasingly emphasised citizen-facing service delivery, online access, digital monitoring, integrated beneficiary identification and more systematic programme administration. The expansion of digital governance illustrates a shift from traditional department-centred administration towards systems that increasingly attempt to integrate information, applications and service delivery. The evidence on multidimensional poverty provides an important dimension of the study. Haryana experienced a decline in

multidimensional poverty during the period for which comparable NITI Aayog estimates are available. At the same time, the magnitude of improvement differed substantially across districts.

This finding is significant because it demonstrates why aggregate state-level indicators must be interpreted alongside spatially disaggregated evidence. A decline in state-level poverty does not imply that all districts or social groups experience development at the same pace. The persistence of higher deprivation in particular districts indicates that structural conditions, local economic opportunities, infrastructure, human capital and institutional capacity continue to influence development outcomes. Education and health illustrate the importance of distinguishing between immediate policy outputs and long-term development outcomes. Expansion of schools, health facilities, insurance coverage or digital services can improve access, but the developmental effects of such interventions depend on quality, utilisation and continuity.

Educational development requires attention to learning outcomes, teacher availability, retention and transition, while health development depends on service quality, personnel, infrastructure, preventive care and accessibility. These outcomes may emerge over periods longer than the annual budgetary or administrative cycle. Digital governance emerged as one of the most visible dimensions of institutional transformation during the study period. Digital service platforms and integrated information systems have the potential to make public administration more accessible, traceable and responsive. Nevertheless, the study finds that digital governance should not be equated automatically with better governance. The effectiveness of digital systems depends on digital literacy, connectivity, administrative responsiveness, data accuracy and the availability of alternatives

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