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**ABSTRACT**

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Chocó is among the states with the lowest economic and social indicators in Colombia. This paper describes the economic and social history of its inhabitants. Starting at the colonial period, the analysis allows the comprehension of the productive stages and the institutional scheme that affected the local development trend afterwards. Also, it emphasizes on the historic consequences of its economic model on the individuals' wellbeing. Likewise, it exposes the recent progress in the standard of living. Last but not least, the study posits a relationship between poverty and the idea of natural resource curse. This is explored through various mechanisms of failure in development. The curse is linked to dependence on natural endowments, little economic diversification and competitiveness in the modern economy.