

AN EMPIRICAL ASSESSMENT OF DEPRIVATION AMONG SCHEDULED CASTE POPULATION IN KERALA

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Abstract

Even though the Government is proving a wide array of schemes and policies for the emancipation of the Scheduled Caste population, it often fails to bring them to the forefront of the society and to reduce the existing gap between them and affluent sections of the society. The existing literature showcased their lack of capacity as the fundamental reason for their deprived status. This Lack of capacity is attributed to their income, caste, wealth and educational status. But various modern thinkers repudiate the notion of calculating deprivation on the basis of money and income and point out various approaches for evaluating human deprivation. Nobel laureate Amartya Sen pointed out that the lack of capability to achieve different functions caused for deprivation in people's lives rather than the low income and scarce resources. So the present study tries to find out the extent of Capability and economic deprivation among SC population in Kerala and pattern of their human capital investment, their socioeconomic status and various schemes intended for their welfare and human capital formation. A multistage sampling method was adopted for the study. Various domains, indicators, statistical tools like discriminant analysis, regression analysis etc have been employed in the study and it is proved that increasing the level of capability and human capital formation will ensure their progress. Both rural and urban areas have been experiencing deprivation depending on different domains and their indicators.

Keywords: *Capability Deprivation, Economic Deprivation, generalized deprivation index, Human Deprivation index, Capability poverty Measure*

Introduction

The term 'SC' appeared for the first time in Government of India Act of 1935. The deprivation of Scheduled Caste population is associated with the historical processes of economic & social exclusion and discrimination based on caste (Varna System). In spite of sustained and consistent efforts on the part of the government to improve the condition of Scheduled Castes, this social group continues to be categorized amongst the poorest and most subordinated in Indian society by any measure of human development. The caste system has implanted all its perils on the shoulders of scheduled caste population and made them the most oppressed class of Indian subcontinent. The origin of caste system in India dates back to the advent of Aryans. Later Indian society has been stratified on the basis of Varna. Vedic texts and literature throws light to that segregation and subjugated condition of lower caste population. The only menial occupation has been allowed to such section of the population. They

had been deprived of all types of social and economic benefactions. Hence they remained on the lowest ladder of growth and development. Their situation was always worse during all the eras of Indian history. The practice of 'untouchability' resulted in great injustice to the members of the concerned castes because they were discriminated against in every respect, and denied ownership of productive assets like land, as well as basic rights like education and equality, which resulted in the perpetuation of their extreme socio-economic deprivation.

Research gap

The existing literature states about the issue of the caste system, insufficient income, poverty, low educational status, inadequate consumption expenditure which leads to an impoverished life of SC masses (Ambedkar 1948; J.H.Hutton 1963; Saradmoni 1980; Kakar 1990; Pattil 1990; Ahuja 1992; Gopal Guru 1993). Due to various constitutional safeguard measures, government schemes and legislation, educational policies over last few decades, their status has been undergone vast changes (R.B. Bhagat 2013; GovardhanWankhede 2016; ThiaguRanganathan 2017). Even though it has caused a positive shift to their addressed issues mentioned earlier, still they remain in a deprived position compared to the advantaged sections of the society. Their enrolment ratio has been increased but it can't claim the improvement in their educational status and attainment of gainful employment. It is an undeniable fact that money income can't always procure welfare to the individual. The welfare of the individual includes freedom of choice, the capability of living a good life at their disposal with adequate means of living. The government envisages and implements an adequate level of health amenities, educational facilities, housing schemes etc to the SC population. But whether they are deprived of in availing and using these facilities? Whether the attained educational qualification is enough to make them self-reliant or capable of having a decent standard of living? Are there any barriers to the attainment of basic needs of housing, services, proper living environment etc? Whether they suffer from the lack of capabilities related to satisfying basic needs of food, shelter, nutrition, water, living environment etc? The present study focuses on these unidentified areas of Scheduled Caste population.

Statement of the Problem

Kerala is well known for its achievements in social sectors - literacy, basic education, sex - ratio in favour of females, health, and life - expectancy, public distribution etc. Even though the condition of scheduled caste population in Kerala is better, when compared to the other states of India, still they are considered to be an excluded social group. Kerala can't claim a major improvement in reducing their inequality and deprivation in all fields of their life with the rest of the population. The government of India has introduced various schemes at the central, state and even at grass root level. Yet, they are still living in a very pathetic condition. In this context, the socio-economic development of scheduled castes has been considered to be an important obligation.

The outcome of social and economic reforms is uneven and far from satisfactory as far as the achievement of the stated goals is concerned. In spite of the various Constitutional safeguards and all the different schemes for their enrichment, the Socio-economic condition of Scheduled Castes is found to be much lower than that of the rest of the society. Even though the state has achieved progress in economic terms, we can't determine it as the status of all subdivisions its population. Economic progress is not the sole measure of individual's wellbeing. But, the social well-being of the citizen, freedom of choice, women empowerment, political freedom etc matters. The present study of deprivation of Scheduled Caste households in Kerala is an effort to investigate and collect evidence on their present conditions in this perspective.

Objectives of the study

The following are the main objectives of the present study.

- To study the status of Scheduled Caste population in Kerala on the basis of various socio-economic domains and indicators.
- To understand the pattern of human capital investment by Scheduled Caste households in Kerala.
- To assess the capability and economic deprivation among scheduled caste population in both rural and urban areas on the basis of gender.

Hypothesis

- There is a direct relationship between the income and expenditure for the human capital formation by the SC household.
- Economic deprivation among Scheduled caste females exceeds than that of Scheduled caste males.
- Capability Deprivation exceeds among Scheduled Caste households in rural area than Scheduled Caste households in urban areas

Theoretical Framework and approach of the study

This segment deals with the theoretical foundation of the present study and different approaches to growth and development. The theoretical perspective developed in this study may be prefaced with a discussion of the existing theories of development that have been evolved by academicians to explain the process of development. The classical theory based primarily on the work of Adam Smith is taken as the first attempt to explain economic growth. According to his theory, growth is the result of the expansion of productive inputs and improvements in technology. For him, investment in physical and human capital is the key to economic growth. Adam Smith identified three main factors, which determine development viz., the productivity of labour, markets and zero political interventions.

Solow, the best exponent of neo-classical theory, included the productivity of labour and its re-investment as the two determinates of growth. The neo-classical economists assumed that individuals in the economy are independent of political control. The another category is the geographic and location theory largely

popularized by Jeffery Sachs and Jared Diamond. This theory suggests that climatic conditions and access to market are the primary determinates of development.

The other approach emphasizes substantive nature of the economy. It is known as the institutional approach and stresses the importance of creating an institutional framework and policy environment conducive to the smooth operation of markets, the realization of gains from trade and entrepreneurial activities. Douglass North and Peter Bauer are the main proponents of this theory.

The main approach of the study:

- Human Capital Investment Approach
- Capability approach

Even though the Government is proving a wide array of schemes and policies for the emancipation of the Scheduled Caste population, it often fails to bring them to the forefront of the society and to reduce the existing gap between them and affluent sections of the society. Various Studies have been conducted so far, for understanding the underlying factors for this particular issue. The existing literature showcased their lack of capacity as the fundamental reason for their deprived status. This Lack of capacity is attributed to their income, caste, wealth and educational status. But various modern thinkers repudiate the notion of calculating deprivation on the basis of money and income and pointed out various approaches for evaluating human deprivation. Human capital formation approach popularized by Adam Smith, Veblen, Marshall, Gary Becker, Harbison, Schultz, Dension, Kendrick, Abramowitz, Bowman, Kuznets etc focuses on increasing knowledge, health and skills of all people of the country thereby decreasing the deprivation among the population. Nobel laureate AmartyaSen pointed out that the lack of capability to achieve different functions caused for deprivation in people's lives rather than the low income and scarce resources. So the present study emphasis on the need and prospects of improving capability and human capital formation among SC population for reducing their deprivation.

Rationale for selecting sample areas/Sample design

- A multi stage sampling procedure was adopted for selecting the sample units
- First Stage-Clustering of all districts of Kerala into two groups based on generalized deprivation index of Scheduled Caste population based on HDR 2005 First five districts having generalized deprivation indices (HDR, 2005) less than 50%
Group B: First five districts having generalized deprivation indices (HDR, 2005) greater than 50 %
 - Second Stage-Two districts were selected from those clustered Groups having SC population more than the state average.

Thrissur (Group A) and Palakkad (Group B) has been selected

The Sample areas were divided into rural and urban areas with Panchayat area constituting the rural and corporation locale constituting the urban area. Thrissur corporation of thrissur district and kavasserypanchayat of Palakkad district has

been selected for the present study. Thus primary data were collected from a total of two hundred households with a total SC population of 942 individuals.

Objectives based Findings and conclusion

- One of the objectives of the study is to understand the socio-economic conditions of the Sample population. For this, various variables like Employment status, Government support, Family Structure, Family size, Income, Savings, Expenditure, liability, Asset holding, Civil status, educational status, housing condition & facilities, infrastructure facilities, Health facilities etc has been evaluated. By observing these factors the socio-economic conditions of SC population in both areas are found to be satisfactory and improving. But rural SC population lacks many of the amenities available to urban households. The socio-economic condition of SC sample households of rural area is lower than that of urban area counterparts.
- Another objective of the study is to assess the pattern of expenditure made for human capital formation by sample households. In the case of some households expenditure on human capital investments is low. But some households spend more on education attainment, private tuitions, health policies etc. Expenditure for skill enhancement by urban population exceeds rural population. In rural area, only 13% is spending (below 1000rs) for skill enhancement and 87% is not spending anything for skill enhancement. All Sample SC households are spending for education and healthcare in both areas. Urban area sample population spends more for education and health care than rural area sample population. So it is understood that human capital investment in the urban area exceeds to that of rural area. ANOVA is employed to understand the relationship between Income and human Capital Investment of household.

Bivariate Regression Model

The regression model can be stated as follows:

$$Y = B_0 + B_1 X$$

Predicted Expenditure on Human Capital Formation = Intercept + Change in Expenditure on Human Capital Expenditure with a unit change in Household Income X Household Income

$Y = B_0 + B_1 X$

Y = Dependent Variable (Expenditure)

X = Independent Variable (Income)

Null Hypothesis :

$B_0 = B_1 = 0$ i.e. there exists no linear relationship between Income and Expenditure.

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	11.767	57.839		.203	.839
	Income	.257	.009	.897	28.582	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Expenditure

So the linear relationship between Household Income and Expenditure on Human Capital formation (Health, Education and Skill/training) can be shown as:

Expenditure on Human Capital Formation = 0.257 X Household Income

There is significant relationship between income and expenditure on human capital formation.

The statistical analysis affirmed that there is a direct relationship between the income of the household and their expenditure for human capital formation. Hence the hypothesis of "There is a direct relationship between the income of the household and expenditure for the human capital formation" is accepted. There is a significant relationship between income and expenditure on the human capital formation. Income of the household determines the expenditure for human capital formation. The expenditure pattern for human capital formation increases with higher income group households in both areas.

The last objective of the present study is to understand the capability and economic deprivation among scheduled caste population in both rural and urban areas in respect to gender. And for this various deprivation domains and indicators has been employed. Economic deprivation is understood on the basis of income and employment deprivation. Capability deprivation is elaborated on the basis of health deprivation & disability, Education/skill/Training deprivation, Barriers to housing & services, living environment facilities, political participation, and Crime.

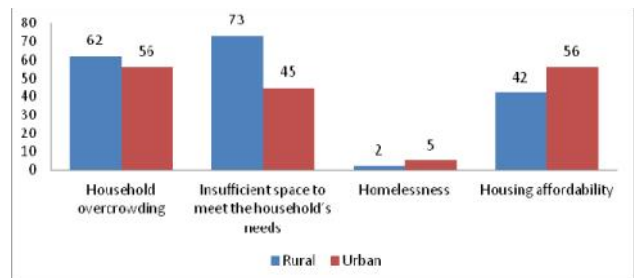
Economic Deprivation

- Income deprivation is prevailed in both areas and is more affected to rural SC households (89%) than Urban (85%) SC households. SC Females confronted employment deprivation more than males in the rural area but in urban area Male workers have undergone employment deprivation more than that of females. This creates a paradox. Hereby the second hypothesis of the study "Economic deprivation among Scheduled caste females exceeds than that of Scheduled caste males" stands to be rejected. Family circumstances, Disguised unemployment, ill-health, harassment, wage issues, underemployment etc are the reasons identified for their exclusion from the job market.

Capability Deprivation

- Only 25% rural male and 24 % of rural females and 20% of urban males and 19% of urban females are in good health (normal category). Here rural area sample population exceeds urban area sample population in normal health category. In rural area, 7 % of SC males and 13% of SC females and 11% urban SC males and 9% of urban SC females are suffering from severe health issues. Here rural SC females outnumber to that urban SC females.

- The study revealed differently abled persons in rural area (25) exceed than that of urban area (15). In rural area 17 in dependent category and 8 in working age are differently abled. In urban area 10 dependent and 5 working age individuals are in differently abled category.
- Number of school drop outs is higher among rural sample population (7) than urban (3). The total female drop outs in both areas are 7. The indicator Non-entry to higher education (involuntary) is also higher in rural sample SC population (21) than urban (17) sample population. In both cases females outnumber males. So it is evident that females are more deprived than males and rural population is more deprived than urban sample SC population. Financial problems, failure, marriage etc caused for the non-entry to higher education and drop outs among sample SC population. Other reason include work for earnings, family responsibility, lack of interest, poverty etc
- Based on Adult skills deprivation indicators (working population), it is understood that sample SC population possess electronic gadgets like mobile phone, computer etc. So it enables the capability of connectivity to them but majority are incapable of using it. Majority of adult population have no knowledge about the complete usage of mobile phones. Some simply use it for calling purpose only. So they lack capability of usage. The % of Sample SC Female population with no/low qualifications are in both areas is higher than their male counterparts.
- The Barriers to Housing sub-domain measures issues relating to access to housing such as affordability (inability to afford), overcrowding, homelessness, insufficient space to meet the household's needs etc.
- Geographical barriers to services subdomain relates to the physical proximity of local services to SC sample households. For urban area sample households all major facilities are available within 3.5 kms but for rural area, it is around 6 kms. So accessibility to essential services is more favorable to urban area sample households than rural area Sample households. Physical distance from services and facilities create a difficulty for frequent travel in rural areas than urban area.
- The structure of households shows that there are no kutcha houses in both sample areas. Majority households are having semi-pucca (rural 83%, urban 75%) and pucca houses (rural 17%, urban 25%).
- Indicators and results of Indoor living Environment sub domain



Source: Primary Survey

Indicators	Result
Housing condition	The structure of households shows that there are no kutcha houses in both sample areas. Majority are having semi-pucca and pucca houses. So the housing conditions of sample households are good.
Energy efficiency / Fuel poverty	10% in rural and 23% in urban are using only LPG for cooking but 90% of rural and 77% of urban is using a mix of LPG, wood and kerosene for cooking purpose. In rural area, .01 households use leaves, hay, cow dung as fuel occasionally but they are also using LPG/kerosene/wood.
Electricity	All households in both areas are electrified.
Sanitation facility	All households in both areas are having bathrooms in their home/premises.

Source: Primary data

Indicators and results of Outdoor living Environment sub domain

Indicators	Results
Air quality	Air quality of both areas is satisfactory. But urban sample SC population is more prone to polluted air as the number of vehicles is high and less number of trees in urban sample area.
Fresh water availability	In rural area, 49 % have own well and 23% depend on neighbours well and 62 % depend on public tap/well for drinking water and in urban area it is 36%, 32% and 51% respectively. Water shortage is a serious issue faced by the population in both areas but it is severe in summer season in urban areas.
Road traffic Accidents (injury to pedestrians, cyclists etc)	Minor Accidents occurred more in urban area than rural area. But one has severely injured in rural area by road accident.
Transportation facility	In urban sample area, there are frequent buses, auto, taxi, railway station (within 8 kms) available to SC sample population. But for rural sample households, there are only limited number of buses in their route. There is no railway station in rural sample area.
Pollution (Smoke, ditches etc)	Pollution of water, air is more in urban area.

Source: Primary data

- Among Rural SC women, only 12 % considers that they have voice in their family affairs, 8 % on family budget, 7 % on family planning and it is 20%, 14%, 10% for their urban counterparts respectively.
- Among both areas, ill-treatment due to crime rate is very low. In both rural and urban area only one household has victimized of theft and in urban area, two

household had victimized by burglary. None has faced any criminal damage, violence etc in last five years.

By observing all the indicators of capability deprivation domain the third hypothesis of the study 'Capability Deprivation exceeds among Scheduled Caste households in a rural area than Scheduled Caste households in urban areas' is rejected. As the urban area is deprived than the rural area in certain indicators of capability deprivation domain.

- Low level of Labour force participation rate is the perpetual characteristic of Kerala labour market among Indian states. Apart from slight increase of LFPR in urban region, labour force participation has been constant over the last two years. The LFPR of sample area-rural counts to 61.8% and urban area it is 65.7%. The sample area LFPR calculation resembles to that of the state ratio as urban LFPR exceeds to that of rural area.
- The Worker Population Ratio of Sample rural SC population (36%) is much less than that of urban SC sample population(51%). It reveals that unemployment rate is more among rural SC than Urban SC population.
- The CPM of scheduled caste population among rural area is 33.3 and that of urban area is 22.3. It reveals that capability poverty measure of rural SC is more than that of Urban SC.

The CPM considers the lack of three basic capabilities

1. Lack of being well nourished and healthy (the proportion of children under five years of age who are underweight.)
 2. Lack of capability for healthy reproduction(the proportion of births unattended by trained personnel)
 3. Lack of capability to be educated and knowledgeable (female illiteracy)
- The human deprivation index of Urban sample SC population (32) is less than that of rural (35.3) SC population. There was no infant mortality among SC population in the sample areas for the past 5 years. Majority of sample SC population among both areas are under BPL category. Human deprivation index has been calculated on the basis of the deprivation in income, health and educational aspects.

Capability deprivation score is calculated using Health deprivation index and Living Environment index

Health Deprivation Index is a direct measure of Health status. Health Status was rated under a ordinal scale of 4 [1(Normal), 2(Minor), 3(Moderate), 4(Severe)]

Health Deprivation Index = 1(Normal), 2(Minor), 3(Moderate), 4(Severe)

Living Environment index is measured through quality of housing of sample households

Living Environment index = 2(Excellent), 1(Good), 0(poor)

Null Hypothesis: Capability Deprivation Score (CDS) is same among Rural and urban area scheduled caste people.

Spss Analysis: one-way anova					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.627	3	.209	.834	.476
Within Groups	149.373	596	.251		
Total	150.000	599			

The table shows the output of the ANOVA analysis and to check whether there is a statistically significant difference between the group CDS means. We can see that the significance value is 0.476, which is above 0.05 therefore, there is no statistically significant difference in the Mean HDI Rural & Mean HDI Urban. We fail to reject the Null Hypothesis.

Conclusion

It is found that both rural and urban Scheduled caste households are deprived in various domains. The urban area is also experiencing deprivation than the rural area in some domains of deprivation. But rural area Sample population is more deprived in various indicators of deprivation subdomains when compared to urban area. It is noted that both economic and capability deprivation is recorded more on rural sample SC population. SC female in both areas is deprived than their male counterparts in all major domains. At this juncture, it is crucial to probe into the question whether various programmes and policies of SC welfare have made any strong impact on the Economic empowerment of SC population. The increase in various government-funded programmes and individual monthly income and savings is nullified by the excessive burden of expenditure of the population as perceived from their level of expenditure and the revelations from unstructured interviews. It is the need of the hour to review and monitor the funds allotted to them are utilized efficiently and rationally to increase their capability and human capital.

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