

Social Deprivation & Quality Of Life

* Prof. Mahjabeen Khanam

*HoD, Psychology, J.L. College, Hajipur
BRA Bihar University, Muzaffarpur.*

** Md. Sharif Ahmad

*Asst. Professor of Education
M M. Rahmani B.Ed. College, Damodarpur, Begusarai*

Abstract

The socio-economic deprivation and its impact on quality of life is a paramount problem of the nation. The sub-urban area of North Bihar have become more socio-economically susceptible and more prone to vulnerability compared to the cities having a higher level of preparedness in development. The real reason is the unequal distribution of national assets and resources across the systems of sub regions. Hence, there is a need to evaluate the degree of susceptibility in the different sub regions. The susceptibility in the process of development can be spatially explained by studying the patterns of deprivation in the sub regions. Additionally there is an observation on quality of life in terms of poor physical infrastructure and housing conditions, which has bearing with susceptibility. The present study attempted to identify the patterns of deprivation and its impact on quality of life from the two observations. The study has been performed based on the performances of fifteen socio-economic growth indicators, broadly categorized as health, education and economic indicators following Human Development Index (HDI) guidelines. The patterns of deprivation of a sub region have been identified by calculating the distribution of deprivation index across the region. Finally, the present study endeavoured to explain the nature of relationship between deprivation index and quality of life indicators. There is a specific case of Muzaffarpur Division, a comparatively less developed region of Bihar which has been selected as the case study.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The term deprivation stands for the condition of a system or a community or a region which is lacking the basic necessities of a society or community. Analogically, socio-economic deprivation can be described as the lack of social and economic benefits which are considered to be basic necessities of a society or community or in a broader sense of a region. The regions with high demand and low supply of basic requirements often exhibit poor social and economic status compared to the other adjacent regions which mark the former as socio-economically deprived region (Pampalon et al., 2000).

According to Maslows' hierarchy of needs, the basic necessities refer to the food, shelter and warmth (Maslow, 1943). The development of any region primarily depends on the fulfilment of these three prime factors. But practically, it is difficult to measure the development of any community or regional system only in terms of availability of food, shelter and warmth. The fundamental factors have to be more specific and quantified to assess the degrees of deprivation. Therefore a set of quantitative indicators which collectively represent the three prime factors of development need to be identified to measure the overall development of any regional system. The identification of the pattern of socio-economic deprivation in the present study, the Human Development Index (HDI) indicators have been considered as the primary units of measurement. Human Development Index (HDI) is considered worldwide as a basic tool for the measurement of socio-economic development, whose fulfilment satisfies the reaching of "A composite index measuring average achievements in three basic dimensions of human development- a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living" (Human Development Reports, 2003). The performances of HDI based indicators also reflect the quality of life of people of any particular region. As example, it can be stated that low per capita income (economic indicator) leads to poor quality of housing, high illiteracy rate (knowledge indicator) leads to less awareness, less number of doctors and beds in hospitals (health indicator) leads to poor health condition etc. Performances of the indicators determine the state of deprivation and in a larger scale the pattern of deprivation for the whole region.

There are several other vicious causal factors which act upon a region and make significant diverse changes in the performances of the indicators. The impact of the factors upon any regional system can be fatal as they expose the region towards different kinds of social and economic shocks, which in turn make a socio-economically deprived region highly sensitive. The factors can be of different types and can emerge from different dimensions. They can damage in direct and indirect way to both tangible as well as intangible assets and eventually affect the quality of life of the people living in the affected region. The extent of damage depends on the nature and intensity of shocks generated by them (Kim et al., 2009).

The study on socio-economic deprivation is gradually becoming significant due to the pressure created over the sub regions by rapid urbanization, changing pattern of demand and supply, globalization etc which have created different layers in the process of development. In the present context the level of development can be explained in three layers of development- development in cities, development in adjoining areas and development in community development (CD) blocks. The cities are already developed and resourceful. The adjoining areas are trying to be a part of city to avail all the amenities in full fledged manner and therefore they are gradually developing. But the area of concern is the development level of CD blocks. Most of the times, the CD blocks being the most neglected part of a region face the highest level of deprivation in social as well as economic aspects. This negligence often leads towards multiple deprivations in both social and economic dimensions. Therefore, in order to understand the pattern of deprivation, the present study has considered the community development blocks as the spatial unit forming the sub regions.

Importance of the Study

The social and economic benefits are the basic necessities of a region and lack of the same makes that particular region exposed to different kinds of shocks and injuries. The region becomes highly sensitive and susceptible in response to the socio-economic shocks generated by the causal factors. When the susceptibility of the sensitive regions exceeds certain limit of tolerance, they become vulnerable to the similar kind of shocks. Secondly, the quality of life of people living in CD blocks is of major concern. Poor and degraded quality of life is a very common phenomenon in those regions. The present study not only attempts to understand the pattern of socio-economic deprivation in the CD blocks of a relatively less developed region in North Bihar, but also tries to explore the existence of any relationship between the pattern of socio-economic deprivation and poor quality of life. Since, the present study has referred to the HDI based indicators for measurement of deprivation, the investigation unveiling the relationship of socio-economic deprivation and poor quality of life becomes obvious.

Objectives of the study

Accordingly, the following two objectives have been formulated to accomplish the present study:

- To identify the pattern of socio-economic deprivation
- To understand the relationship of socio-economic deprivation and poor quality of life.

II. METHODS

Case Study Region

To fulfil the objectives, Muzaffarpur Division - a relatively less developed region in North Bihar, located in north eastern part of India has been selected as the case study. All CD blocks within it have some commonality in terms of soil type, spatial characteristics, demographic and socio-economic characteristics. The region is less addressed and underdeveloped in both agriculture and industrial sectors and consequently is lacking in basic social and economic necessities (Shamim and Ahmed, 2011). Low agricultural productivity, small size of land holding, high dependency on farming, drought and flood are the additional factors acting behind the state of underdevelopment (Siddiqui and Hussain, 2010).

Tools and Techniques

For identification of the pattern of deprivation, the standard formula of indices of multiple deprivations has been used to identify the deprivation index for each CD block in the case study region. As per the definition given by Peter Townsend (1987), deprivation can be explained as “a state of observable and demonstrable disadvantage relative to local community or the wider society or nation to which the individual, family or group belongs”. Broadly, it can be classified into two categories- material and social, indicating lack of access to the basic necessities and social weakness respectively (Pampalon et al., 2012). The state of deprivation in any region or community can be measured by deprivation index. Deprivation index is considered as a geographical marker which indicates the quality of life of people (Pampalon et al., 2009). Multiple deprivations have been considered as sum total of different dimensions of deprivation (Noble et al., 2006). In the present study, the dimensions of deprivation refer to the three basic dimensions of HDI- health, knowledge and economy. Since, the primary units of study must be as small as possible so that it can ensure a very high level of accuracy

(Pampalon et al., 2000), in this study, depending upon the availability of data, CD blocks have been considered as the smallest units. After calculation of the deprivation index a mapping has been done to visually represent the pattern of deprivation. The formula for indices of multiple deprivations is as follows:

$$I_{ij} = (I_{\max} - I_i) / (I_{\max} - I_{\min})$$

I_{ij} = Deprivation Index of i th variable in j th unit of study

I_i = value of i th variable in j th unit of study

I_{\max} = Maximum value of i th variable

I_{\min} = Minimum value of i th variable

Indices of Multiple Deprivations

$$DI = \sum I_{ij} / n$$

n = Total number of variables

For the second objective, the deprivation indices have been related with the quality of life indicators and the relationship has been graphically represented for the detailed illustration. The relationship has been explained with the help of Pearson's correlation coefficient. It is a measure of correlation between different variables explaining their dependence up on each other. The correlation coefficient is generally delineated by "r". The value of r ranges from +1 to -1. Variables with the value near to ± 1 are considered to have very strong relationship with each other. The graphical illustrations have been made based on the z-scores of the QoL indicators and DI of each category of deprivations.

III. RESULTS

Selection of Indicators for Deprivation Index

The selection of indicators has emerged as the key concern of the study as the performances of the indicators are going to determine the degree of deprivation in every single unit of study. Therefore the indicators have to be selected with extreme attention so that they can interpret the actual socio-economic setting of the study region. As the present study from the very beginning has been emphasizing on the Human Development Index based indicators to best describe the social and economic scenario of any region, the three major dimensions have been conceived to frame a guideline for indicator selection. These three dimensions are- health, knowledge and economy.

Depending upon the values of average DI, the blocks have been categorized in four groups. They are: very highly deprived ($DI > 0.8$), highly deprived ($0.6 > DI > 0.79$), deprived ($0.3 > DI > 0.59$) and less deprived ($0 > DI > 0.29$) region to emphasize the pattern of deprivation. The categorization in detail showed that there is a vast area, consisting many blocks from East Champaran to Simanchal up to Bengal border, which are very highly deprived. The pattern reveals the existing socio-economic status of the whole case study region that is Muzaffarpur Division is very much deprived.

Selection of Quality Of Life Indicators

Quality of life (QoL) is the overall wellbeing of people and society and has a very wide range of contexts ranging from health to politics, economy to psychology, education to environment and leisure to social belongings (Gregory et al., 2009; Nussbaum and Sen, 1993). The World Health organization (WHO) defines QoL as: "an individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. It is a broad ranging concept affected in a complex way by the person's physical health, psychological state, personal beliefs, social relationships and their relationship to salient features of their environment" (http://www.who.int/mental_health/media/68.pdf). Therefore it is difficult to identify a particular set of indicators.

Impact of Deprivation over Quality of Life

To understand the impact of deprivation over QoL, the correlation coefficients for DI and all QoL indicators have been determined. The values explain the very strong relationship between DI and QoL indicators.

IV. DISCUSSION

The present study attempted to identify the pattern of socio-economic deprivation in a relatively less developed region and the impact of the socio-economic deprivation over quality of life of that particular region. Previous researches established that, deprivation index was considered as a widespread tool to understand the pattern and degree of socio-economic disparities (Drukker et al., 2003; Schuurman et al., 2007). Deprivation deals with various aspects causing lack of access to basic necessities and related resources which in turn affects the way of life (Nolan and Marx, 2009; Townsend 1979). Relevant researches in European countries have established that socio-economic deprivation and various dimensions of quality of life especially health related issues are associated with each other (Drukker and Os, 2003; Drukker et al., 2003). A study by Drukker et al. (2003) has revealed the relationship between socio-economic status and health related quality of life in The

Netherlands. Moreover, the study has shown that, with the little variation in socio-economic deprivation, there is change in quality of life.

The vast application of the method has been seen mostly in the health related studies. However in the present study endeavour was made to apply the concept of deprivation in case of quality of life of people. Firstly, the results for pattern of deprivation show a high level of socio-economic deprivation in the entire Muzaffarpur Division. However, the quality of life of people living in the case study region is not up to the mark according to the statistics obtained from different reliable sources like Census of India 2011 and District Statistical Handbook 2011. Secondly, the results explained the impact of socio-economic deprivation over quality of life showed that with the increased value of deprivation index, the value of the quality of life indicators decreased. In case of all the five quality of life indicators namely, number of households living in temporary housing, number of households with toilet and bathroom, number of household with drainage, number of household with electricity and number of household with drinking water facility, have lower values with high deprivation index. This incident explains that with high deprivation index, the quality of life becomes poorer, meaning the direct relationship of deprivation and poor quality of life. Consequently, socio-economically deprived regions always lead a degraded quality of life in terms of poor housing qualities and poor physical infrastructure which may lead towards multidimensional vulnerability to different kinds of social, medical and economic shocks.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The preset study has tried to explain the pattern of socio-economic deprivation in a relatively less developed region of developing nations. The study observed how the quality of life of people can be affected by deprivation and how the general idea of quality of life of a particular region can be made based up on the socio-economic status of the region. The strong level of association between the DI and QoL explained the appropriateness of the study. The study identifies the basis of socio-economic susceptibility and consequent vulnerability by understanding the pattern and relationship of deprivation and QoL in a developing region. However, deprivation index is not an individual level measure and also does not provide a descriptive framework. The study is applicable for any less developed region of developing nations. The indicators can be modified according to the nature of derivation and focus of the study.

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