

MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY IN KASHMIR: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SRINAGAR AND ANANTNAG DISTRICTS

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Abstract

In last few decades, poverty has been acknowledged as a multidimensional phenomenon in the policy circle. Multidimensional approach encapsulates the expansive representation of poverty as it implicates innumerable dimensions which are otherwise impossible in the uni-dimensional approach of poverty. The purpose of this paper is to examine the multidimensional poverty in the rural region of the Kashmir division of J&K. The study is based on primary data collected during the first quarter of 2016 from purposively selected two districts, namely, Srinagar and Anantnag districts. Eight dimensions with twenty-nine indicators of human well-being have been enlisted which augments the distinctiveness of this study. The possibility of the prevalence of the extensiveness of multidimensional poverty in rural Kashmir has been measured by the use of Alkire-Foster method. The results confirm our hypothesis of the prevalence of multidimensional poverty in the rural region of Kashmir. The finding of the existence of considerably much underprivileged population in Kashmir region of J&K would be helpful for the policy makers to focus on the dimensions accountable for such socio-economic vulnerability.

The profanest form of human deprivation is poverty. It is labelled as a state of 'prominent dispossession in well-being' (Mehta & Shah, 2001). It includes lack of income, productive resources, hunger and malnutrition, ill health, limited or lack of access to education and other basic services, increased morbidity and mortality from illness, homelessness and inadequate housing, unsafe environments, and social discrimination and exclusion, and lack of participation in decision making in civil, social and cultural life (UN, 1995). Adam Smith, the father of economics links the concept of economic poverty to the want of necessaries (Johnson, 2004). Classical economists distinguished poverty based on behavioural decision and the sub-culture of poverty. During 19th century, it was believed that poverty is necessary otherwise; the labours would not be motivated for work (Townsend, 1979). Sub-culture of poverty suggests that poorest section of the society tend to form a special sub-group with distinctive traits (Lewis, 1965). These theories have been criticized as these theories lack controlled, individual oriented research methodology, exactness and consistency (JRF, 2015).

Initially, poverty has been considered either as absolute or relative poverty. On the basis of absolute poverty approach, poverty has been measured through a poverty line based in terms of minimum weekly sum of money needed for rent, food, clothing, etc. (Sarshar, 2010). In other words, a nutritional and other requirement has been used for the measurement of

poverty (Rowntree, 1901). This approach was criticized as it assumes minimum basic needs for all the people in the society which is not practically true. However, relative approach comprises of measurement of minimum requirements taking into deliberation sensible and satisfactory standard of living (Sarshar, 2010). This approach also pretences problem in the comparison of the poor in the same society and time. Various studies consider minimum level of consumption as measure for poverty (Minhas, 1970; Bardhan, 1970; Dandekar & Rath, 1971; Rowntree, 1901; Srinivasan, 1981).

However, in recent years poverty is observed as a multidimensional concept rather than the traditional unidimensional (money metric) notion (Rogan, 2016). It comprises both the lack of necessary material for welfare and also the denial of opportunities of living a decent standard of living (Philip & Rayhan, 2004). Income based poverty measure essences utterly on deprivation in one variable in particular, i.e., income. But in multidimensional approach different aspects of poverty are taken into consideration. Besides having fetching income a person may suffer from being deprived in various customs like, education, health, good house etc. (Anand & Sen, 1997). In multidimensional poverty both incidence and intensity of poverty is measured (Alkire & Santos, 2011). The multidimensional concept of poverty was generally commended only after the persuasive effort of Sen (1976, 1979, 1985 and 1987). A person is