

IMPACT OF SOCIAL INCLUSION ON QUALITY OF LIFE AMONG DEPRIVED GROUPS

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ABSTRACT

Despite India's record of rapid economic growth and development efforts taken up in the recent decades, extreme forms of poverty remain a major challenge to a large majority of its citizens. Inequality and deprivation are increasing. The much discussed definition of Amartya Sen on poverty that it is basically deprivation of opportunities and freedom for development has shed new insights in tackling the developmental issues that affect the poorest. Deprivations are to a large extent based on group identities. Disadvantages arising out of social exclusion take multiple forms — economic, educational, social, political and cultural. Even as India struggles to grapple with the issue of social inclusion, the impact of globalization has worsened the situation by adding new dimensions to the vulnerability of the country's marginalized communities. Until the Constitution came into force in 1950, exclusion was enforced primarily by the traditional caste-based social order. This practice was legally abolished in the 1950s, though it still persists in the Indian Society. Effective implementation of its provisions over the last six decades should have necessarily ushered in an inclusive and egalitarian society devoid of any exclusionary practices. Unfortunately this has not happened.

INTRODUCTION

The Government, as a government of certainties for citizens, believes that inclusion of Indian citizens is central to maintaining the stability and improving the quality of their lives. Social inclusion is conditional on the coherence of all classes of society and on combining a balanced economic policy with a social policy. This predetermines sustainable growth of the quality of people's lives that can be achieved by encouraging education, research, and development of innovation, and by creating a modern infrastructure necessary for economic and social development. When assessing the quality of life of individuals and society, it is not only the material standard of living that must be taken into account, but also health, education, the sum of an individual's activities, including work, opportunities for political and civic engagement, the impact of

government measures, interpersonal relations and social contacts, certainty or, conversely, uncertainty in economic and personal terms, and the quality of the environment. All of this is proportionally evolving in society that integrates a knowledge-based social model into its development.

In a modern 21st century city how can we build prosperity and wellbeing across all parts of our community; bridging the poverty gap, strengthening community cohesion and increasing access to economic opportunities? These are the key questions that need to be addressed over the next decade for India to achieve its ambitions for growth and quality of life for its citizens. What constitutes a good society and how the life of individuals can be improved have always been central questions across time and cultures (Schuessler and Fisher, 1985; Griffin, 1986). For

centuries philosophers, theologians and political thinkers have proposed their own definition of quality of life (QoL) according to different normative, religious or ideological assumptions.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

A socially inclusive society is defined as one where all people feel valued, their differences are respected, and their basic needs are met so they can live in dignity. Social exclusion is the process of being shut out from the social, economic, political and cultural systems which contribute to the integration of a person into the community (Cappo 2002).

Social networks can provide social support, social influence, opportunities for social engagement and meaningful social roles as well as access to resources and intimate one-on-one contact (Berkman & Glass 2000).

MEANING OF WELL-BEING

The well-being of a population or an individual is not easy to define or measure. Often the material well-being of people is examined, but quality of life is also influenced by non-material components. People need an income, food and accommodation, but also need good social relationships, good health, leisure time, a family life etc. Although people naturally sense that there is more to life than satisfying material needs, the most widely used measure of progress or well-being has been a country's Gross Domestic product, GDP. This measure can easily be used for comparison across countries and should give an indication of economic success of a society. The theory is that economic output should lead to happy citizens, but this measure masks inequalities within societies and does not take into account the negative effects of economic progress, for example the pollution of the environment.

Currently new ways of thinking about well-being are being developed and are known as "beyond GDP" measures or indicators, which take into account social and environmental dimensions.

MEASURES TO ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY OF LIFE

Quality of life is assessed with the help of both objective and subjective indicators. In quality of life research, one often distinguishes between the subjective and objective quality of life. Subjective quality of life is about feeling good and being satisfied with things in general. Objective quality of life is about fulfilling the societal and cultural demands for material wealth, social status and physical well-being (Quality-of-Life Research Center, 2005). Accordingly, objective indicators exist in the society and they can be monitored and assessed by their amount and frequency rate. Whereas subjective indicators exist in the consciousness of an individual and they can be identified only from the person's answers to important subjects to her/him. Comprehensive quality of life survey must include both types of indicators (Juniper et. al., 2005; European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2007; Eurofound. Quality of life, 2008). This spectrum, from the subjective to the objective quality of life via the quality of life in the existential depths, incorporates a number of existing quality-of-life theories. Therefore this spectrum is called the integrative quality-of-life (IQOL) theory (Ventegodt et.al. 2003).

Concepts such as quality of life, subjective wellbeing and life satisfaction are important themes in contemporary academic research on deprived people and also feature in the public policy agenda. Around the world, concern about health, education and economic inequality is reflected in debates about 'sustainable development' and the need to achieve a 'sustainable quality of life' (Dervitsiotis, 2001).

METHODOLOGY

This article reports an analysis of the factors that influence the quality of life and Well-being among deprived people (Below Poverty Line) living in rural areas of Agra District. The study reported here

surveyed 200 people aged 30-40 or more years. Data were collected about seven factors that existing research had identified as being potentially important in relation to quality of life: Health and Function, Social and Economic Support, Psychological and Spiritual Conditions, Family Conditions.

EMPIRICAL BACKGROUND: DETERMINANTS OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE

A number of studies have related key socio-demographic variables such as; age, marital status, sex and ethnicity, to wellbeing and life satisfaction (Fernandez and Kulik 1981; Haug and Folmar 1986; Thomas and Hughes 1986; Hao and Johnson 2000; Pinguart 2001). Being older, married, and having a lower level of education have all been associated with greater reported life satisfaction (Fernandez and Kulik 1981). Studies of ethnic minority groups in Canada and the United States have shown that some minority groups have a poor quality of life, in comparison with the white majority (Thomas and Hughes 1986; Hao and Johnson 2000; Michalos and Zumbo 2001). : When asked to priorities the important areas of their lives, people of all ages frequently mention relationships with family or relatives as most important, followed by their own health, the health of others (e.g. family or friends), and personal finances or material standard of living (Bowling 1995). Numerous studies have demonstrated the significance of health or satisfaction with health as a determinant of the quality of life (Bowling 1995; Kunzmann, Little and Smith 2000; Michalos, Zumbo and Hubley 2000; Seik 2000; Bowling and Windsor 2001; Michalos et al. 2001; Michalos and Zumbo 2002). Several studies have identified a link between adequate financial resources and quality of life (Bowling 1995; Farquhar 1995; Mookherjee 1998; Bowling and Windsor 2001). Scharf et al. (2002) found that those living in poverty were twice as likely to rate their quality of life as very poor compared with those not in poverty. The importance of housing has been observed in

several studies. Pérez et al. (2001) studied the association between quality of life and older-people's neighbourhood satisfaction. Iwarsson and Isacson (1997) concluded: 'Inaccessible housing presents a potential health problem, since it threatens the independence and subjective wellbeing of elderly people.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results reported that only 45% people availing health services. They people ignored their health and not got proper care. They were living in fatigue and not able to take care of their selves. They ignored their sexual life even they have not adequate fun material to entertainment. It seems they have not good chance for happy future. They were not able to take family responsibility.

Research revealed that 65% people not living in good socio-economic conditions. They have not good friend circle and deprived to get emotional support from them. Their educational conditions were pitiable and also surviving for jobs. Even they are not able to fulfill their financial needs.

On the basis of findings it can be stated that 75% people were not living in sound mind. They are struggling in their life and deprived for mental and spiritual peace. They spend their whole time to manage their daily needs therefore not achieve their optimum goal of self-satisfaction. They are also not too happy as they should be.

Research finding revealed that Family life of 67% people were not adequate. Their children deprived from nutritious food and quality of life was not good. Family happiness was not adequate. Children were ignored for emotional support from their parents.

On the basis of findings it can be concluded that people who are socially excluded, their quality of life is not respectable. The perception toward their well-being is not virtuous. It is basic human rights that they avail their basic needs of life so that they can enjoy their life as a human being. Social inclusion may be an instrument to provide total

quality of life to deprived people. Social inclusion may be able to improve the quality of life and well-being of deprived people.

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