

**SOCIAL SCIENCE
IN
PERSPECTIVE**

**Vol. 14
January - March 2022
No. 1**

SOCIAL SCIENCE IN PERSPECTIVE

Vol. 14

January - March 2022

No. 1

CONTENTS

Articles

**Why We Must Abolish the Discredited and Odious
Crime of Sedition and Bring to an End its
Sesquicentennial Suppression of Liberty in India**

G. Mohan Gopal

**Digital Divide and IT Enabled Education in
Schools in Kerala: An Appraisal**

Vidya Nair

**Dependence on PDS for Maintaining Minimum
Subsistence Levels During the Lockdown Related to
the Outbreak of Covid 19 Pandemic - A Case Study of
Casual Labourers in Kerala**

Shibu A.S. & Anilkumar P.

Gender Responsive Budgeting - An Overview

Pillai U.V. Lakshmy & Christabell P.J.

**The Sector and Gender differences in Health
Status among Older Adults: Evidence from Kerala**

Resmi R. Nair & Christabell P.J.

An Analysis of Emerging Geographies of Poverty

Thomas Mathew

Introducing New Books

Mapping the History of Public Health in India

Saurav Kumar Rai

Review Article

The Emerging Peaceful, Secular 'One World'

B. Vivekanandan

Introducing New Book

Mapping the History of Public Health in India

Saurav Kumar Rai

Sanjay Kumar and Jugal Kishore,
Public Healthcare in India: Historical Background and Current Realities,
Century Publications, New Delhi, 2020, xxii+288 pages, Rs. 450/-

Proper maintenance of health of subject population has always been a significant aspect of statecraft. The ancient Greek philosopher and polymath, Aristotle, remarks that the condition of medical care in a state mirrors the quality of governance within it. A perpetually sick subject population as well as frequent outbreak of diseases may seriously challenge the prospect of growth of any state polity. Widespread health calamities not only pose serious threat to law and order, but also prepare grounds for rebellion against the existing regime. In fact, many pre-modern civilizations viewed spread of pandemics as a kind of divine retribution for unjust rule that provoke the subject population to rise in rebellion. Hence, every ruler has to necessarily take into cognizance the larger issues of public health in order to perpetuate his rule. In this context, the present book resorts to delineate the history of public healthcare in India from ancient to modern times.

There are altogether seven chapters in this book. The book begins with delving into some of the major challenges facing India in contemporary time in terms of public healthcare. In this regard, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-48) talks about some of the major geographical and socio-economic inequalities in access to healthcare. The ensuing two chapters, i.e. Chapter 3 and 4, delineate key features of public health and medical practices in ancient and medieval India respectively. Here it should be kept in mind that medicine and medical practices are very much like cultural artefacts rooted in and shaped by the social environment from which it originates and in which it evolves. This is clearly evident through the discussions as contained in the aforementioned two chapters.

The fourth chapter (pp. 86-120) throws light on the emergence of 'modern' public health in colonial India. With modernity, there occurred a fundamental shift in the notion of public health. The state directed public health policy no longer remained concerned only with the matters related to health and disease; rather it evolved as one of the essential tools to enumerate, categorize and control the subject population. This led to the emergence of what the Germans called *Staatsmedizin* viz. 'medicine of the state' in modern times. In fact, political concern with public health and the ideology of the civilizing process continued to be inter-related in colonial healthcare set-up. In this context, the chapter delves into the fundamentals of public health system in British India which had lasting impact on future healthcare of India.

The fifth chapter (pp. 121-62) deals exclusively with the report of the Health Survey and Development Committee, 1946, popularly known as the Bhole Committee. The authors discuss the Bhole Committee Report rather comprehensively and in detailed fashion as they consider it to be the foundational text which laid down benchmark goals and ways and means to achieve them for the planners of public health system in independent India. The penultimate chapter, i.e. Chapter 6 (pp. 163-95) glides through some of the landmark plans, policies and progress in public healthcare in independent India. The reports and plans which the authors have engaged with in this course include the Mukherjee Committee Report (1966), Jungalwalla Committee Report (1967), Kartar Singh Committee Report (1973), J.B. Srivastava Committee Report (1975) and the background of the Alma Ata Declaration (1978) and First National Health Policy (1983).

The last chapter (pp. 196-254), which is the longest one, explores the impact of LPG (liberalization,

privatization and globalization) on public healthcare system in India. Here the authors emphatically argue that the existing poor condition of the Indian healthcare services, especially in rural areas, is not just due to the government's failure; globalization and privatization have also contributed to the degradation of public healthcare system in India. They lament that unfortunately, after six decades of independence, we have not been able to provide good healthcare to the majority of the population (p. 256). This eventually compels the authors, in the Epilogue (pp. 255-63), to argue in favour of making health a fundamental right (p. 262).

The diverse background of the authors; while Sanjay Kumar has his training in the discipline of history, Jugal Kishore is a medical educator and public health expert; make this book an interesting pedigree of ideas. This book may be useful not only to scholars interested in history of public health in India, but also for planners, administrators, and people engaged in healthcare in order to understand the manifold challenges in the path of universal accessibility to health.

Why We Must Abolish the Discredited and Odious Crime of Sedition and Bring to an End its Sesquicentennial Suppression of Liberty in India*

G. Mohan Gopal

The nature, and contemporary content and scope, of sedition and cognate laws must be exposed and explained to the people. Systematic data about the use of these laws to suppress democratic activity must be gathered. The illegalities involved in the use of these laws must be identified. Sedition law victims must be provided systematic legal assistance to defend themselves. Public awareness must be created on the dangerous essence and pernicious impact of these laws. Conferences must be organized across the country on these anti-freedom laws, demanding their repeal. A national campaign for the repeal of anti-democratic laws is required. Public opinion must be created in support of freedom of speech and expression and its significance for the survival and progress of our Republic and for a better future for the people.

The continued existence in our law books of the colonial crime of sedition included in the Indian Penal Code just over one hundred and fifty years ago in 1870 to suppress our liberty is a grave and intolerable threat to our Republic. Scores of the most committed defenders of our Republic, all from progressive movements, have been silenced and incarcerated over the years using this law - the same law that was used against our freedom fighters and was decried by Gandhiji in his 1922 sedition trial speech as the 'prince of laws that suppress liberty'. What is the nature and scope of the crime of sedition today? Why has it been possible for this discredited and odious statutory colonial crime to survive for 72 years in independent, democratic India in blatant defiance of the Constitution? How can the crime of sedition and its cognate crimes that suppress liberty be abolished? These issues are explored in this note. Although written from a legal perspective, it addresses a general, rather than a legal audience.

(1) Sedition Today: An Unruly Crime with a Dangerous Essence

The story of the crime of sedition is one of phenomenal growth over eight centuries from a limited role of preventing defamation of the ruling elites to a large, unruly and all-purpose State weapon against anyone it dislikes or disagrees with.

Initially, sedition is said to have originated in protecting social elite from the working class by proscribing defamation of the elites. It later evolved into a State weapon against speech that could, in the State's opinion, create discord between the King and the people. As noted by a learned commentator:

"The seeds of seditious libel originated in a collection of laws known as Scandalum Magnatum, [(the scandal of magnates)] which was passed in 1275 and outlawed any speech that contributed to discord between the king and his people. Sir Edward Coke, as attorney general, reported to the infamous Star Chamber in a case in 1606 that libel of a government official is a greater offense than a private libelⁱ ... [Over four hundred years later], the theory behind seditious libel was set forth by Chief Justice Holt in 1704 when he said that "if people should not be called to account for possessing the people with an ill opinion of the government, no government can subsist. For it is very necessary for all governments, that the people should have a good opinion of it."ⁱⁱ

In the words of Mr. K.M. Munshi addressing the Constituent Assembly on 1st December 1949, sedition

*C.Achutha Menon Memorial Lecture 2021

in colonial India grew further and came to cover "all those practices whether by word or deed or writing which are calculated to disturb the tranquility of the State and lead ignorant persons to subvert the Government.... Even holding an opinion against, which will bring ill-will towards Government, was considered sedition once. Our notorious Section 124-A of Penal Code was sometimes construed so widely that I remember in a case a criticism of a District Magistrate was urged to be covered by Section 124-A". Mr. K.M. Munshi said to the Constituent Assembly on 1st December, 1948 during the debate on sedition," The word sedition' has been a word of varying import and has created considerable doubt in the minds of not only the members of this House but of Courts of Law all over the world."

Today, Section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) criminalizes thought or expression that creates, or attempts to create hatred, contempt or disaffection against "the government established by law in India" - irrespective of whether the target is the system of government, the government in power or individual government officials. A proviso inserted by the Supreme Court of India in 1962 to reconcile sedition with the Constitution and keep it alive requires that to be liable for sedition, thoughts or expressions should have a consequence: incite recipients to any type of violence or have the tendency to create public disorder or disturbance of public peace. This proviso stands largely disregarded by courts and the police.

Sedition is an unruly crime today in India. Over the last 151 years, sedition has criminalized twenty-four vague and ill-defined (impossible-to-legally-define) actions or states of mind.

These are, in the legal language used by courts or statutes: (1) ten attitudes towards the government (hatred; contempt; disaffection; enmity, dislike, hostility, ill-will; bad feeling ; discontent; and dissatisfaction) (2) ten types of actions against the government (rebellion; revolution; insurrection; civil war; subversion of government; subversion of lawful authority of the government; disloyalty; disobedience; vilification of government; and condemnation of government); and (3) four types of disruptions of normal life: public disorder; anarchy; public disturbance; breach of peace.

In addition, we are not only liable if the outcomes indicated here come to pass but also if the actions have a "tendency to" create or lead to or result in such outcomes. It is impossible today to effectively protect ourselves from malicious, corrupt or selective, politically motivated prosecution for sedition because of the vagueness of these grounds on which one may be accused of sedition. This in and by itself violates the "rule of law" which is a part of the basic structure of our Constitution.

In practice, sedition is understood and applied today informally by the police as "desh droh"- a term not recognized in law. It is whatever the concerned police official and his or her departmental and political bosses say it is. Once they decide it is "desh droh" they slap Section 124-A and cognate crimes without any regard for the protection of Constitutional liberty. Typically, they understand "desh" as "Bharat Mata" and in turn as the Hindu Rashtra. The phenomenon of prosecuting for the unwritten crime of "desh droh" is documented by Prof. Anushka Singh in *Sedition in Liberal Democracies* (2018). She argues that "the translation of sedition as 'desh droh' popularly construes it as an offence against the nation. Sedition is constituted in acts that are anti-national. In this iterated notion of sedition, the idea of what is believed to be 'national' and 'anti-national' conditions the use of the law and vice-versa".

Sedition is therefore today a thoroughly unruly crime. This itself should be a reason to abolish it.

The United Kingdom abolished sedition in 2009 on the ground, stated in the explanation of the legislation that deleted it, that, "Having an unnecessary and over-broad common law offence of sedition, when the same matters are dealt with under other legislation, is not only confusing and unnecessary, it may have a chilling effect on freedom of speech and sends the wrong signal to other countries which maintain and actually use sedition offences as a means of limiting political debate."

The 2018 discussion paper of the Law Commission of India on sedition notes that "Despite the conflicting views and the attempts by courts to narrow the scope of sedition, it survives as an offence in the

United States, though it is very narrowly construed and can even be said to have fallen in disuse. In **New York Times v. Sullivan**, the Supreme Court remarked that speech must be allowed a breathing space in a democracy and government must not be allowed to suppress what it thinks is unwise, false or malicious....In **Brandenburg v. Ohio** the Supreme Court categorically held that "freedoms of speech and press do not permit a State to forbid advocacy of the use of force or of law violation except where such advocacy is directed to inciting or producing imminent lawless action and is likely to incite or produce such action". The paper also notes that in Australia, "the Recommendation of the Australian Law Reform Commission was implemented in the National Security Legislation Amendment Act 2010 wherein the term sedition was removed and replaced with references to urging violence offences'.

Beneath the anarchy of grounds on which sedition may be invoked by the State, however, is a highly dangerous core essence of the crime which has been its hallmark from the very outset: sedition criminalizes mere "thought and expression" against the state and the government, without any mandatory requirement that the thought and expression should result in violence or any proved harm against any person or institution. Although such a limitation has been introduced by courts (including by the Supreme Court in *Kedar Nath*, see below), it is undermined by the caveat that a mere tendency to create or lead to violence or such harm is adequate for conviction for sedition

The idea that the mere "thought and expression" (specifically protected by the Constitution in the Preamble as a liberty) may be prosecuted provides immense draconian power to authoritarian governments. This dangerous idea is today found in new, even more draconian and arbitrary laws that provide even stronger tools for suppression of democracy, such as the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967 and National Investigation Agency Act, 2008. As a result, while cases filed per annum for sedition have reduced from 147 in 2015 to 23 in 2020 according to the National Crime Records Bureau statistics, prosecution under UAPA has increased nearly ten-fold from 46 to 398 per annum in the same period.

The arbitrary nature of sedition law in India has left it today entirely bereft of legitimacy and legality.

(2) Sedition has No Place in a Democracy

An autocracy does not allow for any change of state or government by the people - whether change of the system of governance or its ideology; or the groups or individuals who hold power. In an autocracy the ruling class is not to be attacked or defamed. No sentiments are allowed to be created against the ruling class. Any demand for change must be made within the parameters permitted by the autocracy. There is an unbridgeable schism in an autocracy between the king and the people. In an autocracy, therefore, the only possible way to bring about a change or improvement in the state or the government which is necessary but not acceptable to it, is through rebellion and revolution.

A democracy, on the other hand, is a system where *demos* (common people) hold *kratos* (power). The State is constituted by "we the people". Theoretically and conceptually, therefore, in a democratic state in which "we the people" hold the power of the state, there can be no room for discord between state and the people as the state expresses the will of the people. Democracy provides the institutional channels and mechanisms for people to make necessary changes in the state or government. The process of questioning, criticizing and changing the State is an inherent and central part of democracy and cannot be criminalized. There is therefore no question of having "sedition" as a crime in a democracy.

Gandhiji unequivocally rejected the legitimacy of the crime of sedition and claimed the right to create disaffection against an unjust State in a statement read out at his sedition trial in March, 1922. Gandhiji said:

Section 124-A under which I am happily charged is perhaps the prince among the political sections of the Indian Penal Code designed to suppress the liberty of the citizen. Affection cannot be manufactured or regulated by law. If one has no affection for a person or system one should be free to give the fullest

expression to his disaffection, so long as he does not contemplate, promote or incite to violence. But the section under which ...I [am] charged is one under which mere promotion of disaffection is a crime. I have studied some of the cases tried under it, and I know that some of the most loved of India's patriots have been convicted under it. I consider it a privilege, therefore, to be charged under that section.

Article II of the French 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen proclaims the right to resistance against oppression. *The Preface to the French Constitution of 1793* declares in Article 35 that "When the government violates the rights of the people, insurrection is for the people, and for every portion thereof, the most sacred of rights and the most indispensable of duties;" and in Article 11: "Any act directed against a person, apart from the cases and without the forms determined by law, is arbitrary and tyrannical; if attempt is made to execute such act by force, the person who is the object thereof has the right to resist it by force". The *1776 US Declaration of Independence* says in Article 35: "Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their safety and happiness." *The Constitutions of six American states* include explicit provisions recognizing the right to rebellion.

Sedition is therefore redundant in a democracy because the theory of democracy internalizes and legitimizes rebellion. In a democracy, the people retain the right not only to have and to hold, but also to express and propagate their opinion about the nature, structure, ideology and functioning of the State and the government as well as question and to rebel against them. They retain untrammelled freedom of speech and expression except to the extent it derogates from the freedom of others. They are under no obligation to profess affection for the state or the government. No true democracy can therefore conceivably prohibit, to paraphrase Gandhij's words, "the fullest [non-violent] expression of disaffection of any citizen". In a democratic polity, the State and government have no power to prevent any citizen or group of citizens from challenging and seeking to reverse, paraphrasing Madison quoted above, the "prejudices of the community" which may be on the side of the state.

(3) Why Then Does Sedition Still Thrive in Post-colonial Democratic India?

A careful reading of the Constituent Assembly debates will show that the Assembly had no intention to abolish the essence of the crime of sedition (see earlier discussion) or reduce or abolish the power of the State to restrict freedom beyond some minor liberalization in the scope and application of the power.

This explains why the drafting committee of the Constitution proposed that sedition be included in the Constitution as a ground for restricting freedom of speech and expression. The Constituent Assembly rejected the proposal-not because it wanted to protect freedom of speech and expression, but because, it wanted to strengthen the power of the State to restrict freedom in an even more effective way.

Some key Assembly members who spoke felt that including sedition as a ground for restricting freedom of speech and expression could weaken state power to restrict freedom for two reasons. First, the judicial interpretation of sedition had become confused and contradictory-some courts had already greatly restricted its use-and using that term would create uncertainty. Second, sedition had acquired a most odious public reputation in India during the freedom movement and its inclusion in the Constitution would not be acceptable politically.

Key speakers in the Constituent Assembly made it abundantly clear that the deletion of "sedition" and its substitution by the ground of "undermining the authority or foundation of the State" would repackage the essence of sedition without any substantive change, i.e., that anti-state thought and expression would not be less criminalized. K.M. Munshi said in the same speech on 1st December, 1948, "This amendment therefore seeks to use words which properly answer to the implication of the word 'sedition' as understood by the present generation in a democracy and *therefore there is no substantial change;the equivocal word 'sedition' only is sought to be deleted from the article.*"

Acknowledging the need for fetters on liberty to be built into the Constitution, the conservative T.T. Krishnamachari said to the Constituent Assembly on 1st December, 1948, during the discussion on sedition,

It is quite possible that ten years hence the necessity for providing in the Fundamental Rights an exclusion of absolute power in the matter of freedom of speech and probably freedom to assemble, will not be necessary. But in the present state of our country I think it is very necessary that there should be some express prohibition of application of these rights to their logical end.

A powerful critique of the lack of adequate commitment to personal liberty in the Constitution is found in the speech made in the Constituent Assembly by Mr. Somnath Lahiri, the only CPI member of the Assembly, on April 29, 1947. Mr. Lahiri said, eloquently and presciently

"I feel that many of these fundamental rights have been framed from the point of view of a police constable... Why? Because you will find that very minimum rights have been conceded and those too very grudgingly and these so-called rights are almost invariably followed by a proviso... which takes away the right almost completely.... Apart from the knowledge that we can gather from the experience of other countries, there is also the knowledge born out of our own experience, that is, there are certain rights which we have been denied in the past by an alien and autocratic government. We have come up against those difficulties. We want to incorporate every one of those rights which our people want to get. One vital thing which our people have been suffering from in the past has been the curtailment of the liberty of the press The press has been crushed completely. This is a thing against which every patriotic Indian is up in arms, including every congressman, and, therefore, in his heart of hearts every Indian feels that in a free India in order that people may feel freedom and act up to it, there should not be such drastic curtailment of liberties of the press. But what do we find? There is not even a mention of the liberty of the press in this whole list of fundamental rights submitted by the Committee, except a solitary mention made at one place that there will be liberty of expression. Sir, this is something which goes against our experience and must be protected.... Similarly, there is another thing that we have found all along that a Government which does not depend on the people and which rules the country by autocracy and by means of force, detains people without trial, without having to go through a judicial process. This is a thing against which Indians have been entertaining the bitterest feelings and they have been agitating against this from the Congress and every other platform. But in the fundamental rights that have been cooked up by this Committee we do not find this right. That is why I am constrained to say that these are fundamental rights from a police constable's point of view and not from the point of view of a free and fighting nation. Here whatever right is given is taken away by a proviso. Does Sardar Patel want even more powers than the British Government, an alien Government, an autocratic Government which is against the people-needs to protect itself? Certainly not. Sardar Patel has the support of the overwhelming masses of the people and, therefore, he can do with much less powers to rule the country than an autocratic government would require. But here we find that none of the existing provisions of the powers of the executive has been done away with; rather in some respects those powers are sought to be increased. And if some of the amendments are passed-specially that of Sri Rajagopalachariar- it will in certain cases be even worse than the conditions obtaining at present. I will give one example. Here according to Patel a seditious speech is a punishable crime. If I say at any time in the future, or the Socialist Party says, that the Government in power is despicable, Sardar Patel, if he is in power at that time, will be able to put the Socialist Party people and myself in jail, though, as far as I know, even in England a speech, however seditious it may be, is never considered a crime unless an overt act is done. These are the fundamental bases of the, fundamental rights of a free country, but here a seditious speech also is going to be an offence; and Rajagopalachariar wants to go further. Sardar Patel would punish us if we make a speech, but Rajaji would punish us even before we have made the speech. He wants to prevent the making of the speech itself if in his great wisdom he thinks that the fellow is going to make a seditious speech.... What is the necessity of fundamental rights in a bourgeois national democracy which you are trying to have ? There

one of the fundamental objects is that a political opposition must have full freedom to express its views, to draw its own conclusions and to say anything it likes. If I am in the opposition or if someone else is in the opposition it is certainly his business to say that the existing Government is despicable; otherwise he would not be in the opposition. Why should my right to say that be curtailed and at the same time we should assume that political opposition will grow and democracy will develop? It cannot; it will have to depend on the sweet will and the tender mercies of the party in power or the executive in power. That is not the basis of democracy... if we lay down fundamental rights and then insert provisions in every clause for taking away those rights, we will simply make ourselves a laughing stock before the whole democratic world.

Mr. Lahiri's critique of the Constitution was so important that Dr. B.R. Ambedkar thought it necessary, in his capacity as chair of the drafting committee, to respond to it in his final speech to the Constituent Assembly on 25 November, 1949 although at a personal level Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar would agree with the need for deontological individual liberty (subject to the rights of other individuals). Babasaheb said:

The condemnation of the Constitution largely comes from two quarters, the Communist Party and the Socialist Party. Why do they condemn the Constitution? Is it because it is really a bad Constitution? I venture to say no'. The Communist Party want a Constitution based upon the principle of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. They condemn the Constitution because it is based upon parliamentary democracy. The Socialists want two things. The first thing they want is that if they come in power, the Constitution must give them the freedom to nationalize or socialize all private property without payment of compensation. *The second thing that the Socialists want is that the Fundamental Rights mentioned in the Constitution must be absolute and without any limitations so that if their Party fails to come into power, they would have the unfettered freedom not merely to criticize, but also to overthrow the State.*

This exchange powerfully reveals a significant fault line that, to this day, makes it possible for sedition and its cognate laws to survive - the absence of a consensus amongst left, liberal and social democratic forces that untrammelled individual liberty of speech and expression and the right to rebellion is a deontological public good. Left, liberal, social democratic forces are still ambivalent about the benefits of untrammelled individual liberty. They have a Hegelian fear that if individual liberty is given as an unrestricted right to the unwashed, barely literate, uneducated masses of India without subordination to an appropriate ideological framework, there will be anarchy. Therefore liberty must be guided and controlled. They see freedom of speech as a laissez faire approach incompatible with the interventionist role of the State to proactively construct an equitable and democratic socialist order and a republican polity in a deeply feudal and fascist society. Therefore, Left, liberal and social democratic forces do not hesitate to suppress free speech when in power. There is a tacit ideological consensus between the Left, social democratic forces and the Right that liberty needs to be restricted- with of course fundamental differences over the purpose and extent of restrictions.

Once the idea that liberty should be fettered was forced into the Constitution, laws to restrict freedom-sedition, chief amongst them- became essential. Sedition and cognate laws cannot be abolished unless there is a consensus amongst Left, liberal, social democratic forces that untrammelled freedom of speech (subject to the rights of other individuals) is justified and necessary.

The judiciary too played a key role in keeping alive sedition and its cognate laws whose only purpose was to suppress liberty.

Against a background of two High Courts striking down sedition as unconstitutional (Allahabad and Punjab), a five judge bench of the Supreme Court gave life support to sedition and kept it alive in 1962 in **Kedar Nath vs. State of Bihar**. In what has proved to be a decisive blow against freedom of speech in

India, the Supreme Court declined to strike down Section 124-A as unconstitutional and, instead, "limit[ed] the operation of Section 124-A] only toactivities involving incitement to violence or intention or tendency to create public disorder or cause disturbance of public peace."

This is still the prevailing law in India,, although the restraint imposed by the Supreme Court is so porous that it has never held water. Nor has the judiciary struck down UAPA and NIA, which are both plainly unconstitutional laws.

A key failure of the judiciary in this regard has been that it has not developed an overarching Constitutional principle limiting State power to restrain liberty. Instead, the courts have confined themselves to determining the constitutionality of specific statutes that restrain liberty. This has provided a lot of leeway to make inroads against liberty.

(4) Way Forward: The Need for a Left/Social Democratic Justification for Deontological Freedom of Speech

The Way Forward is clear. Sedition and its cognate laws must be abolished. Politicization of laws governing offences against the State must be ended, including their misuse against political rivals of the ruling party. The right to dissent must be written into the Constitution.

A Constitutionally compliant framework for dealing with genuine security threats to the people and the country must be developed consistent with global human rights standards.

A key intellectual priority for this is to build a robust consensus amongst left, liberal, social democratic forces on the ideological justification for deontological individual liberty in the Indian context. The concerns expressed by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in this regard, quoted earlier, should be addressed. This consensus will need to underpin the mass mobilization against sedition and its cognate laws.

A starting point for this consensus can be found in our Constitution itself - in the Constitutional recognition of the liberty of every individual to thought, expression, belief, faith and worship. The freedom of speech and expression in Article 19(1)(a) is a remedy - a legal weapon - given to us to protect our liberty against incursion by the State. The use of this weapon can be subject to reasonable restrictions - to stop us from defending the use our liberty to constrain the liberty of others including through violence. However, the liberty recognized in the Preamble is neither given to us by the State nor can it be restricted by the State. The State can and must use its power only to protect this liberty. State power cannot be used to restrict liberty. When the liberty of one person is used to deprive another person of her liberty, the State must intervene to stop such deprivation. However, in so doing, the State acts legally as a protector of the person whose liberty is deprived rather than as a restrainer of the person who attacks another's liberty. The theory of the Constitution is that when every individual's liberty is so protected, there will be order and security for society and for the state and no force will be able to undermine it.

Whether -and if so on what basis - the Constitution can provide a basis to build a left, liberal social democratic consensus on a deontological commitment to freedom of speech and expression requires detailed deliberation.

What Can We Do to Achieve These Objectives?

The nature, and contemporary content and scope, of sedition and cognate laws (including UAPA and NIA) must be exposed and explained to the people. Systematic data about the use of these laws to suppress democratic activity must be gathered. The illegalities involved in the use of these laws must be identified. Sedition law victims must be provided systematic legal assistance to defend themselves. Public awareness must be created on the dangerous essence and pernicious impact of these laws. Conferences must be organized across the country on these anti-freedom laws, demanding their repeal. A national campaign for the repeal of

anti-democratic laws is required. Public opinion must be created in support of freedom of speech and expression and its significance for the survival and progress of our Republic and for a better future for the people.

Notes

- (i) "In an age which understood society as a divinely ordained hierarchy ascending by degrees of "quality" [in which] "disgraceful words" and speeches against eminent persons" constituted a far more serious offence than those directed against individuals of lesser quality... by the seventeenth century, protection from scandalum magnatum ["the scandal of magnates"] had come to be counted regularly among that small body of legal privileges which set peerage apart from the rest of English society." (John C. Lassiter, *The Rise and Decline of the Action for Scandulum Magnatum, 1497-1773, American Journal of Legal History, vol. 22, No.3 (July 1978) pp 216-235 (Oxford University Press)*)
- (ii) Michael Kahn, The Origination and Early Development of Free Speech in the United States, Florida Bar Journal (Vol. 76, No. 9 October 2002) <https://www.floridabar.org/the-florida-bar-journal/the-origination-and-early-development-of-free-speech-in-the-united-states-a-brief-overview/>

Gender Responsive Budgeting - An Overview

Pillai U.V. Lakshmy
& Christabell P.J.

Gender Budgeting aims to include gender-based biases into budgetary exercises. It promotes gender justice and fiscal justice by ensuring equitable distribution of resources thereby contributing to equal opportunities for all. This paper provides an overview of policy framework, methodology and set of tools associated with Gender Budgeting which incorporates a gender perspective into the budget.

Introduction

Women's issues being a main part in policy agenda of national governments and international organizations over the last two decades forms the basis for integrating gender considerations in budget programmes and policies. Gender Budget Analysis is a key tool for assessing the impact of public policies on women and for managing critical governance issues. It is a method of analyzing how governments raise and devote public money, for securing gender equality in decision making about public resource allocation and investigates what money is allocated to put forth the policy, whether the money is spent as allocated, whom it reaches, and how/whether it brings changes to gender patterns in the society.

Gender Budgeting is a tool for analysing an administration's gender mainstreaming obligations in their policy framework. It is indeed an implementation of gender social inclusion in the strategic planning process. It also entails a gender-based appraisal of spending, considering a gender understanding at all stages of the financial policy and reconfiguration of incomes and spending for empowering women. It is a device for determining whether a government's gender equality commitments translate into budgetary commitments (Sharp and Broomhill, 2002).

The terms gender-responsive, gender-sensitive budget, or gender-aware, as well as women's budget, can be used interchangeably in place of gender budgeting. Gender budgeting does not infer a female-only budget. It covers the full budget, revenues and expenditures, and is not restricted to national budget aimed at anti-discrimination policies or empowering students.

Gender budgeting affects all parts of government, including national, regional, and municipal. Gender budgeting thus incorporates all phases of the decision making and includes gender-sensitive budget assessment and reorganisation. Proposals of the government go beyond the assessment of agendas put forth purposely for women. It also searches for the estimation of gender objectivity within all policy frameworks. The policy frameworks have different effect on men and women due to their different position in the economy. So, without an appropriate framework and policy, a government's uniformity promises are implausible to be achieved (Council of Europe, 2005).

Essence of Gender of Responsive Budgeting

Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) is a technique for integrating gender views into budgeting. It should be seen as a dynamic part of strategic management related to the formulation of budgets at differing stages, as it gives relevant data to specialists who make budget allocation decisions. GRB is being implemented in different forms in various country across the globe. GRB is used in Europe by EU and non-EU countries, as well as emerging countries. Creating gender-sensitive budgets allows policymakers to see how budget revenues and expenditures impact women's and men's socioeconomic factors and prospects, as well as gender equality in the country. It is a technique for public finance management, allows for understanding how and to what degree state policy affects different groups of men and women as system users, infrastructure

consumers, and taxpayers. Gender-based analysis, lays the base for adopting the principle of equal opportunity for women and men in all spheres. Gender-based analysis takes into consideration not only disaggregated data on women and men, but also other main social categories such as age, socioeconomic status, territory, educational qualification, and others. GRB can be done in a variety of ways. However, the real needs and interests of women and men are always at the heart of this technique, and they must be taken into account equally in the central and local budgeting processes. Women's and men's priorities, as well as strategic and practical needs, differ significantly. Furthermore, accounting for gender inequalities makes a budget more practical, equitable, and reachable, as well as promoting higher rates of growth. Gender responsive budgeting, helps to expand public finance methods and technology by ensuring the accessibility of relevant information about outputs and outcomes.

The Stakeholders Within Gender Budgeting Process

Gender budget projects differ from country to country and its activities are led by both governments and society groups at the national, provincial, and municipal levels. Within government groups some has gain from access to relevant information as well as the ability to make direct contributions to budgetary and economic policy decisions. Although outside democratic society activities have resource and data limitations, their independence from government has allowed groups to play a significant role.

The European Union (EU), The Commonwealth Secretariat, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Nordic Council, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) have all shown support for gender budget initiatives from international perspective.

At national level government, civil society groups, academics and individuals play their part in gender budget initiatives. According to Budlender et al (2002) gender budget will be effective under the lead of government. Finance ministry along with the backing of other ministries can take all initiatives with the help of the concerned government. Most policymakers initiate the gender strategic planning by integrating only two or three other critical departments, generally health and education. These departments were considered to be more relevant for women for their overall welfare.

Along with government, parliamentarians also have important role in the creation of gender budget particularly women members. The success of gender budgeting initiatives also depends on the participation by the civil society. Many of the persons active in these groups are political leaders' counterparts, thus they have an excellent work rapport and knowledge. Academics should also cooperate with the government to guarantee that intensive research is done on what is relevant for legislation and that activists have the capacity of understanding to realize particular gender budgeting goals. Individuals in influential positions have been important to the achievement of a number of initiatives of gender budgeting.

The international movement to decentralise budgeting functions and power has prompted a growing amount of gender budgeting work at the sub national level. Differences can rise among localities; thus, gender budgeting strategies must be distributed.

Benefits of Gender Responsive Budgeting

GRB has a big future, and making it materialize has a lot of benefits. GRB allows improvement of efficiency of public expenditure, quality of services and programmes for the community and public engagement. GRB can also be used to improve the efficacy of international aid, enhancing economic growth and well-being. Gender equality has a high economic value and aids in the achievement of development goals (International Monetary Fund, 2007). It also highlights the importance of extending prospects for women in this exercise and calls for the aim of gender equality to be translated into a broadly recognized goal. Gender equality needs an understanding of the various requirements, interests, and objectives that determine how males and females gain from strategies and funding priorities. As a result, gender-responsive budget aims at accomplishing overall wellbeing of the people and stimulating the economy of the nations.

Gender responsive budgeting focusses on gender policy issues, and gender-based analysis. It helps in acquiring better data on resource distribution among men and women recipients. This provides the government a better and more realistic proof, which will aid in ensuring that public resources are invested more successfully. In response, recognizing gender differences as a result of GRB implementation promotes changes in legislation and policy.

Human rights enforcement is intricately linked to gender policy formulation. Gender relations are directly associated to basic rights protection. Gender responsive budgeting is a method of assessing how far international and domestic commitments to achieving gender equality have already been met. It aids in the discovery of the amount of public spending set apart for accomplishing gender-specific agendas.

The practice of strengthening the fair, just, and accountable delivery of goods and services to women, men, girls, and boys must be regarded as part of the notion of fiscal prudence. Gender responsive budgeting aids in achieving both accountability and transparency of the budgeting process by analysing how allotted resources are spent. Gender budgeting also helps in valuing unpaid work of the women like child care, cooking, caring old age people etc. As such measures for promoting women who make a difference in the world by doing unpaid work and lowering their costs must be undertaken. It is very essential to recognize the burden of unpaid women in every corner of the world.

History of Gender Budgeting

The first country to implement gender budgeting in 1984 was Australia. A ground-breaking analysis of the effect of public budgets on gender relations was conducted, taking budgets as an important tool for fostering equality for women. The agencies were motivated to set goals and procedures for enhancing quality in addressing women's needs. The initiative was named as women's budget statement in 1987, and it was given more formalized authority in the federal budget. Even though direct allocations to expand women's representation continued minimal, the budget was considered as playing an important role in enlightening the administration about the deep effect of conventional government programmes on females. The Australian model was not only significant in promoting consciousness but also served as a motivation for subsequent gender budgeting initiatives.

In 1995, a distinct initiative was launched in South Africa, prompted in part by amendments in the government's post-apartheid legislation that gave importance to gender equality. This project was a collaboration between parliament and a number of non-governmental groups, with the purpose of exploring the gender ramifications of government budgets. South Africa was the first country to involve in the Commonwealth Secretariat's gender budgeting project. This effort of the government was thought to have enhanced public understanding of gender issues. The creation of learning resources that are reachable to a broad cross-section of the public, as well as a series of Women's Budget Documents, were the profound outcome of this initiative.

Gender equality has become a significant priority in the policies of European Union. A double approach was taken with the Amsterdam Treaty, which cartels women's participation in all stated rules with the establishment of significant features to improve women's standing. However, one of the primary aims of the Development Funds has been to equalise opportunities for men and women. The Framework Strategy on Gender Equality, annual gender equality work programmes, and the Structural Funds are the most newly established measures for accomplishing gender equality within the European Union. The Platform is proposed to improve sectoral coordination of operations and projects in the country.

Gender budgeting was introduced in Spain at both the national and regional levels. As a result of getting development funds, Spain has previously been indebted to report to the European Union on the growing acceptance of equal opportunities for men and women. Commonwealth government has also made significant accomplishment in implementing gender perspective into policy making and budgeting ever since the United Nation's fourth World conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. According to Sarraf (2003) gender budgeting

has risen in popularity over the years, after the above conference which called for the inclusion of a female perspective in budgetary policies and programmes. Gender analysis is being employed in the budgets of over forty countries. Developing economies, on the other hand, have done a lot better than member countries in terms of executing gender financing than members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

In India, Gender budgeting as a subject was first presented in the 2000-01 Budget Speech (Lahiri, 2002). In India spending is divided into three groups: explicitly targeted for women, expenditure with pro-woman allocations, and general spending. Women's spending is again categorised into four divisions. Protective services, social services for women empowerment, self-employment, and regulatory expenditure such as maternity coverage are the categories. Overall, they account for less than one percent of the budget. There are also pro-women spending, which are obtained from public spending using a formula that is not especially aimed at women.

Women's labour force participation is high in the Nordic countries, while men's involvement in child care is increasing, owing to societal attitudes that inspire it and the provision of paid parental leave for both men and women. According to Schmitz (2005) the Nordic countries have increased gender equality and also made significant strides in terms of gender budgeting in operation. In each Nordic country, pilot projects will concentrate on gender analysis of government services, with the goal of producing a gender perspective on allocation of resources and incorporating equality for women as government's budget ambition. In Norway, Finland and Sweden, the budgeting would include an inspection of the financial difference in revenue between men and women. The Swedish government also has guaranteed to include gender perspectives in the government's budget. It has completed three viability studies in the infrastructure, inclusive growth, and relevant institutions. The final purpose is to integrate resources, privileges, and responsibility in all spheres of life for men and women in Sweden.

Gender Budgeting : Five Step Framework

A Five step frameworks is used globally to implement gender responsive budgeting. In the first step an assessment of the exact situation of women and men in various sectors will be analysed. In the second step the scope of the policies in addressing gender issues implemented in various sectors are assessed. In the third step an estimation of the adequacy of financial allocation in budget to implement gender sensitive schemes will be identified. In the fourth step a monitoring process will be done which includes monitoring of spending and delivery of the services. In the fifth step an assessment of the impact of the implemented programmes is done. It also investigates the changes in the prevalent situation because of the impact of the programme.

Apparatus for Gender Mainstreaming of Budgets

As per Budlender, Sharp, and Allen (1998), the foremost tool that can be used for a gender-responsive budget analysis is Gender-aware policy evaluation. This is an analytical technique that needs investigating the policies of various government projects as part of their intensive gender attention. It casts doubt on the concept that government initiatives are gender-neutral in their impact or whether it is used to decrease or deteriorate gender inequalities in the economy.

Gender-disaggregated beneficiary assessment is an alternative technique used to analyse gender budget. This technique is used to enquire actual or potential beneficiaries of the government projects and that how well government policies and programmes makes progress in their quality of life.

Gender-disaggregated public expenditure incidence analysis is one of the major tools which is commonly used to analyse the outcomes related to a project. This research method studies the distribution of public expenditure among women and men. A public spending incidence study can be used to inspect the benefits of the project among different groups.

Gender-disaggregated tax incidence analysis is yet another technique which is used to analyse gender budgeting from revenue side. This methodology assesses how various people or households bear the burden of taxation of the government. The data can be broken down on the basis of gender.

Gender-aware budget statement is another main tool which can be used in gender budgeting analysis. It is a government report on its adherence to gender equality as part of a continuing quest. Any of the above tools can be used to assess the administration's policies, activities, and finances in this technique. Their repercussions for equality for women are abridged using a range of measures such as the percentage of overall spending targeted to gender equity initiatives. Gender-disaggregated assessment of the budget's impact on time use is another tool which studies the relationship between the national budget and how women spend their time at home. This ensures that the government policy assessment takes into account the time spent by women doing unpaid employment.

Gender-Aware Social Accounting Matrices (SAMs) is another important financial system which assesses the impacts that describes the amount of economic growth. It portrays socio-economic system's macro economic and micro economic accounts that include interactions and exchanges among all financial intermediaries in the organization (Holst, 1997). It's a good instrument for policy research. By untying workforce and consumer accounts by gender it can be created to allow gendered policy simulations.

Gender - Responsive Budgeting Initiatives at the Local Level

According to Hofbauer (2003) as governments continue to implement decentralisation plans and public sector management changes, gender-responsive budget measures at the local level have become more important. As the fundamental institutions of representative democracy, the Local Self Government Institutions (LSGIs) play a critical role in addressing gender equity and equality at the local level (KILA, 2017). Women's proactive participation in the decision-making process forms the basis for the success of LSGI efforts in the states. Women must be recognised as equal citizens in decision-making and implementation, not just recipients. LSGIs can become more people-friendly in principle, primarily more gender-friendly in specific, as a result of this process, while still maintaining public fairness.

Gender Budgeting in India

The validation for gender budgeting stems from the reflection that the pattern of resource distribution in national budgets affects men and women differently. Even though women constitute major portion of India's population, they suffer more than men in numerous social variables such as health, education, politics and economic situations. Proper allocation and distribution of resources in national budgets has the power to change marginalization of women. As a result, Gender Budgeting has indeed been recommended as a method for realizing gender developmental objectives.

In the Budget speech in 2001, Finance Minister made a special reference of gender budget. The National Institute of Public Finance and Policy led a study on Gender Related Economic Policy Issues at that time. The NIPFP studied the Union Budget 2001-02 for the first time from a gender viewpoint and in 2002, a study of the budgets of a few state was conducted. In the years following the analysis, expenditure on women was surveyed in the years 2002-03, 2003-04, and 2004-05, and the basic outcomes were emulated. This was an important advancement in the development of Gender Analysis in India.

From 2003 forward, the Government of India recommended that Ministries incorporate a segment on women's issues in their annual financial reports. Since then, many have been reporting on the subject, which aids as a chief foundation for assessing the ministries progress on women's development. The Ministry of Finance formed an Expert Group in 2004 to examine the viability of gender budgeting and economic classification. All Ministries were given instructions to establish a Gender Budgeting Cell by 2005. Every year since 2005, the Ministry of Finance's releases a statement on Gender Budgeting as part of the Budget Circular.

The Expenditure Division of the Ministry of Finance compiles and integrates this information in the form of Statement twenty as part of the Expenditure Budget Document Volume I. There are two parts to this Gender Budgeting Statement: Part A and Part B. Part A of the budget statement specifies Women-Specific Programmes, which are those that have a 100 per cent female allotment. Part B of the budget statement shows pro-women programmes, which are those in which women usually receive 30 per cent of the allotment. The Indian Planning Commission clarified in 2010 that the Women Component Plan should be a policy at the national and state level. It should be renamed Gender Responsive Budgeting or Gender Budgeting as suggested by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Women and Child Development. As a result, the Department of Expenditure has formed Revised Guidelines for the Outcome Preparation of the gender budget. As a result, in 2013, the Ministry of Women and Child Development published guidelines to states as a strategic plan for establishing Gender Budgeting at the state level.

Gender Budgeting in the States - Year of Adoption

Early Adopters	Subsequent Adopters	Recent Adopters
Odisha (2004-05)	Madhya Pradesh (2007-08)	Andaman & Nicobar Islands
Tripura (2005-06)	Jammu & Kashmir (2007-08)	(November 2012)
Uttar Pradesh (2005)	Arunachal Pradesh (2007-08)	Rajasthan (August 2011)
Karnataka (2006-07)	Chhattisgarh (2007-08)	Maharashtra (January 2013)
Gujarat (2006)	Uttarakhand (2007-08)	Dadra and Nagar Haveli
	Himachal Pradesh (2008)	(2011-12)
	Bihar (2008-09)	
	Kerala(2008-09)	
	Nagaland(2009)	

Source: Gender Budgeting Handbook (Govt. of India)

State Budget Gender Analysis

The task of assessing State finances in India to track the gender varied influence and consequence of budgetary process was managed by a community of research institutes and gender experts from around the country. A rapid work station assessment of the State budget documents was decided upon in order to identify (i) Women Specific Schemes, (ii) Pro Women schemes and (iii) Gender-neutral schemes

The total allocation of the government towards gender budgeting can be again classified into four categories: Social services, economic services, protective services and regulatory services.

- a) **Social services:** Social services comprises educational and health-care programmes, financial assistance services such as childcare centres and dormitories, water supply, sanitation, and welfare schemes. All of the schemes in social services play a vital role in women's emancipation, directly by enhancing their capabilities and securing their physical well-being. It informally develops the capabilities and guarantees their financial well-being unintentionally, by alleviating domestic chores.
- b) **Economic services:** Economic services consist of schemes for training and skill development of women. Also provisions were made to get, infrastructure, credit marketing etc. which are essential for women's monetary self-reliance and self-sufficiency.
- c) **Protective services:** Protective services comprises allowances for women having homes and care institutions, widows' and destitute women's pensions, rehabilitation schemes for victims of horrible crimes etc. These all allocations are aimed at combating the ramifications of women's

socioeconomic enslavement instead of addressing the primary causes of this subservience. These allocations are very necessary to enhance the dignity of women.

- d) Regulatory services: Regulatory services comprises institutional systems for gender equity, such as State Commissions for Woman, women's cells in police stations, awareness generation campaigns, and other initiatives that offer structural venues and potentials for women's rights.

Gender Budgeting in Kerala

The Indian Constitution's 73rd and 74th Amendment's objective is to achieve social justice by guaranteeing equal approach and enhanced membership of women in the authority structure of Local Self Government Institutions. The People's Plan Campaign (PPC) was started by the government of Kerala in 1996. The People's Plan Campaign primarily focused on the creation of gender equality and equity. In Kerala, alternative deliberative democratic organizations such as Kudumbashree, Jagratha Samithi, and Women Component Plan etc. have provided additional opportunities for women to participate (KILA, 2017).

Kerala began the gender planning process at the local governments in 1998, requiring local governments to set aside at least 10 percent of the plan funds devolved by the state for women as part of the Women Component Plan (Nishanthi, 2020). From 2008-09 onwards, the state budget started to realize the gender budgeting process and a determined effort was made to make gender evident in every aspect of the economy. Gender assessment was first executed in Kerala as an element of budget formulation in 2008-09, and the exercise was initiated for the first time on the 2008-09 Kerala budget. It was the Kerala State Planning Board which started Gender Budget initiative in the 2008-09 budgets.

Every department in the ministry of Kerala has tried to design actual plans for women's welfare. Even in generic initiatives, efforts would be made to deliberately address gender problems. The budget also highlights the importance of developing gender-disaggregated data and institutional frameworks that can benefit policymakers to implement gender-sensitive plans and practices. In 2008-09, the overall outlay targeted for women accounted for only 5.5 percent of the entire State budget outlay, but after a gender audit, it grew to 8.5 percent in 2010-11. Gender budget measures were also included in the 2011-12 budget address. The ministry continued what the former administration has done in terms of women specific schemes for that fiscal year and subsequent years. In 2015, the Kerala government approved a policy titled Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment to improve female empowerment. The GEWE Policy provides a results framework for accomplishing gender equality in Kerala. It looks forward for a more planned and outcome-oriented approach and for this purpose, the government released a Gender Planning, Budgeting, and Auditing Manual on 2015. The manual largely outlines policy execution tactics on gender perspective.

The new government which came to office in 2016 also gave priority to gender budget policies. The State Planning Board has been drafting gender statements that are issued with the budget paper since 2017-18. The resource allocations for women's development have been divided into two portions in this announcement. Part-A refers to programmes in which all of the participants are women. The general developmental schemes with a special dimension for women or a distinct number of women beneficiaries are included in the Part-B statement. Furthermore, the government developed and authorized the Women's Empowerment Policy for Kerala 2014-2020, with the purpose of developing groundwork for the mutually beneficial cooperation of both sexes in society through fair opportunities to socioeconomic and democratic opportunities.

Conclusion

Although gender budgeting seemed to be a simple concept, including gender issues into the budget process in a way that has significant effect on the growth is a multifaceted analytical endeavour. As ministries or departments examine the gender impact of their line budgets, it requires a high level of dedication and collaboration across the government. Eradicating women's disadvantage can lead to faster growth in the

economy and better financial stabilization, which paves the way for a successful economy. Strengthening gender equity has favourable externalities, which validate government initiatives that support it. Gender budgeting can even be executed in an aggregated fashion, but it must also be done in a differentiated manner. It can be either in terms of public programmes or critical characteristics of legal frameworks, to be appropriately implemented.

References

1. Ahmad, M. (2014): 'Empowerment of Women Through Budgets: Indian Experience', *Humanities and Social Sciences Letters*, 2(1), 1-11.
2. Austen, S., Costa, M., Sharp, R., & Elson, D. (2013): 'Expenditure incidence analysis: A gender-responsive budgeting tool for educational expenditure in timor-leste?' *Feminist Economics*, 19(4), 1-24.
3. Bellamy, K. (2002): 'Gender Budgeting: a Background paper for the Council of Europe's Informal Network of Experts on Gender Budgeting' *UK's Women's Budget Group*.
4. Bhavsar, D., & Vandana, B. (2009, January): 'The Potential of Gender Budgeting in India-Issues and Alternative Strategies for Future', *4th International Conference on Management-IBSA* (pp. 2-4).
5. Budlender, D. (2008): 'Integrating gender-responsive budgeting into the aid effectiveness agenda: Ten-country overview report', *Community Agency for Social Enquiry*, Cape Town.
6. Chakraborty, L. (2014): 'A Case Study of Gender Responsive Budgeting in India'.
7. Chakraborty, L. (2014): 'Gender-responsive Budgeting as Fiscal Innovation: Evidence from India on Processes', *Levy Economics Institute, Working Paper*, (797).
8. Chakraborty, L. (2014): 'Integrating time in public policy: Empirical description of gender-specific outcomes and budgeting', *Levy Economics Institute of Bard College Working Paper*, (785). Forum (Vol. 3, No. 1).
9. Chakraborty, L. (2019): *Federal fiscal policy effectiveness and Inequality: Empirical evidence on Gender Budgeting in Asia Pacific* (No. 19/273).
10. Chakraborty, L. S. (2007): *Gender responsive budgeting and fiscal decentralisation in India: A preliminary appraisal*, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy.
11. Chakraborty, L., Ingrams, M., & Singh, Y. (2018): *Fiscal Policy Effectiveness and Inequality: Efficacy of Gender Budgeting in Asia Pacific* (No. 18/224).
12. Dey, J., & Dutta, S. (2014): 'Gender responsive budgeting in India: Trends and Analysis', *International Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(4), 495-509.
13. KILA (2017) : 'Gender Budget Manual for Local Self Government Institutions of Kerala.'
14. 'Gender Budgeting Handbook', Government of India, Ministry of Women and Child Development, October 2015
15. Jhamb, B., Mishra, Y., & Sinha, N. (2013): 'The paradox of gender responsive budgeting', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 35-38.
16. Lahiri, A., Chakraborty, L., Bhattacharyya, P. N., Bhasin, A., & Mukhopadhyay, H. (2002): 'Gender budgeting in India', *The National Institute of Public Finance and Policy*, New Delhi.
17. Madhusudhanan, S. (2018): 'Gender responsive budgeting: A lesson learned and way forward', *International Journal of Applied Economics, Finance and Accounting*, 2(1), 27-29.

18. Mishra, Y., & Sinha, N. (2012) : 'Gender responsive budgeting in India: What has gone wrong?', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 50-57.
19. Pathak, P: 'Gender Budgeting'.
20. Sharma, P., & Garg, P. (2014): 'Women empowerment through gender budgeting in India',. *International Research Journal of Human Resources and Social Sciences*, 1(6), 25-34.
21. Sodani, P. R., & Sharma, S. (2008): 'Gender responsive budgeting', *Journal of Health Management*, 10(2), 227-240.
22. Stotsky, J. G. (2006): 'Gender budgeting', *IMF Working Papers*, 1-50.
23. Sukumar, M. (2012): 'Engendering local development plans: Gender budgeting initiative by a local government institution in Kerala', India. In *Universitas Forum* (Vol. 3, No. 1).
24. Vijayan, A., & George, M. S. (2011): *Gender responsive budgeting: The case of Kerala* (No. id: 3723).
25. Women, U. N. (2012): 'Gender responsive budgeting'.

The Sector and Gender differences in Health Status among Older Adults: Evidence from Kerala

**Resmi R. Nair
& Christabell P.J.**

The population of the world has been ageing since the mid twentieth century. The world's population aged 60 and more is anticipated to rise to 2 billion by 2050. Kerala has the greatest proportion of elderly population than any Indian state. Ageing is accompanied by a slew of illnesses and physical disorders. Long term care becomes inevitable with increased life expectancy and consequent implications of ageing. The state of health in Kerala is influenced by the age structure profiles, longevity of life, and living situations of the elderly. It has the highest frequency of diseases (64 percent) compared to all other Indian states. . In Kerala, the percentage distribution of ailments is higher among females than males in both rural and urban locations. It is undeniable that as people get older, the number of illnesses they suffer from grows. Men reported much greater health than women in this study, which looked at sex differences in health among older persons. According to self-reported health among the elderly, the percentage of older women who have a bad health condition is significantly higher than that of older men.

Introduction

The population of the world has been ageing since the mid twentieth century. In most of the countries rate of growth of population ageing is much quicker than that has been the instance in former times. The world's population aged 60 and more is anticipated to rise to 2 billion by 2050, up from 900 million in 2015 and 80% of the world's elderly will be living in low- and middle-income countries. (World Health Organisation, 2018). Over the past decades population ageing has mostly been contributed by falling fertility along with decline in mortality at older ages and growing longevity too have had some far-reaching consequences. A number of identical challenges for instance, insolvency of old people, alienation, low health status, rising dependency ratio, increasing health care expenditure etc. are experienced by ageing societies (Harper and Hamblin 2014). The state of the economy, the delivery and usage of health services, pension systems, family life, medical research objectives, end-of-life decision-making, private and public resource allocation, and housing arrangements are all affected by this unprecedented surge in population ageing (Robert N. Butler, 1997). With rise in age and changes in pattern of disease from acute illness to chronic illness, the health status of the elderly goes on deteriorating (Robin S. Lau, Shanthi Johnson and T. J. Kamalanabhan, 2012). The burden of morbidity and mortality in the population will shift from infectious disease-dominated burden profiles to chronic noncommunicable disease-dominated burden profiles (Omran, A. R.1971). The burdens and the cost of health care pose the concern of ageing (Jan Pakulski, 2016). Long term care becomes inevitable with increased life expectancy and consequent implications of ageing. Through the preferment of efficacious family planning and the resulting advancement in child and maternal health services population ageing has been escalated in developing countries (Shah Ebrahim, 1979). People's capacity to execute the tasks they value will be identical to that of a younger person if they can enjoy these extra days of life in excellent health and in a safe environment. The ramifications for older individuals and society are more unfavourable if these additional days are characterised by decreases in physical and mental capacity (World Health Organisation, 2018).

For the definition of older adult or 'elderly' an age of 65 years has been agreed by developed countries. To mention the older population the age of 60 years or above has been advocated by the United Nations. In its National Policy on Older Persons in 1999, the Government of India has marked those individuals aged

60 years or more as its senior citizens or older adults. A typical population will tend to get greyer, its median age will rise, and the share of the old will also climb between the commencement of replacement fertility and the advent of zero natural increase. The middle and older age groups are extended in particular as younger cohorts ascend up the age pyramid, and population ageing is a direct result of the momentum. Ageing has been demonstrated to be linearly related to population momentum (Schoen R, Kim YJ, 1998). The age-specific momentum reveals that the momentum in the older age groups is substantially stronger (Kim YJ, Schoen R, Sarma PS, 1991). According to UN estimates, the global share of elderly people has gradually increased from 9.2 percent in 1990 to 11.70 percent in 2013, and is expected to continue to climb by 21 percent of the world's total population by 2050 (UN, 2013). During the last 50 years, India, the world's second most populous country, has seen a tremendous demographic shift, with the population over 60 years old i.e., the elderly (Government of India, 2011). This trend appears to be set to continue. The proportion of Indians aged 60 and more is expected to climb from 7.5 percent in 2010 to 11.1 percent in 2025 (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs [UNDESA], 2008). There are a few significant aspects of India's old population. The elderly make up 7.5 percent of the population, two-thirds of whom live in villages and nearly half of whom have a low socioeconomic status (SES) (Lena et al., 2009). Half of India's elderly are dependents, frequently as a result of widowhood, divorce, or separation, and the elderly are overwhelmingly female (70 percent) (Rajan, 2001). As a result, the majority of old people live in rural areas, have low socioeconomic status, and are reliant on their relatives.

In 1961, the percentage of older population in Kerala was less than the national figure of 5.1% and this constituted 5.6%. But as against the related national figure of 7.4 percent, the percentage of older adults in Kerala was extended to 10.5% in 2001. According to 2011 census, 12.6% of entire population in Kerala were aged 60 years or more and the rate of growth of elderly population is high among those aged seventy or eighty or above where as the national figure for the same was 8.6%. Kerala has the greatest proportion of elderly population than any Indian state. An old age society is defined as one with a population of more than 10% older people.

With this type of ageing scenario, there is strain on all aspects of senior care, including financial, health, and housing. Many people believe that ageing is accompanied by a slew of illnesses and physical disorders. Apart from physical ailments, the elderly are more likely to suffer from poor mental health, which can be caused by senility, neurosis, and a lack of life satisfaction. As a result, any study of the elderly population should include a focus on the elderly's health (S. Irudaya Rajan, 2006). Long-term care has long been a source of controversy in Kerala. Finally, the state of health in Kerala is influenced by the age structure profiles, longevity of life, and living situations of the elderly.

Objectives of the study are:

1. To understand the distribution of ailments among different age groups in different districts in Kerala
2. To understand the percentage distribution of self-rated health and the prevalence of self-rated poor health among the elderly in Kerala.

Methodology

The data from 75th round of National Sample Survey (NSS) conducted by National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) between July 2017-June 2018 was used in this study. A random sample of 1,13,823 households in rural and urban areas across the country were interviewed in this survey. The survey includes 19801 people from Kerala, including 10,682 people from rural areas and 9,119 people from urban areas. For the study, a total of 4,467 households were chosen, with 2,392 from rural areas and 2,075 from urban areas. A total of 3086 elderly people were chosen from Kerala, with 1596 elderly females and 1490 elderly men, and 1688 samples drawn from rural areas, with the remaining 1398 samples drawn from urban areas. The survey was designed to gather basic quantitative data about the health sector. A key goal of the study was to determine the prevalence rate of general morbidity by age group and gender, as well as particular

categories of disease, at the state and national level. A special focus was placed on illnesses that necessitated hospitalisation or treatment as a patient in a medical facility. Information of any hospitalizations of any household member in the 365 days leading up to the survey date, including expenditures for treatment while in hospital etc. were taken into consideration.

Table 1 : Percentage distribution of Ailment among the Aged (60+) in India in 2018

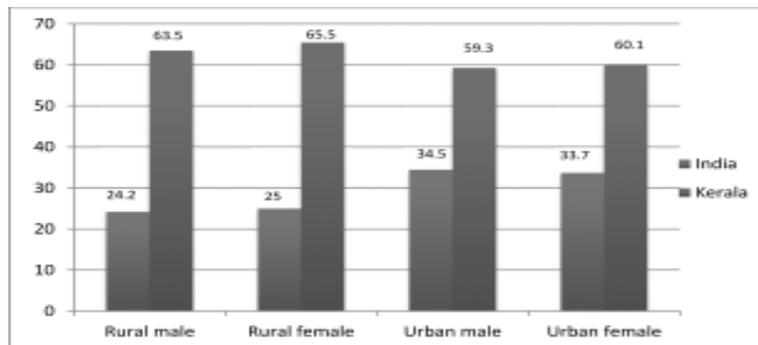
State	Rural			Urban			Rural+Urban		
	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P
Jammu & Kashmir	25.6	30.2	27.7	17.7	33.3	24.5	23.4	31.0	26.9
Himachal Pradesh	26.0	27.1	26.6	29.8	43.2	37.3	26.3	28.5	27.5
Punjab	28.6	31.9	30.3	27.7	37.7	32.9	28.2	34.5	31.4
Chandigarh	1.8	2.1	2.1	30.3	41.9	36.0	30.2	41.3	35.7
Uttaranchal	5.8	8.7	7.3	24.0	18.6	21.4	10.7	11.0	10.9
Haryana	13.4	18.0	15.6	20.9	16.8	18.8	16.3	17.5	16.9
Delhi	0.5	0.8	0.5	26.9	40.5	33.4	26.1	40.4	32.9
Rajasthan	15.6	9.5	12.4	13.8	22.9	18.7	15.2	12.6	13.8
Uttar Pradesh	19.9	21.6	20.7	22.7	25.3	24.0	20.5	22.4	21.4
Bihar	13.2	4.3	8.8	14.0	14.1	14.0	13.3	5.7	9.6
Sikkim	18.1	22.7	20.3	15.5	26.8	20.3	18.0	22.9	20.3
Arunachal Pradesh	7.4	2.9	5.3	5.3	1.7	3.9	7.1	2.8	5.1
Nagaland	0.6	14.8	5.4	16.3	13.9	15.4	3.9	14.6	7.5
Manipur	2.1	11.3	6.1	8.4	2.5	5.5	4.4	7.6	5.9
Mizoram	8.0	2.2	5.1	13.9	11.2	12.5	10.9	6.7	8.7
Tripura	5.2	4.2	4.8	2.0	7.0	4.3	4.3	5.0	4.6
Meghalaya	1.5	0.0	0.9	3.6	0.7	1.8	1.9	0.3	1.2
Assam	4.4	11.0	7.3	12.1	4.8	8.1	5.3	9.9	7.4
West Bengal	41.2	48.1	44.4	52.5	55.0	53.7	45.3	50.8	48.0
Jharkhand	10.5	15.0	12.8	28.4	26.3	27.4	15.1	17.8	16.5
Odisha	23.5	23.3	23.4	24.9	31.3	28.1	23.7	24.4	24.0
Chhattisgarh	10.4	20.9	15.7	21.1	19.2	20.2	12.8	20.5	16.7
Madhya Pradesh	11.2	11.4	11.3	26.7	25.9	26.3	15.5	15.6	15.6
Gujarat	19.8	21.5	20.8	34.8	29.3	32.1	25.8	24.2	25.0
Daman & Diu	21.3	0.7	7.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.9	0.7	6.4
D & N Haveli	26.9	0.0	12.5	52.8	22.8	32.7	29.2	3.3	14.9
Maharashtra	17.8	18.3	18.1	38.0	38.3	38.1	26.3	26.7	26.5
Andhra Pradesh	49.5	57.4	53.8	66.9	55.9	61.2	54.2	57.1	55.7
Karnataka	22.0	11.0	15.8	30.8	23.8	27.4	25.8	15.5	20.3
Goa	27.8	21.2	24.4	48.9	36.9	43.6	38.7	28.3	33.7
Lakshadweep	16.8	50.9	38.9	44.0	73.7	59.8	38.6	67.2	54.6
Kerala	63.5	65.5	64.6	59.3	60.1	59.7	61.7	63.2	62.5
Tamil Nadu	25.1	23.6	24.3	22.0	15.8	18.4	23.8	19.8	21.6
Puducherry	0.5	35.3	15.0	14.1	23.5	19.2	7.5	27.8	17.4
A & N Islands	20.6	25.0	22.8	56.5	28.6	40.7	33.7	26.6	30.0
Telangana	31.3	17.2	24.0	41.7	21.3	33.0	36.1	18.7	27.8
India	24.2	25.0	24.6	34.5	33.7	34.0	27.5	27.9	27.7

Source: Estimated by author from NSS data of 75th rounds on Household Social Consumption: Health, July 2017-June 2018.

Note: M-Male, F-Female, and P-Persons; Values are given in row wise.

A study of the prevalence of diseases among the elderly in India found that the percentage distribution of ailments is higher in urban areas (34%) than in rural areas (25%) in the majority of Indian states. The frequency of diseases is nearly equal among elderly males and females in both rural and urban areas of India. Kerala, on the other hand, is in a different scenario. Kerala has the highest frequency of diseases (63 percent) compared to all other Indian states, and it is more than two times at the national level (28 percent). Moreover, the percentage distribution of ailments is higher in rural parts (65%) compared to urban parts (60%) of Kerala. In urban Kerala, the percentage of older males and females suffering from diseases is nearly equal (59 percent for men and 60 percent for women), however in rural Kerala, there is a minor difference (64 percent for men and 66 percent for women). The disease burden of elderly in rural India is 25%, where as in the case of rural Kerala it's 65%. In urban sector also the scenario is much higher in Kerala (60%) compared to national figure (34%). While the southern states (Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu) may be the most significant drivers of ageing in India, other Indian states (particularly Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Punjab) are also seeing an increase in older populations, primarily in rural areas (Alam and Karan, 2010). When examining morbidity patterns by age, it is obvious that the elderly have a higher burden of diseases than other age groups (National Sample Survey, 2006).

Figure 1: Percentage distribution of ailments among aged; India and Kerala, 2018



Source: Estimated by Author

Table 2: Percentage distribution of Ailment among different age groups in Kerala in 2018

Age group	Rural			Urban			Rural+Urban		
	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P
0-4	14.7	18.2	16.3	17.6	20.7	19.0	15.9	19.2	17.5
5-9	15.7	13.6	14.7	14.5	9.3	11.8	15.2	11.6	13.4
10-14	13.2	14.5	13.8	9.4	13.7	11.7	11.6	14.1	12.8
15-19	10.9	10.7	10.8	5.0	8.7	6.8	8.0	9.7	8.8
20-24	7.6	9.6	8.5	8.0	7.6	7.8	7.8	8.6	8.2
25-29	4.3	4.8	4.6	3.0	7.4	5.4	3.8	5.9	4.9
30-34	7.2	13.1	9.9	10.4	15.5	13.0	8.6	14.3	11.4
35-39	11.9	14.0	13.1	12.0	18.7	16.0	11.9	16.4	14.5
40-44	19.9	24.4	22.4	16.2	23.1	20.0	18.1	23.8	21.2
45-49	33.7	23.6	28.2	23.6	26.2	24.9	29.0	24.7	26.7
50-54	27.2	38.5	33.7	25.5	48.7	37.9	26.5	42.5	35.4
55-59	39.4	44.2	41.6	34.9	48.2	42.5	37.8	46.0	42.0
60-64	57.6	56.9	57.3	53.1	54.8	53.9	55.8	55.9	55.9
65-69	62.4	62.2	62.3	62.2	64.6	63.5	62.3	63.3	62.8
70+	70.1	73.6	72.0	63.2	61.4	62.2	67.3	68.7	68.1
All	24.1	26.8	25.5	20.7	25.7	23.4	22.6	26.3	24.5

Source: Estimated by Author.

It is undeniable that as people get older, the number of illnesses they suffer from grows. Gender revealed as an important factor explaining the health condition of elderly people in both developed and developing nations among the socioeconomic variables (Kavalar and Jamuna, 2011). In rural areas, 58 percent of elderly males and 57 per cent of elderly females between the ages of 60 and 64 are suffering from various diseases. For elder males and females in urban areas, the figures are 53 per cent and 55 per cent, respectively. In the case of those belonging to the age group 65-69 years; percentage distribution of ailments is 62% in rural areas and 64% in urban areas. Affections grow more prevalent in those who are in the 'old old' group or above, and they are more prevalent in rural locations than in urban areas. In rural areas, 72 per cent of older individuals (70 per cent and 73.6 percent for older males and females, respectively) suffer from various ailments, but in urban areas, the ratio is 62 per cent (63 per cent and 61 percent for older males and females, respectively).

Table 3: Percentage distribution of major diseases among the Aged (60+) by districts in Kerala 2018 (365 days)

Districts	Major diseases								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Kasaragod	1.5	0.8	10.2	2.8	0.2	4.7	8.1	6.8	3.2
Kannur	2.8	3.4	8.9	2.4	7.8	4.3	12.3	4.2	7.8
Wayanad	0.5	0.0	0.1	0.6	3.5	0.0	1.9	0.0	0.0
Kozhikode	7.9	5.7	3.9	12.0	3.0	5.0	7.2	2.9	11.0
Malappuram	6.9	1.9	12.0	8.6	6.9	13.0	2.8	9.6	1.5
Palakkad	8.0	7.0	2.9	11.0	13.5	2.1	2.9	2.1	18.9
Thrissur	5.3	4.6	11.1	7.0	7.1	4.5	15.7	15.2	17.0
Ernakulam	6.3	6.1	2.8	4.5	17.3	6.5	8.0	22.4	9.7
Idukki	10.1	1.7	0.0	8.0	5.1	10.4	15.5	2.7	6.5
Kottayam	18.7	9.4	10.0	6.1	7.1	7.7	3.5	18.8	4.8
Alappuzha	6.6	32.2	9.7	12.8	16.0	21.8	1.2	5.4	9.2
Pathanamthitta	3.0	4.9	2.5	3.6	3.2	1.7	1.4	2.2	3.2
Kollam	6.3	3.5	24.7	10.9	3.5	8.6	10.0	3.7	4.0
Thiruvananthapuram	16.4	18.9	1.3	10.0	5.9	9.6	9.6	4.0	3.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Estimated by Author Note: 1=Infection, 2=Endocrine, metabolic*, 3=Psychiatric & neurological, 4=Cardio-vascular, 5=Respiratory, 6=Gastro-intestinal, 7= Musculo-skeletal, 8=Genito-urinary, 9=Injuries

According to the percentage distribution of major diseases among the elderly in Kerala, cardio-vascular disease (23 percent) is the most common followed by infection (17 percent). Alappuzha has the greatest rate of older people with cardio-vascular illness (13%) followed by Kozhikode (12%), and Wayanad has the lowest percentage (0.6 percent). The proportion of elderly individuals with infections is highest in Kottayam (19%) and lowest in Wayanad (0.5 percent). Musculoskeletal disease, respiratory sickness, and endocrine, metabolic disease are other more significant categories of diseases that may impact another major share of older persons in Kerala (8 percent). In the case of musculoskeletal disease, the biggest proportion comes from Thrissur (16%) and Idukki (16%), and in the case of respiratory sickness, the major share comes from Ernakulam (17%), whereas Alappuzha has the highest percentage of older people suffering from endocrine and metabolic disease (32 percent). Psychiatric and neurological difficulties impact roughly 6% of older persons, with Kollam (25%) residents being the most affected.

Table 4: Percentage distribution of prevalence of diseases among the aged (60+) by gender and sector in Kerala 2018 (365 days)

Diseases	Rural			Urban			Rural+Urban		
	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P
Infection	15.9	24.2	20.4	13.2	13.3	13.2	14.6	20.3	17.4
Cancers	3.1	2.9	3.0	4.4	5.3	4.8	3.7	3.8	3.7
Blood diseases	0.6	0.2	0.4	0.4	2.5	1.3	0.5	1.0	0.7
Endocrine, metabolic*	5.4	6.6	6.0	11.9	8.8	10.6	8.5	7.4	7.9
Psychiatric & neurological	8.9	3.5	6.0	6.9	3.7	5.5	7.9	3.6	5.8
Eye& Ear	3.2	5.5	4.4	3.6	3.1	3.4	3.4	4.6	4.0
Cardio-vascular	26.5	18.3	22.1	23.0	24.2	23.5	24.8	20.4	22.6
Respiratory	7.5	10.4	9.1	5.9	7.2	6.4	6.8	9.3	8.0
Gastro-intestinal	7.5	5.9	6.7	3.5	4.0	3.7	5.6	5.2	5.4
Skin	0.4	0.4	0.4	1.8	1.2	1.5	1.0	0.7	0.9
Musculo-skeletal	8.9	8.0	8.4	8.3	8.2	8.3	8.6	8.1	8.4
Genito-urinary	4.6	4.2	4.4	9.7	2.8	6.8	7.0	3.7	5.4
Injuries	6.1	5.8	5.9	3.7	10.2	6.4	5.0	7.4	6.2
Others	1.5	4.2	2.9	3.7	5.5	4.5	2.5	4.6	3.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Estimated by Author

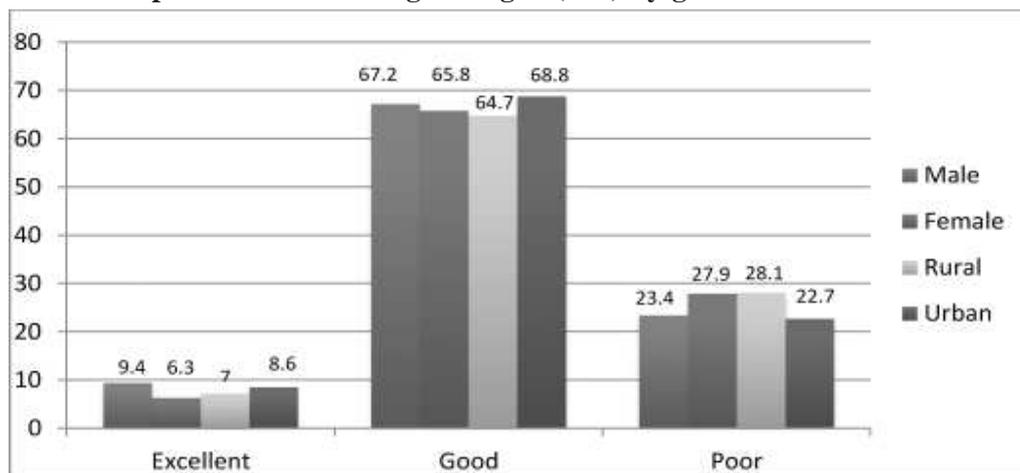
Cardiovascular illnesses affect the majority of older adults in both rural and urban regions (22 percent in rural areas and 24 percent in urban areas). In rural Kerala, the number of seniors suffering from cardio vascular disease is higher among elderly males (27%) than females (18%), however in urban regions, the percentage share of elderly ladies suffering from the condition is slightly higher (24%) than that of older males (23 percent). Cardiovascular illness is more common in older males (25%) than females (20 percent) in Kerala, according to the general prevalence rate. In rural areas, infection is the most common disease that affects older women (24 percent), while it is the second most common condition that affects older men (16 percent). In urban Kerala, infection is more or less evenly distributed among older males and females (13 percent for both), while the prevalence rate suggests that infection is greater among older females (20 percent) than older males (15 percent), and is also higher in rural areas (20 percent) than urban areas (13percent). Musculoskeletal disease affects both men and women, and it affects people from all walks of life (8 percent). However, older females (9 percent) have a higher prevalence of respiratory illness than older males (7 percent). Females are more affected by respiratory illness than men in both rural and urban regions (10% and 7% correspondingly for rural and urban females) (8 percent and 6 percent respectively for rural and urban males). In the case of Endocrine and Metabolic Disease, the percentage proportion of males (9%) is larger than that of females (7%), and the sector analysis shows that the percentage share is higher in urban regions (total 11%, 12 percent for males, and 9 percent for females) than in rural areas (total 6 percent, 5 percent for males and 7 percent for females). Old age injuries are higher among females (7.4%) compared to males (5%). The percentage distribution of psychiatric and neurological difficulties among males (8%) is about double that of females (4%) in both rural (9% and 4% respectively for men and women)and urban (7% and 4% respectively for men and women)areas.Gastro-intestinal sickness affects both males (5.6 percent) and females (5.2 percent), but the percentage distribution is higher in rural (average

rate 7 percent, 8 percent for males and 6 percent for females) than urban (average rate 4 percent, 4 percent for both sexes) areas.

Self-Reported Health Status Among the Aged

“Self-ratings of health assess something different than physicians’ ratings - what we have called ‘perceived’ or ‘subjective’ health as opposed to ‘actual’ or ‘objective’ health,” according to Suchman et al. (1958). It’s a subjective health indicator that considers a person’s biological, mental, social, and functional characteristics, as well as personal and cultural views and health habits(StanojevicJerkovic O, Sauliune S, Saumskas L, Birt C, Kersnik J, 2017). Four out of five people experience to a certain extent self-reported infirmity by the age of eighty indicating a substantial “iceberg” of unmentioned agony (Shah Ebrahim, 1997). In a self-assessment of health, a lot of objective information is given, probably more than can be contained in a survey instrument or even gathered in a busy clinical setting (Benyamini Y, 2011). Participants who assess their health as bad had a 2 to 5 times higher risk of dying than those who rate their health as exceptional or good, according to studies (DeSalvo, K. B., Bloser, N., Reynolds, K., He, J., Muntner, P. (2006). The elderly’s self-rated health has been found to be an independent predictor of survival (Herman DR, Solomons NW, Mendoza I, Gonzales C, Qureshi AK. 1998). Self- rated health is a surprisingly dependable measure that is consistent with the actual health state of the respondents, despite the fact that it ignores the issue of interpersonal incomparability. Self-reported health has been used to evaluate population health and predict health outcomes, such as survival, impending morbidity, and mortality (Hirve S, Juvekar S, Sambhudas S, Lele P, Blomstedt Y, Wall S, et al. 2012).

Figure 2: Self-reported health among the Aged (60+) by gender and Sector in Kerala 2018

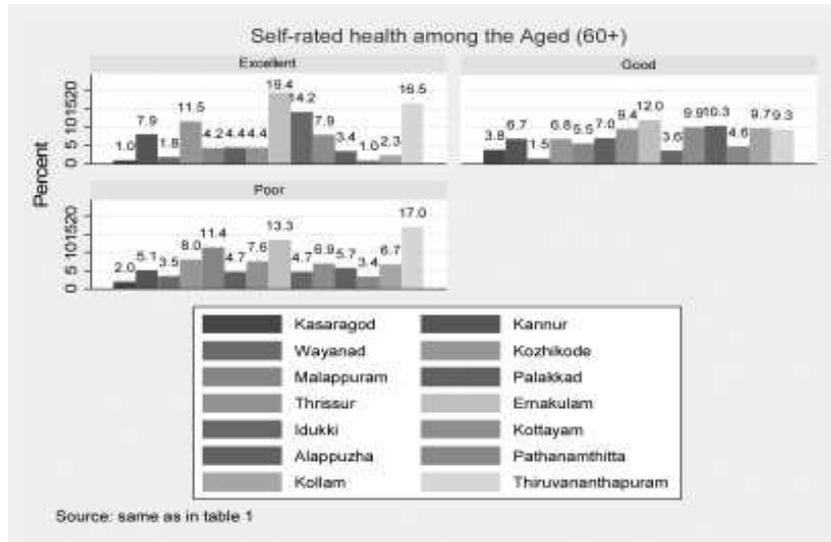


Source: Estimated by Author

According to self-reported health among the elderly, the percentage of older women (28%) who are in poor health is much higher than the percentage of older males who are in poor health (23 percent). Women have a greater life expectancy than men in most societies around the world, but women also report higher levels of despair, distress, and chronic illness (McDonough, P., Walters, V,2001). However, when it comes to those who feel in good or outstanding health, the ratio is larger among older males (9.4% reported excellent health, 67.2 percent reported good health) than females (6.3 percent reported excellent health whereas 65.8 percent reported good health). Women of all ages exhibit consistently worse self-reported health than men. Surprisingly, as people get older, the gender gap in self-reported health widens. The combined effect of residential disadvantage in terms of lack of sufficient health care facilities and other important civic amenities in rural areas, as well as societal and changing family norms, results in a health disadvantage for rural women over urban women and even rural males. Rural women have traditionally been the backbone of the rural economy, with the majority of them working as farmworkers and caring for household cattle. In later age, a poor domestic environment and traditional cooking habits raised the likelihood of diseases and a low health

status. The outcomes of this study corroborated previous findings that in India, a higher proportion of older women than males reported poor self-rated health (Agrawal, G., Arokiasamy, P. 2010).

Figure 3: Self-rated health among Individuals, different districts in Kerala, 2018



In the case of entire elderly population who reported excellent health status, the highest percentage is from Ernakulam (19.4%) followed by Thiruvananthapuram (16.5%) and Idukki (14.2%). Kasaragod (1%) and Pathanamthitta (1%) have the lowest percentages in this category (1 percent). The majority of persons in good health hail from Ernakulam (12 percent), Alappuzha (10.3 percent), and Kottayam (9.9 percent). Wayanad (1.5 percent) and Idukki (1.5 percent) have the lowest percentages in these categories (3.6 percent). Thiruvananthapuram’s elderly (17%) make up the largest share of persons in bad health, while Kasaragod’s (2%) make up the smallest.

Figure 4: District wise self-rated poor health among the aged by gender in Kerala 2018



Source: Estimated by Author

According to self-reported health among the elderly, the district of Thiruvananthapuram has the greatest percentage of older males in poor health (9%), followed by Ernakulam (7%), and Malappuram (5%), while Pathanamthitta has the lowest ratio (1 percent). In the case of older female population also, this ratio is

found to be highest in Thiruvananthapuram (8%) followed by Malappuram (6.8%) and Ernakulam (6.5%) and at the same time it's lowest in Kasaragod (0.8%). The differences in poor self-rated health among older men and women across the region may be partly explained by the diversity of regions in terms of resource availability and socioeconomic and demographic progress.

Discussion and Conclusion

As elderly individuals are more likely to suffer from illness compared to younger age groups, health issues are meant to be a society's primary priority. According to research, Kerala has a higher rate of illness in the older population than the rest of India and Kerala has the highest rate of significant health issues (Communicable and Non Communicable Disease) among the elderly. Intuitively, the most pressing issue facing the elderly in Kerala is one of health, which they must not jeopardise at any cost in their living situations. Because of the high age specific death rate of the 80+ group, their proportion to the total population is lower than that of the 60+ and 70+ populations in Kerala. The proportions of old women outnumber those of their male counterparts. It is due to the fact that women live the longest at very old ages. The majority of elderly women in Kerala are widows. As a result of the combined consequences of ageing and widowhood, elder women in Kerala are doubly marginalised, and they are designated a unique group to receive priority in national policies for the elderly. In this study, interesting sex-related differences in health concerns were discovered. The health of older women has never been a big public health issue. With an increase in the number and percentage of senior people, as well as a longer life expectancy for women, concerns affecting elderly women can no longer be overlooked. Females should be given special focus in public health programmes for the elderly. In terms of dependency, inability to meet basic necessities, and property ownership, elder ladies perform worse than elder males.

In the following decades, the growing older population will impose significant morbidity and death costs across the country. As previously stated, important hurdles to health care for the elderly in India include social barriers influenced by gender and other axes of social inequality such as religion, caste, socioeconomic status, stigma etc. The state is noted for having a high morbidity rate for people of all ages. Kerala has a greater rate of morbidity, with roughly a quarter of the population suffering from diseases, compared to less than 10% for the rest of India. This is seen in the case of the elderly population. According to a gender-based research, older women have higher rates of morbidity than men (Morbidity, Health care and condition of aged, NSSO 60th round (January - June 2004).

It is of crucial importance that older adults should have prolonged support and assistance from friends and family who remain the unrewarded carers. Fascinating gender related dissimilarities in the health issues were noticed in the study. Health information access and utilisation are crucial to personal and public health outcomes. Whether or not a person has access to health information and how they utilise it can have an impact on their health behaviour, health outcomes, health care utility, and quality of life. In addition to existing government support mechanisms, greater attention should be paid to the health problems of the elderly.

This study discovered a large number of senior people who self-report poor health, as well as significant disparities based on gender and demographic factors. Given the increased percentage of poor self-reported health among the elderly and the growing number of Kerala's ageing population, this study highlights the need to improve health care and social security programmes for the old.

References

1. Agrawal, G., Arokiasamy, P., (2010): 'Morbidity prevalence and health care utilization among older adults in India', *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, 29, 155-179.
2. Alam M, Karan A: 'Elderly Health in India: Dimensions, Differentials, and Over Time Changes', New Delhi, United Nations Population Fund; 2010. Building Knowledge Base on Ageing in India: A series of Programmatic and Research Studies.

3. Andrews M.A., Shaji K.S, Asokan, Praveenlal Kuttichira (2015): 'Health Problems of the Elderly: Cross-Sectional Study in a Rural Population in Kerala', *Kerala Medical Journal*.
4. Benyamini Y: 'Why does self-rated health predict mortality? An update on current knowledge and a research agenda for psychologists', *Psychol Health*. 2011, 26:1407–13.
5. DeSalvo, K. B., Bloser, N., Reynolds, K., He, J., Muntner, P. (2006): 'Mortality prediction with a single general self-rated health question: A meta analysis', *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 21, 267-275.
6. Friedrich Breyer, Joan Costa-Font and Stefan Felder (2010): 'Ageing, health, and health care Author(s); *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, winter 2010, vol. 26, no. 4, *The Economics of Ageing* (Winter 2010): pp. 674-690, Published by: Oxford University Press
7. Harper Sarah and Hamblin Kate (Eds) (2014): *International Handbook of Ageing and Public Policy*. Edward Elgar, London.
8. Herman DR, Solomons NW, Mendoza I, Gonzales C, Qureshi AK: 'Anthropometric measures and indices of body composition among Guatemalan elderly: Relationship with self-rated health and activities of daily living and comparison with other sites in the "Food Habits in Later Life" multicentric study', *Asia Pac J Clin Nutr* 1998; 7: 55- 64.
9. Hirve S, Juvekar S, Sambhudas S, Lele P, Blomstedt Y, Wall S, et al. (2012): 'Does self-rated health predict death in adults aged 50 years and above in India? Evidence from a rural population under health and demographic surveillance', *International Journal; Epidemiol* 41(6): 1719–1727.
10. Jan Pakulski (2016): *Facing the Challenges of an Ageing Society*, Australian National University Press.
11. Jean-Pierre Michel and Jean-Marie Robine (2004): 'A "New" General Theory of Population Ageing, The Geneva Papers on Risk and Insurance. Issues and Practice', October 2004, Vol. 29, No. 4, *Special Issue on Health* (October 2004), pp. 667-67, Palgrave Macmillan Journals.
12. Kalavar, J. M., Jamuna, D. (2011); 'Aging of Indian women in India: The experience of older women in formal care homes', *Journal of Women & Aging*, 23, 203-215.
13. Kenneth F. Ferraro (1980): 'Self-Ratings of Health among the Old and the Old-Old', *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, Dec., 1980, Vol. 21, No. 4 (Dec., 1980), pp. 377-383, Published by: American Sociological Association
14. Kim YJ, Schoen R, Sarma PS: 'Momentum and the growth-free segment of a population', *Demography* 1991; 28:159-73.
15. Lena A, Ashok K, Padma M, Kamath V, Kamath A: 'Health and social problems of the elderly: A cross-sectional study in Udupi Taluk, Karnataka', *Indian Journal of Community Medicine*, 2009;34:131–134. [PMC free article] [PubMed]
16. Martin Roth (1960): 'Problems Of an Ageing Population', *The British Medical Journal*, Apr. 23, 1960, Vol. 1, No. 5181 (Apr. 23, 1960), pp. 1226-1230.
17. McDonough, P., Walters, V. (2001): 'Gender and health: Reassessing patterns and explanations', *Social Science & Medicine*, 52, 547-559
18. Nair, S. B., & Kumar, S. (2017): 'Ageing in Kerala: Some Key Issues', *Indian Journal of Community Medicine*, 31(2), 209-238.
19. National Sample Survey (NSS), (July 2017-June 2018): National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO).
20. Omran, A. R. (1971): 'The epidemiologic transition. A theory of the epidemiology of population change', *Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*, 49, 509-538.

21. Paslithil A (2009-2010): 'An aging Indian population : Issues and problems', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 2009-2010, Vol. 70 (2009-2010), pp. 1095-1099 Published by: Indian History Congress
22. Robert N. Butler (1997): 'Population Aging and Health', *British Medical Journal*, Oct. 25, 1997, Vol. 315, No. 7115 (Oct. 25, 1997), pp. 1082-1084 Published by: BMJ
23. Robin S. Lau, Shanthi Johnson and T. J. Kamalanabhan (2012): 'Healthy Life Expectancy in the Context of Population Health and Ageing in India', *Asia Pacific Journal of Public Health*, January 2012, Vol. 24, No. 1 (January 2012), pp. 195-207.
24. Sadasivan Nair P.(2010): 'Understanding Below-replacement Fertility in Kerala', *Journal of Health, Population and Nutrition*, AUGUST 2010, Vol. 28, No. 4 (AUGUST 2010), pp. 405-412 Published by: Springer
25. Schoen R, Kim YJ. : 'Momentum under a gradual approach to zero growth', *Popul Stud* 1998; 52:295-9.
26. Shah Ebrahim (1979): 'Public Health Implications of Ageing', *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* (1979-) , Oct., 1997, Vol. 51, No. 5 (Oct., 1997), pp. 469-471 Published by: BMJ
27. StanojevicJerkovic O, Sauliune S, Šaumskas L, Birt C, Kersnik J: 'Determinants of self-rated health in elderly populations in urban areas of Slovenia, Lithuania and UK: findings of the EURO-URHIS 2 survey', *Eur J Pub Health*. 2017;27(suppl_2):74–9
28. Suchman, E., B. S. Phillips, and G. Streib (1958): 'An analysis of the validity of health ques- tionnaires', *Social Forces* 36:223-32.
29. United Nations Population Division, Department of Economics and Social Affairs (DESA). World population and ageing 1950-2050. <http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/worldageing19502050/>.
30. Vandana Desai and Matthew Tye (2009): 'Critically Understanding Asian Perspectives on Ageing', *Third World Quarterly*, (2009): Vol. 30, No. 5, 'Remapping Development Studies: Contemporary Critical Perspectives' (2009): pp. 1007-1024 Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd.

The Emerging Peaceful, Secular ‘One World’

B. Vivekanandan

**Jose T. Thomas, *_Kurisum Yuddhavum
Samadhanavum : Bhavi Vicharaparamaya Samskarika Charitra Niroopanam_*
(The Cross And War And Peace : A Futuristic Evaluation of Cultural History),
Kottayam, Muziris Times, 2021, pp.328, ‘ 420/-**

Jose T. Thomas, the author of this book under review, is an extra-ordinary person. After obtaining a Master’s Degree in Statistics, which helps him to practise precision and clarity in writing, he started his career as a journalist. For 15 years, he worked in *Deepika* newspaper, and rose to the position of its Resident Editor. In 1988, Kerala Government honoured him with a State Award for Development Journalism. While he was Resident Editor of *Deepika*, following an inner call to pursue truth, in 1996 he voluntarily resigned from *Deepika*, and plunged into research on the history of mankind, with a dedicated mindset. With a penetrating yogic eye, he delved deep into the history of the World from the Big Bang, which took place millions of years ago, down to the present Knowledge Era of the 21st century A.D., to present his vision of the unfolding new era of mankind.

The world of writing is saturated with authors of varied calibre. There are authors who dissect past events, with the skill of a doctor, do a post-mortem and give resultant findings. There are also authors who analyse contemporary events/developments and their impact on the life around. But, rarely we come across authors, who are endowed with a detached philosophical mind, and a readiness to walk dangerously in pursuit of truth, who dive deep into the evolution of human civilization, rationally analyse contemporary developments in an incisive manner, and comprehend the direction of the world, at a macro-level with the insight of an enlightened visionary. Jose T. Thomas belongs to this rare calibre of authors. The book under review, contains the quintessence of his evaluation of the past and the present, and the direction in which the mankind is advancing towards a common future in a ‘One World’, transcending all divisive barriers. In that vein, the author has fittingly dedicated this book to the universal vision of a famous Indian sage, Sree Narayana Guru, and to the love stream unleashed by the Jesus-Mary duo to unite all humans, during their life-time in the 1st Century A.D.

This book has been divided into three parts, and sub-divided into 24 Chapters, in addition to a few highly informative appendices. The first part deals with the crystal form of Jesus in his real life, and the undoctored version of his sermons and doings, at Capharnam, Samaria, Nazareth, Jerusalem, and elsewhere in Palestine.

The second part deals with the issue of gender equality women enjoyed at Jesus-Mary Friendship Gatherings (which are usually called as ‘Jesus Movement’ or ‘Early Christian Communities’ by Church historians) and the subsequent gender discrimination women suffered, after a male - steered priestly bureaucracy brought the old neighbourhood associations under their, absolute and undemocratic rule. In that patriarchal project, which was almost completed between the 2nd and 4th Centuries A.D., the priestly leaders made Jesus into an anointed (“Christened”) figure, a royal high priest), changed the name of Jesus as Jesus Christ, established a new religion in the name of “Jesus Christ”, and placed the fear-emitting crucifixion of Jesus, and its instrument, the Cross, at the centre of the new religious teaching and practice. This part explains how the new Clergy obliterated the gender equality women enjoyed during the time of Jesus-Mary gatherings,

made the new religion a male-dominated clerical bastion and configured the New Testament accordingly.

The third part deals with how a new universal global community, on the lines Jesus envisaged during his life-time, is now emerging all over the world, setting aside the divisive barricades which the vested interests, including religions, have placed during the last 18 centuries.

These three parts of the book are followed by an interesting, and highly informative, section of Appendices, focusing on world developments, from the ‘Big Bang’ down to the present ‘Knowledge Era’, in a nutshell.

The number of English and Malayalam books and documents, which the author has referred to, for writing this book, is amazing. In all, he has referred to 424 books – 33 books on history, 16 books on religion, 46 books on Bible, 88 books on Church and Christianity, 161 books on India and South Asia, and 80 general books – for writing this thoughtful magnum opus.

During the last 25 years, the author has made a thorough study of the teachings of Jesus, making of the Bible, founding of the Christian religion, and the impact of changing of the name of Jesus as ‘Jesus Christ’, long after his crucifixion.

The principal focus of this book is the vision of Jesus for a peaceful compassionate, secular and unified world, where the humanity enjoys equality, liberty, and distributive justice, and how this vision of Jesus was kept under the wrap, for 16 centuries or more, through various maneuverings by vested interests, and how that vision of Jesus is splendidly re-emerging, world over, in the present era, and how a new “one world” is evolving, on the lines which Jesus envisioned during his life-time.

Jesus-Mary Gatherings

In the book, the author gives features of Jesus’s teachings and his vision of the society. Jesus spelt out much of these through his discourses at various gatherings of ordinary people. His teachings were all-inclusive, universal, and secular ones, which proposed equality, equity and equal distributive justice. Gender equality was a distinctive aspect of them. He urged people to be fearless, in thought and action, and spoke against pomp and extravagance. He was all against priestly overlordship upon people. He freely moved among ordinary people, as one among them, and spoke to them, in short simple sentences, in the local Aramic language, to convey his messages. They vouch that Jesus was above all divides. His teachings have timeless validity. “Love your neighbour, like you love yourself”, is the quintessence of Jesus’s societal concept.

After the crucifixion of Jesus, the neighborhood groups of the friends of Jesus and Mother Mary lived, truly practising these ideals. Their gatherings were highly decentralized, all-inclusive, universal, and secular associations. They were not priest-led organisations. That remained their character for many decades. Unconditional love, compassion and solidarity were the cementing factors of these gatherings, which, all along practised universal values.

Founding of Christianity

Between 2nd and 4th centuries, under the guise of chairpersons in the ceremonial ‘Last Supper’ remembrance, a male-dominated priestly group brought the old Jesus-Mary Friendship gatherings, under their rule. The hierarchy was formed, with its various layers of priesthood as the rulers, and all the members of the erstwhile Jesus-Mary friendship associations as mere followers. Thus created the most hierarchical religious structure in history. As Emperor Constantine legalized the religious teaching and practices of this structure in 313 A.D. and Emperor Theodosius I made it the State religion, the Bishop of Rome became the most High Priest of the new religion and was subsequently titled the Pope. In the place of universality preached and practiced by Jesus, there came the universal commanding power of the Pope and, later, that of the heads of various Individual Churches. While Jesus was accorded posthumously the position of a royal high priest, the priestly hierarchy developed a new “Christology” for the believers, with the help of St.Paul’s crucifixion-centred theology.

Gospels

As Jesus was turned into Jesus Christ, the friends of Jesus and Mary were turned into mere followers of the ruling Christian hierarchy called Church.

In the book, the author has made a thorough study on the components of the Bible, and noted that the Gospels included in it differed widely in their descriptions of Jesus's activities and communication with the people of Palestine. Some of their terminologies appeared subsequent political–theological constructs, under Roman imperial patronage. The author gives numerous examples from the gospels, where convenient changes in the original teachings of Jesus, are made. He makes out the way to identify and sift the teachings of Jesus from the gospels. Since wordings and contents of gospels differed, the author considered only common descriptions found in all gospels, including the non-canonical ones. That provides the true picture of a kind, loving and compassionate Jesus, practising equal sharing of food among all people, and highlighting the equal dignity of all persons.

In the book, the author has scrutinized all four canonical Gospels in the Bible to understand the perceptions of Jesus (not of Jesus Christ) in real life. In pages 198-202, he has given the essence of Jesus's teachings, commonly appearing in all Gospels. In pages 203-219, is given the Gospel of St.Thomas, which remains excluded from the Bible. According to the author, of all Gospels, the most credible Gospel, which gives the most trustworthy presentation of Jesus's sayings is the Gospel of St.Thomas. As a close disciple of Jesus, St. Thomas personally accompanied Jesus and Mary while none of the authors of the canonical Gospels were disciples of Jesus. The author has tested this truthful description of the sayings of Jesus transmitted by St.Thomas, against the partially doctored/theologised versions in other Gospels, like those of Mathew, John, Luke and Mark. Therefore, to understand Jesus, it is imperative to rely more on the Gospel of St.Thomas, and the hypothetical 'Q' Gospel which goes hand in hand with Thomas and is partially retained in Mathew and Luke.

It has also been found that some additions and deletions in Gospels were made to blot out the universalist, secular and egalitarian contents in Jesus's teachings, and to present Jesus as 'Christ'. The harm is evident in the fact that when Jesus said that 'Love your neighbour like you love yourself', some Gospels amputated the words "like you love yourself" from it, which radically changed the spectrum of that universal message. After citing such examples, the author holds that, yet, the new generation understands this misconstruct about Jesus in some Gospels, and views Jesus in his natural form.

Jesus Vs Jesus Christ

The author has uncovered the significant difference in the connotations between 'Jesus' and 'Jesus Christ', and the political objectives behind the creation of a new divisive religious community in the name of 'Christ', which was contrary to the all-inclusive secular societies, which the lives of Jesus and Mary signified.

In the book, he made a critical review of the implied meanings of terms like 'Christ', and 'Christianity', against the touchstone of the original teachings and actions of Jesus, and explains how vested interests had hijacked Jesus, as if 'Christ' is his surname, and how Christianity was made a new religion, the spread of which was made a shared objective of Emperors and the new Clergy. Imperialism and cultural conquests were part and parcel of the objectives of both emperors and the Clergy.

Jesus And Christian Religion

The book reveals who, how, why and when the name of Jesus was suffixed with Christ, and how this new name Jesus Christ, made by the Clergy later, radically changed the popular perception of the real vision and mission of Jesus. It explains how the fundamental premises of Jesus's thoughts and actions were systematically whittled down by the new Clergy, by giving a pivotal position to the fear-emitting Cross and Crucifixion, the addition of a surname 'Christ' to Jesus, and the establishment of a new religion under his

changed name, and its use for conquest, colonization, conversion and exploitation, from the time of Emperor Constantine. Behind the Cross, an imperial mind had grown, and colonialism, cultural domination, social inequalities, gender injustice, and capitalist exploitation are justified. They were all feats contrary to what Jesus stood and worked for.

Clearly, the establishment of a sectarian religion, Christianity, and, thereby, the introduction of divisiveness in society, was not in tune with the vision of Jesus. Similarly dichotomic, with Jesus teachings, was the move of the new Clergy to brand all believers as self-condemned “born sinners”, and to stipulate a priest-led redemption process, of secret ‘Confession’ before a male-priest, to free the sinner from his/her sins. Obviously it gave enormous power to the priest over the believer, and made the latter to dance to the former’s tune.

Pilloried Jesus

The author explains how the new Clergy, which took control of the new Christian religion, pilloried the simplicity and kindness of Jesus, and lionized him by depicting him as ‘King’ and ‘King of Kings’, and by circulating his contrived portraits, adorning robes of a grand priest, wearing an emperor’s crown on his head, and holding a Roman Cross in his hand, befitting an emperor - all just opposite to what Jesus actually was. Indeed, evidence shows that in all circumstances Jesus spoke like an enlightened person of love and compassion. Through his benevolent actions he was promoting a common man’s democratic movement, based on love, compassion, equality, and distributive justice, a precursor to the approach of a modern Welfare State, launched by social democrats of Scandinavia.

Be Fearless

It may be noted that, in all his sermons, Jesus urged his followers to be fearless. Fearlessness was the expected quality of a true follower of Jesus. Against Jesus’s call for fearlessness among his disciples and followers, the new Clergy had positioned fear as the centre-piece of Christianity i.e. the Religion of the hierarchical Church with the worship of ‘Christ’. By converting the Cross, a constant reminder of crucifixion, into the symbol of Christianity, fear was made the life-line of relationship between the believers and the Clergy. The crucifixion-centered Christian theology, crafted by St. Paul, placed believers perpetually under the shadow of fear.

Emperor Constantine’s acceptance of Christianity, was the starting point of the close collaboration between the Roman Empire and the Papacy. The Cross, which was, hitherto, used as the insignia of the Roman Army in its flag was adopted by the Clergy as the emblem of the new Christian religion. (Jesus was crucified on a ‘T’ shaped wooden frame. By making Constantine’s Cross as the emblem of the new religion, the Clergy could instantly instill fear in the minds of fearless followers of Jesus). A notable feature of this book is its critical scrutiny, of the later additions in the Bible to infuse fear in the minds of believers, and, thereby, ensure the commanding position of male-priests.

New Clergy Consolidates

Thus, two centuries after the crucifixion of Jesus, a new Clergy had hijacked and changed his name, associations and followers, to suit its agenda to install itself as the unquestioned master conductors of the new faith. They attached Christian religion to imperial conquests. Even a direct war between the Cross and the Crescent was also fought. All these actions were contrary to what Jesus stood for. Jesus’s vision of indivisiveness of the humanity, a secular egalitarian world society, based on love, compassion, and equal distributive justice, was replaced by sectarianism, imperialism and exploitation, the author records. Similarly, to deny gender equality, the new Clergy chose to side-line Mother Mary and the female disciples in the New Testament, as part of its perpetuation of gender bias, and to make the Church a male-bastion.

The author underlines that, Jesus never thought of creating a divided society based on a religion. He

was a universalist, whose thought approximated the one contained in the 'Advaita' of Indian Upanishads, as the Gospel of Thomas makes clear. Therefore, the world society Jesus envisaged was one of universal equality of all humans, secular spirituality, equal distributive justice, peace, freedom, love, compassion and solidarity. This is what his 'Reign of God' (incorrectly translated as the 'Kingdom of God') means.

Jesus's Vision and the New Generation

For 16 or more centuries, the Clergy of the new religion had succeeded to keep Jesus's ideals and vision out of sight, through various maneuverings and manipulations. But, that phase of contrived eclipse of Jesus's ideals and vision is ending, and the new dawn of Jesus's ideals and vision has already passed, the author says. A new generation of believers, who understands the difference between Jesus and 'Christ' has already come up all over the world. They realize that Jesus was a personification of love, compassion and gender equality, whereas the concept of Christ symbolized a male-centred priestly power, sustained by the fear factor embedded in it. These new friends of Jesus and Mary are active for the realization of Jesus's vision for a peaceful, secular, prosperous, 'One World'. Fearlessness has returned among a large number of believers. That is becoming a widespread feature in the emerging world.

Impact on the Author

Clearly, an off-shoot of this deep study on the vision of Jesus is its impact on the author himself. Through his dedication and concentration on this great futuristic study, he seems to have acquired an uncommon quality of making intuitive, but correct, forecast of unfolding developments in the world, with the farsightedness of a philosopher and visionary, who has attained a capacity to rise to a higher plane, to dispassionately observe developments down below, at the macro-level. As a result, he could see the germination of 'One World' in the teachings of Jesus, and its springs emanating from the 'Advaita' (non-dualist) philosophy in the Indian Upanishads. Similarly, he has recognized the eternally valid message of a saintly personality like Sree Narayana Guru, for the establishment of secular world society of freedom, and equality, similar to the one which Jesus envisaged 2000 years ago.

With the vision of an enlightened person, Mr. Jose, in this book, has focused on how a new 'One World', on the lines of Jesus's vision, is emerging, and how new forces, and developments, are leading the humanity in that direction. He has underlined, in the book, that Jesus's vision was above all divides in society, including religious divides.

Emerging One World

The author underlines that people all over the world have realized the distortions and mutilations the Clergy had done to the teachings and doings of Jesus and Mary, which the present generation widely disapprove, as evidenced by the increasing thin attendance of the youth at Sunday Masses of the Church, all over the world. At the same time, sensible observers see a systematic emergence of a new world society, where people would live like a large peaceful family, without any sectarian prejudice based on caste, colour and religion. They seek peaceful, undivided and sharing societies, which Jesus and Mary signified in the beginning of the 1st century A.D. Such a new society is now taking shape at a macro-level in the world. Global communication revolution of the 21st century, and increasing people-to-people connectivity across Continents, are quickening that process.

From the time of Constantine, emperors, kings and priests were viewed as embodiments of power and influence. But, what happens now is very different. While the Rome-based 'Christian' stream recedes, the love and compassion based Jesus stream is growing and advancing, along with 'Advaita' and secular spirituality which Jesus espoused in his teachings and actions. The present Knowledge Era presents a positive environment for the world, to shift from a religion-based culture to a secular culture, or a trans-religious culture as the author puts it, which Jesus envisaged, the author surmises.

In the new situation, the misrepresentation of Jesus's teaching and actions in the 'Christian theology' of St. Paul is fading out, and a new young generation, world over, has come up, to establish a world society based on universality and non-sectarianism, which Jesus envisioned. The humanity is moving towards unity and oneness, based on cooperation and consensus. As a result, the unfolding new era is not one of wars and conflicts, but of peace, equality and social justice, the author says. He envisions that, despite some conflicts and confrontations on the surface, there is a strong growing current for unity, love, compassion, equality and distributive justice in the inner core of humanity. The systematic growth of Welfare State Systems everywhere indicates the growth of that core and the evolution of a new world of peace, friendship, equality, and solidarity, akin to the society which Jesus had envisaged.

Author's Conclusions

Undoubtedly, Jesus and Mary symbolized love, compassion, equality, equity, and fearlessness. That fact could not be drowned by steps like suffixing Jesus's name with Christ, nor by hijacking their neighbourhood friendship associations to create a new Christian religion, with certain imperialist features. Now, as the author observes, after 16 centuries, Jesus gets restored from the contrived Jesus Christ nomenclature, along with his original messages of peace, love, compassion, equality, and equal justice, away from the fear-radiating terms akin to Cross and Christ. Now, people increasingly use the name 'Jesus' only, than Jesus Christ, as they are starting to understand the difference between the two names. That indicates a massive return to Jesus and to the ideals he stood for during his life-time. Resentments against clericalism in the Church, and against the use of unintelligible clichés by priests at congregations to over-awe the believers present, have also grown, as indicated by the absenteeism of young believers. They give little importance to the role of the priest.

A global fraternity network is emerging. An all-embracing human solidarity is its framework. The author perceives that, in tune with the objectives of Jesus, the world socio-political system is moving towards social democracy and Welfare State. That is the new unfolding world system.

The author sees the ongoing emergence of a new globally minded, and globally connected generation, with a secularist spiritual outlook and approach, transcending cultural and geographical divides, and widening the spectrum of unity in diversity in the world. That is the present direction of the humanity. He points out that despite shallow confrontations and conflicts here and there in the world, there is an onward march of the humanity towards the phenomenon of 'One World'. Nevertheless, the overall focus is on the ongoing centennial and millennial advancement towards 'One World', based on compassion and cooperation. He asserts that, ultimately, peace, not war, will prevail in the world. The author is emphatic that the era of wars and conquests is getting over, giving way to a new era of peace, love, compassion and solidarity. And, the new society will be characterized by gender equality, secular spirituality and social democracy.

A Distinct Feature

A distinct feature of this book is the enormous depth of the vision which it provides. In it, the author gives a big philosophy in simple language. Through this book, he urges the humanity to rise above all divides in the world, and peacefully unite with the spirit of love and compassion, and impart distributive justice to one-and-all in the human family. The vision contained in this book makes the author, Jose T Thomas, a philosopher, endowed with an exceptional insight. The far-sightedness he has shown in it, has made him a rare genius of our times, who deserves world-wide attention. He has clearly seen the ongoing movement, of the humanity towards a common future. A 'One World' human family, welded with all-embracing love, compassion, cooperation, equality, equal justice and solidarity, is in the making at a planetary level. After 16 centuries of suppression, the principles which Jesus and Mary preached and practised in their lifetime, have come back to the fore, in the form of an emerging 'One World' community of the humanity. The new generation increasingly realizes that divisiveness, wars, and conflicts, and perpetuation of inequality, which

the Clergy supported all along in the past, is not the way for the future wellbeing of the humanity. Peace, co-operation and togetherness, which Jesus envisaged in the Ist century A.D, is the way. Significantly, the author finds a commonality between thoughts and actions of Jesus, and the core of the large spectrum of thought cherished in India's 'Advaita' philosophy - the indivisibility and oneness of the humanity. Therefore, Jesus's perception was universal, encompassing all cultures and continents. Under it, all are equals. The Gospel of St.Thomas conveys the message that Jesus's teachings approximated the core content of '*Advaita*', which is explicit in his talks, at various locations in Palestine, as an enlightened Asian Guru.

The validity of the teachings of Jesus is timeless. "Love your neighbour like you love yourself", conveys the crux of his message. In tune with that, after 2000 years, love, compassion cooperation, equality, equal justice and indivisibility of the human family are getting re-established. A systematic transformation in that direction is now taking place, the author underlines. It would produce secular societies, and institutions. From a modern ideological angle, Jesus stands tall, in the history of human civilization, as a democratic socialist.

In a way, this book is partially a book of revelation, which contains the expressions of a philosopher. It is the creation of a great, fertile mind of a noble person, who has imbibed, to a great extent, Jesus's teachings in his personal life. His valid observations in it have sprouted from deep thought and analysis, and therefore, are bound to remain valid for a long time to come. This is an influential, thought provoking, book, which must be read by people all over the world, for which the author should expeditiously bring out an English edition of this Malayalam book.

Dependence on PDS for Maintaining Minimum Subsistence Levels During the Lockdown Related to the Outbreak of Covid 19 Pandemic - A Case Study of Casual Labourers in Kerala

**Shibu A.S.
& Anilkumar P.**

Consumption, the use of final goods and services by households, is not only a means to satisfy human wants but also a necessary action for existence. The quantity and quality of consumption of deprived socio-economic groups faced challenges during the lockdown related to the covid 19 pandemic. Casual labourers around the world are among the badly affected and the casual labourers in Kerala are not an exception. In order to ensure minimum levels of consumption, Kerala government increased the quantity of food grains distributed through the PDS and also supplemented other pulses and food items including edible oil, which helped the labourers who lost their income and employment during the lockdown and covid-19 pandemic period.

Introduction

Casual labour is a person who is employed on a temporary, rather than a permanent or regular basis. Casual labour force of a country is different from other categories of labour force. They are the most unorganised and dispersed stratum of the country's labour force. They are usually the most unskilled category of workers and hence have no bargaining power to exercise in the labour market. As a result of their low bargaining capacity, their wages are found to be the lowest among the working category. They are comparatively an easily available factor of production and most of the countries do not face the problem of scarcity of casual labour, except a few.

The present study analyses dependency of casual labourers in Kerala on PDS for meeting their food consumption with special reference to Kollam district. The Public Distribution System (PDS) evolved as a system of management of scarcity through distribution of food grains at affordable prices. Over the years, PDS has become an important part of Government's policy for management of food economy in the country. PDS is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and the State/UT Governments. The factors identified for determining dependency on PDS are the social status of households, the income level and employment diversification.

The Kerala government turned the PDS into a food grain assurance mechanism to ensure not only staple food grains viz wheat and rice but also pulses and edible oil through the popular "Food Kit" during the lockdown and in the pandemic period thereafter. This assurance is a great relief to those deprived sections of the society as they struggle to meet food expenses when they lose their earnings during the lockdown. Infact, this also helped the continuation of rule by the LDF government in Kerala. In this paper, we try to explore how the distribution of food items and relief kit through the ration retails shops helped the casual laborers to cope with the difficulties faced in finding employment during the period of the pandemic.

The study aims to analyse how the casual labourers maintained their status of food consumption during lockdown and thereafter with the assistance of PDS. The study also analyses the role of the state government in determining the level of adequacy and accessibility of food articles among the casual labourers and to examine the role of PDS in assuring food articles to the casual labourers in Kollam district.

Methodology

The study uses both primary and secondary data to analyse various objectives. The secondary sources include particularly information gathered from various NSSO household consumption expenditure reports. These are used for identifying the overall consumption standards of casual labourers at the national and the state level. The assurance of the consumption status of casual labourers and other related issues are studied with the help of primary data collected from the selected district of Kerala. The district selected for the purpose of study is Kollam. By using the criteria of precision and confidence level, 450 sample casual labourers are selected. A structured interview schedule was used for eliciting information about the consumption of food grains and related factors.

In this article, we attempt to analyse the dependency on the basis of dependency index. Before preparing the dependency index, scores representing dependency are prepared. The dependency scores are then converted into a normative index using the following formula -

$$\frac{(\text{Actual value} - \text{Minimum value})}{(\text{Maximum value} - \text{Minimum value})}$$

The values of the index thus calculated lie between the minimum of zero and the maximum of one.

Review

Numerous studies on consumption and consumption pattern have been undertaken in India and in various parts of the world. Some of these studies are purely theoretical and some others are empirical. Empirical studies in India are mostly based on NSSO data and concentrate on broad commodity groups like cereals, pulses, edible oils, other food and non-food items. No attempt has been made to analyse the food consumption of casual labourers in Kerala and how PDS influences total consumption.

A large number of theoretical propositions or hypotheses on consumption have been put to empirical evaluation over the decades. The important theoretical propositions put to empirical verification are the Keynesian consumption hypothesis (1936), Duesenberry's relative income hypothesis (1949), Friedman's permanent income hypothesis (1957), Modigliani's life cycle hypothesis (1954), Random Walk hypothesis of Hall (1978), the normal income hypothesis of Farrel, the growth hypothesis of Modigliani and Brumberg (1954). In addition to the empirical verification of the above hypotheses, a large number of case studies on consumption expenditure have been conducted at the global, national and local level. The inferences from these empirical surveys provide valid insights for policy making.

The inferences such as insufficiency of food consumption of farm women (Chanderkanta Vats, 2014), the increasing demand for food along with growth and its insights into developing the agriculture sector (HuseyinÖzer, 2003) are highly useful for understanding the nature of consumption expenditure of the casual labourers. A study by A K Rejula Devi (2001) on the issue of food insecurity among India's poor and landless agricultural labourers reveals the stark food insecurity, particularly among female-headed households.

The discourse on the public distribution system (PDS) in India has been mostly centred on its ability (or its lack thereof) to provide basic food security to the poor in terms of calories, by providing carbohydrate-rich cereals at a cheap price. There are studies that provide evidence of its effectiveness in augmenting the calorie intakes of the poor beneficiaries (Kumar and Ayyappan 2014). The above empirical reviews highlight that the consumption expenditure of marginalised groups such as casual labourers is determined not only by income, but also by various other socio-economic factors including employment diversification.

Discussion

Consumption status of casual labourers: National and state level comparison

Table 1 shows the absolute amount of mean monthly per capita consumption expenditure (MPCE)

among various occupational groups in rural and urban areas, both at the national level and the state level of Kerala. For all Rounds of NSSO consumption surveys, the absolute MPCE of rural areas is lower than that of urban areas. In the latest 68th Round, while the All India average MPCE for rural areas is only Rs 1430, the urban MPCE is Rs 2630. Among all occupational groups in urban areas, the MPCE is lowest for casual labourers in all Rounds of survey. Compared to the average MPCE of Rs.2630 in urban India for all occupational groups in the 68th Round, the MPCE of casual labourers is only Rs.1514.

Table 1 : Average MPCE (Rs.) by household type during various Round of NSSO

Average MPCE (Rs.) by household type India and Kerala (55 th to 68 th round)									
	Type of HH	55th round (1999-00)		61st round (2004-05)		66 th round (2009-10)		68th round (2011-12)	
		India	Kerala	India	Kerala	India	Kerala	India	Kerala
Rural	Self-employed in non - agriculture	502	800	604.14	1134.28	1111	1896	1509	2932
	Agri. Labour	386	570	415.65	690.77	828	1402	1159	1933
	Other labour	483	656	519.81	792.81	968	1454	1238	2081
	Self-employed in agri.	520	925	583.81	1296.53	1102	2407	1436	2989
	Reg. wage/ salary earning							2002	3029
	Other	652	1016	818.19	1307.72	1557	2287	1893	3569
	All types	486	766	558.78	1013.15	1054	1835	1430	2669
Urban	Self-employed	813	950	982.35	1455.9	1806	2462	2415	3798
	Regular wage salary earning	981	1129	1212.66	1513.65	2326	3068	3062	3815
	Casual labour.	541	653	579.63	830.91	1090	1477	1514	2076
	Other	1031	1258	1444.97	1430.2	3012	3143	3734	4309
	All types	855	932	1052.36	1290.89	1984	2413	2630	3408

Source: NSSO Households consumption expenditure survey (various reports)

The status of consumption expenditure of various occupational groups in Kerala is not different from the All-India level. The MPCE of casual labourers is the lowest among all occupational groups in all the NSSO Rounds in Kerala. While, the average MPCE of rural households is Rs 3438 in 68th Round of NSSO in Kerala, the MPCE of casual labourers is only Rs.2076. The major difference in MPCE of All India and of Kerala state is that the average MPCE of Kerala is much higher than the national average. It is applicable for both rural and urban areas. Another significant feature is that the inter occupational difference in consumption at the All-India level is higher than the state level of Kerala. These factors highlight the impact of growing consumerism in the state of Kerala and the growing egalitarian and social reforms.

Thus, Table 1 highlights that the casual labourers are the worst hit occupational group with respect to consumption expenditure at both national and state level. This calls for a deeper analysis on the consumption pattern of this vulnerable group in the context of covid-19 pandemic.

Out of the 450 sample households selected for the study, 429 households possess ration cards. Of this,

35 (7.77%) households are included in the AAY (Andhyodaya Anna Yojana) scheme, which guarantees 25 kg of food grains per month free of cost. This ensures that there is an adequate supply of cereals. It is noted that 208 (46.22%) households are in the priority category and 168 (37.33%) households are in the non-priority subsidy category which guarantees food grains at a subsidised price. Only 18 (4.00%) households are in the non-priority category which receives food grains at a lower price compared to the open market. The households not only possess ration cards but also avail the subsidised food grains for meeting their consumption needs. Out of the total households surveyed, 95 percent of them avail the subsidised food grains for maintaining consumption. This underlines the importance of PDS and the need for proper maintenance of the system.

Now we will examine the distribution of ration cards on the basis of social categories. In Kerala, recently the Central and State Governments initiated certain steps for weeding out non-eligible subsidy holders and to remove higher income groups from the subsidised scheme. As a result of this, it is possible to ensure that subsidised food grains reach only eligible households.

Table 2 : Type of ration card and classification of household income

Type of ration card	Classification of household income			Total
	SC/ST	OBC	General	
NIL (0)	2.60%	4.04%	5.20%	4.66%
AAY	9.56%	7.36%	8.03%	7.77%
Priority	49.64%	46.20%	44.28%	46.22%
Non priority subsidy	38.20%	36.10%	35.24%	37.33%
Non priority	0.00%	6.30%	7.25%	4.00%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Chi square value 43.664, df12, sig 0.12				

Source: Primary data

Table 2 shows that 7.77 percent of sample households belong to AAY or Priority category and more than 90 percent of casual labourers, irrespective of social groups, are in the subsidy/priority or AAY category. Chi square value for this distribution is 43.66 at 12 degrees of freedom and level of significance 0.12 indicating that there is no significant difference between different social groups with regard to the type of ration cards. The survey also indicates that 91 percent of all households regularly visit retail ration shops for buying food grains. This indicates the extent of food security assured by the PDS system and support provided by the government through it.

The pattern of food consumption expenditure of sample households: A social group analysis

The level and pattern of food expenditure are the important determinants affecting the standard of living of people, particularly the marginalised section like casual labourers. In the following analysis, an attempt for a detailed investigation of the pattern of food expenditure incurred by the sample households is made. In addition to cereal items, people consume a variety of food items including fish, meat, vegetables, edible oils, beverages, fruits, milk etc. Table 3 summarises the pattern of food consumption expenditure of sample households categorised by social groups. The average monthly expenditure incurred on major food items are given in the Table. The monthly average food expenditure for the entire sample population is Rs 5303.11. The average expenditure of SC/ST, OBC and General community are Rs 4893.54, Rs 5371.00 and Rs 5312.13 respectively. Compared to OBC and General community, the average food expenditure of SC/ST is significantly lower. However, there is not much difference in spending between OBC and general community. As shown by the significance of F-ratio test, the difference in monthly average food expenditure among the social groups is not statistically very significant. This indicates that irrespective of social groups, casual labourers in Kerala have similar consumption expenditure.

The pattern of food expenditure is not uniform across social groups. In general, the largest percentage of food expenditure is incurred on items such as fish, milk and spices. The percentage share of expenditure (Table 3) on fish, milk and spices are 14.84, 11.00 and 8.53 respectively. Households are also spending a significant amount on fast foods and beverages including intoxicated drinks. Nearly 9.06 percent of spending are incurred on intoxicated beverages. The average monthly expenditure on all individual food items by SC/ST community is lower than that of OBC and General community. The value of F-ratio and its significance shows the magnitude of variation among the social groups. Except on items such as vegetables, milk, sugar, spices, intoxicated beverages, fast foods and other food items, the difference in spending on food items among social groups are statistically very significant.

Table 3 : Average monthly food consumption expenditure by social groups (Rs)

Food articles consumed	Social Groups				ANOVA results		
	SC/ST	OBC	General	Total	F- ratio	DF	Sig.
Cereal	330.19 (6.75)	402.35 (7.49)	371.16 (6.99)	373.79 (7.05)	3.025	2 and 447	0.05
Meat	285.30 (5.83)	355.68 (6.62)	302.56 (5.70)	319.25 (6.02)	5.382	2 and 447	0.005
Fish	721.08 (14.74)	818.43 (15.24)	790.59 (14.88)	786.86 (14.84)	3.375	2 and 447	0.035
Edible oil	186.23 (3.81)	211.40 (3.94)	205.65 (3.87)	198.78 (3.75)	3.639	2 and 447	0.027
Vegetables	325.25 (6.65)	362.69 (6.75)	346.58 (6.52)	365.85 (6.90)	2.846	2 and 447	0.059
Fruits	159.23 (3.25)	196.35 (3.66)	191.25 (3.60)	189.23 (3.57)	9.802	2 and 447	0.001
Pulses	294.65 (6.02)	310.25 (5.78)	315.25 (315.25)	320.25 (6.04)	5.977	2 and 447	0.003
Tea/coffee	220.00 (4.50)	225.36 (4.20)	230.15 (4.33)	235.26 (4.44)	3.280	2 and 447	0.039
Milk	545.49 (11.15)	597.46 (11.12)	586.25 (11.04)	583.26 (11.00)	2.547	2 and 447	0.079
Sugar	59.33 (1.21)	63.86 (1.19)	62.06 (1.17)	62.14 (1.18)	1.416	2 and 447	0.244
Spices	438.79 (8.97)	458.11 (8.54)	461.76 (8.68)	452.36 (8.53)	1.504	2 and 447	0.223
Bakery sweets	356.25 (7.28)	375.85 (7.00)	337.56 (6.35)	356.59 (6.72)	4.15	2 and 447	0.016
Beverages intoxicated	442.26 (9.04)	433.25 (8.07)	562.25 (10.58)	480.59 (9.06)	1.87	2 and 447	0.155
Other food items	529.56 (10.82)	559.56 (10.42)	549.28 (10.34)	578.59 (10.91)	0.820	2 and 447	0.41
Amount of total food expenditure	4893.54	5371.0 0	5312.13	5303.1 1	5.02	2 and 447	0.007

Note: Figures in the brackets show the percentage to total

Source: primary data

It is also inferred that a close link exists between the level of food expenditure and its distribution among various items. Among the social groups, the highest average expenditure is incurred by OBC. The examination of the expenditure pattern of OBC highlights that their percentage expenditure on meat, fish and fruits are higher than that of other communities. However, the percentage expenditure incurred on intoxicating beverages by OBC is lower as compared to SC/ST and General Community. Thus, the group with the highest expenditure tries to optimise their expenditure plan in such a way that it yields maximum benefits to them in terms of calorie and nutrient values.

Public distribution system (PDS) and consumption of sample households

Kerala has a well-established, well-functioning PDS. The total number of ration cards issued in the state is 86.30 lakhs and out of this, 5.89 lakhs are under Antyodaya Anna Yojana, 31.01 lakhs are Priority Households (PHH) and 36.90 lakh cards are under National Food Security Act (NFSA). This well-equipped PDS ensures adequacy and affordability of consumption articles, especially among the low-income groups.

Dependence on government and private outlets for food items

Government outlets including the ration retail shops and outlets run by Supply-co and Consumer Fed provide a supporting hand to the low-income sections of the society. A large section of casual labourers depends on government outlets for their food items. Table 6.8 provides information about the dependence of households on PDS and private outlets.

Table 4 : Dependence of sample households on public (PDS) and private outlet for food items

Food item	Public outlets (PDS)			Private outlets		
	No dependence	Partial dependence	Full dependence	No dependence	Partial dependence	Full dependence
Cereal	39 (8.70)	241 (53.47)	171 (38.00)	171 (38.00)	241 (53.47)	39 (8.70)
Edible Oil	39 (8.70)	336 (74.67)	75 (16.63)	75 (16.63)	336 (74.67)	39 (8.70)
Pulses	39 (8.70)	343 (76.22)	68 (2.9)	68 (2.9)	343 (76.22)	39 (8.70)
Tea	39 (8.70)	358 (79.55)	53 (1.3)	53 (1.3)	358 (79.55)	39 (8.70)
Sugar	39 (8.70)	362 (80.44)	49 (4)	49 (4)	362 (80.44)	39 (8.70)
Spices	39 (8.70)	374 (83.11)	37 (8.22)	37 (8.22)	374 (83.11)	39 (8.70)

Note: Figures in the bracket show the percentage, Source: Primary data

Table 6.8 shows that regarding the 6 food items examined, the dependence of sample households on PDS outlet is higher. In the case of cereals, 38 percent (171) households depend fully on PDS for meeting consumption. PDS outlets are not capable of fulfilling all the requirements of sample households. Even after the supply of Food Kits through the PDS, there exists a need for purchase from the private outlets as there are certain items like edible oil, pulses, tea, sugar and spices which are not readily available as per requirement of the household. However, it should be noted that more than 90 percent of the households make use of the food kit and this was welcomed as a great relief by the casual labourers.

A good number of households depend partially on government outlets for cereals, edible oil, vegetables,

pulses, sugar, and spices. This indicates that as the sample respondents are economically poor, they are not in a position to rely on the private sector completely for food items. They mostly depend on government outlets to meet the basic necessities of life such as cereals, edible oil, etc.

Dependency Index on public and private outlet for food items among social groups

An index of dependency of people on public and private outlets for various food items are prepared. The items considered here are those items that are supplied by both public and private outlets. The items which are considered for preparing the dependency status are cereals, edible oil, pulses, tea, sugar, and spices. The options for dependence are (stated as) fully, partially and nil and these options are assigned values of two, one and zero respectively. The aggregation of values of these options for various items for public and private outlets gives a dependence score for these outlets. These scores are converted into a normative scale ranging between zero and one as done previously for preparing a similar index. The mean score and mean index values show the absolute and relative dependence respectively on public and private outlets by the people. Table 6.9 shows the estimated mean score and mean indices for public and private outlet dependency among various social groups.

The mean score of dependency on the public outlet is 1.21, while it is 0.79 for the private outlet. It indicates that sample households are relying more on public outlet for purchasing the food items. However, the dependence status of different social groups on the public and private outlet are not uniformly distributed. Among the social groups, the dependence of SC/ST households on the public outlet is greater than that of OBC and General Category households. At the same time, the absolute dependence of SC/ST households on the private outlet is lower than that of other communities. The absolute status of various social groups reflects on the relative status in terms of the mean index value. The mean index value of dependence on the public outlet is greater for SC/ST households followed by OBC and General Communities. In the case of the private outlet dependency index, it is highest among the General community followed by OBC and SC/ST communities. This dependency status of various social groups must be evaluated in relation with their economic status. Already, it is seen that non-SC/ST households have the highest monthly income and highest average food expenditure. As non-SC/ST households have higher monthly income, their dependence on the public outlet is comparatively lower; but at the same time, their dependence on the private outlet is relatively higher. Thus, it is found that while the income status has a negative relationship with public outlet dependence, it has a positive association with private sector dependence. It again emphasises the need for improving the public outlet infrastructure for safeguarding and ensuring the food security of the marginalised sections in the society. Though there is some difference in public and private outlet dependence index among social groups, this difference is not statistically significant as revealed from the value of F-ratio as given in the Table.

Table 5 : Dependency on public and private outlets by sample households for food on the basis of social groups

Social Groups	Dependency on public outlet		Dependency on private outlet	
	Mean score	Mean index	Mean score	Mean index
SC/ST	1.2375	0.6057	0.7625	0.3943
OBC	1.2148	0.5912	0.7852	0.4088
General	1.1948	0.5785	0.8052	0.4215
Total	1.2092	0.5877	0.7908	0.4123
ANOVA results of index of dependency on public outlet for food items vs Social groups F ratio 1.351, DF 2 and 447, sig 0.223				
ANOVA results of index of dependency on private outlet for food items vs Social groups F ratio 1.51, DF 2 and 447, sig 0.227				

Source: Primary data

The inferences contained in Table 5 shows that the value of the dependency index on public outlet for food items among social groups such as SC/ST, OBC, and General category households is not statistically significant. This is shown by the less significant value of F-statistics derived from the ANOVA results. Thus, it can be inferred that there is not much difference in casual labourers belonging to various social groups with respect to their dependency on the public outlet.

Kerala’s Food Kit Distribution

The Kerala government started distribution of food kits that contain essential grocery items needed by a family for a month in April 2020. According to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, “the food kits will be distributed to all ration card holders in the state, that is over 87 lakh families”. The food kits distribution is being carried out through the ration shops spread across the state. The food kit contains all basic essential groceries needed for a family for a month. The food kit with 17 essentials contains 1 kg sugar; 250 g tea powder; 1 kg salt; 1 kg green gram; 1 kg Bengal Gram; 250 g dal; half litre coconut oil; 1 litre sunflower oil; 2 kg whole-wheat flour; 1 kg rava; 1 kg black gram; 100 g chilly powder; 100 g coriander powder; 100 g turmeric powder; 100 g fenugreek; 100 g mustard; and soap (two nos).

As the food kit consists of items which are most commonly used by the households, it reduced the food consumption expenditure of the lower income class. In fact, it turned to be a great relief for those households which do not have members in the organised sector. Casual labourers who lost their employment due to lockdown and covid-19 pandemic are one of the major beneficiaries of the scheme. Table 6 shows the percentage of sample households benefited from the scheme. It is clear from the table that 94.6 percent of the households, ie., the sample households who own a ration card, received the benefit of the scheme.

Table 6 : Percentage of households received food kit and other foods grains through PDS

Social Groups	Dependency on public outlet	
	Number	Percentage
SC/ST	83 (81)	97.59
OBC	147 (138)	93.87
General	220 (208)	94.09
Total	450(426)	94.66

Source Primary data

Information from the civil supplies department and at grass root level (ration retail shops) reveals that free food grain kits were distributed to all ration card holders irrespective of type of cards. It may also be noted that all the beneficiaries received the food grain kit distributed through the PDS. Infact, this was treated as a helping hand by the casual labourers and those labour households who lost their employment due to the lockdown and cannot find an alternative source of income. The distribution of food kit seems to be a great relief to the casual labourers as it ensures the necessary minimum consumption. The state government continued the distribution of food kit even after the first lock down in April 2020, irrespective of the type of ration cards, as a popular scheme.

Conclusion

Analysis of empirical data reveals that food kit distribution is vital for maintaining the necessary minimum consumption by the households falling under the poverty line. Covid-19 pandemic and related lock downs has badly affected the poorer sections and the workers in the unorganised sectors. Casual labourers, agricultural labourers, workers in the unorganised sector and self-employed are in the category of people who lost their employment and income. These labourers who live on a daily income cannot survive without government assistance. Government intervention to ensure minimum food grains to the low-income groups is a laudable model in times when disposable income is zero or very low.

References

1. Khera, Reetika (2011a): 'Trends in Diversion of Grain from the Public Distribution System', *Economic & Political Weekly*, 46(21).
2. – (2011b): 'Revival of the Public Distribution System: Evidence and Explanations', *Economic & Political Weekly*, 46(44)
3. Puri, Raghav (2012): 'Reforming the Public Distribution System: Lessons from Chhattisgarh', *Economic & Political Weekly*, 47(5).
4. Puri, Raghav (2012): 'Reforming the Public Distribution System: Lessons from Chhattisgarh', *Economic & Political Weekly*, 47(5).
5. Carriker, Gordon L., Featherstone, Allen M. and Schroeder, Ted C. (1993) *Farm Household Consumption Patterns, Reviewed work(s)*, Review of Agricultural Economics, Vol. 15, No. 1, Oxford University Press on behalf of Agricultural & Applied Economics Association, pp. 63-73.
6. Duesenberry, James. (1949): *Income, Saving, and The Theory of Consumer Behavior*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, p.3.
7. Eleanor E. Wein, Jean Henderson Sabry and Frederick T. Evers. (1991): *Food Consumption Patterns and Use of Country Foods by Native Canadians near Wood Buffalo National Park Canada*, Reviewed work(s): Arctic, Vol. 44, No. 3 (Sep., 1991), pp. 196-205 Published by: Arctic Institute of North America.
8. Friedman, Milton. (1957): *A Theory of the Consumption Function*, National Bureau of Economic Research, General Series no. 63, Princeton: Univ. Press, p. 3.
9. Geetha, K.T. (2011): 'Consumption Patterns Among Selected rural and Urban Households in Coimbatore City', *Zenith, International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* Vol.1 Issue 2, June 2011, ISSN 2231 5780.
10. Geetha, K.T. and Malarvizhi. V. (2016): 'Consumption Pattern among the Selected Urban Slum Households in Coimbatore City', *IJRESS, International Journal of Research in Economics and Social Sciences*, Volume 6, Issue 1 (January, 2016) (ISSN 2249-7382).
11. Hall, Robert E. (1978) : 'Stochastic Implications of the Life Cycle-Permanent Income Hypothesis: Theory and Evidence', *Journal of Political Economy* Vol.86, No.6, 971-987.
12. Houthakker, H. S. (1957): 'An international comparison of household expenditure patterns', *Econometrica*, pp. 532-551.
13. Houthakker, H S. (1958): 'The Permanent Income Hypothesis, A Review Article', *American Economic Review*, XLVIII (June, 1958), p. 396.
14. HuseyinÖzer (2003): 'Consumption Patterns of Major Food Items in Turkey', *The Pakistan Development Review*, Vol.42, No.1, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Islamabad, pp 20-40.
15. Keynes, John Maynard. (1936): *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, Harcourt Brace and Co., New York, pp 96-7.
16. Kuznets Simon. (1942): 'Uses of National Income in Peace and War', New York: National Bureau of Economic Research, *Occasional Paper no. 6*.
17. Lluch, C. (1973): 'The extended linear expenditure system', *European Economic Review*, 4. pp 21 - 32.
18. Lluch, C., Powell, A. A. (1975): 'International comparison of expenditure and patterns', *European Economic- Review*, July, Vol. 6. No. 3.

19. Modigliani, Franco and Richard Brumberg. (1954): *Utility Analysis and The Consumption Function: An Interpretation of Cross-Section Data, Post Keynesian Economics*, ed. by Kenneth K. Kurihara, New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, p. 388.
20. NSSO (2012): *Household consumer Expenditure Across Socio-economic Groups*, NSS 66th round, (july 2009-june 2010), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Govt of India.
21. NSSO (2015): *Household Consumer Expenditure Across Socio-economic Groups*, NSS 68th round, (2011-june 2012), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Govt of India.
22. Pollak, R. A. (1970): 'Habit formation and dynamic demand functions', *Journal of Political Economy*, 78 (4-1) pp 754-63.
23. Rajuladevi, A.K. (2001): 'Food Poverty and Consumption among Landless Labour Households', Reviewed work(s), *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 36, No. 28 (Jul. 14-20, 2001), pp. 2656-2664.
24. Reddy, A. Amarender (2004): 'Consumption Pattern, Trade and Production Potential of Pulses', Reviewed work(s): *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.39, No. 44 (Oct. 30 - Nov. 5, 2004), pp. 4854-4860.
25. Shahabuddin, Quazi (1989): *Pattern of Food Consumption in Bangladesh : An Analysis of Household Expenditure*, The Bangladesh Development Studies, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, Vol. 17, No. 3, pp. 101-117.
26. Shenggen Fan, Eric J. Wailes and Gail L. (1995): 'House hold Demand in Rural China: A Two-Stage LES-AIDS Model', *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, Vol. 77, No. 1 (Feb., 1995), pp. 54-62.
27. Singh, Balvir. (1973): 'The Effects of Household Composition on Its Consumption Pattern, Reviewed work(s): Sankhyâ': *The Indian Journal of Statistics*, Series B (1960-2002), Vol. 35, No. 2 (Jun.,1973), pp. 207-226.
28. Vats, Chanderkanta. (2004) : *Food Consumption Pattern and Nutritional Health Status of Hill Farm Women*, KrishiVigyan, Himachal Pradesh: KrishiVigyan Kendra, Kullu at Bajaura, 3(1) : 33-36 DOI: 10.5958/2349-4433.2014.01245.8.
29. Tyagi, D S (1990): *Managing India's FoodEconomy: Problems and Alternatives*, SagePublications, New Delhi
30. Parikh, K S (1994): 'Who Gets How Much fromPDS: How Effectively Does it Reach the Poor?' *Sarvekshana*, 17(3), January-March
31. <https://www.collinsdictionary.com> > dictionary
32. Ministry of food and public distribution, Govt of India, <https://dfpd.gov.in>
33. Civil Supplies Department, Govt of Kerala, <https://civilsupplieskerala.gov.in>
34. *Indian Express daily*, April 11 2020

An Analysis of Emerging Geographies of Poverty

Thomas Mathew

In this paper an attempt has been made to provide a description of the poverty scenario from multiple angles, throwing light on the real plight of the people, to provide suggestions for the right kind of policies. The true facets of poverty situation cannot be discerned from a simple \$ 1.9 poverty line, so a more vivid description of the real problems of poverty is needed. The multi-dimensional perspective suggests approaching poverty as an overlapping of deprivations; unshackling the unfreedoms rather than deprivation in income or consumption. The first part of the paper studies the trends, patterns and geographical spread of absolute poverty from 90 onwards; the second part enquires into the emerging multidimensional nature and spread of poverty across the globe, with particular emphasis on the shifting geographies of poverty in the sub-Saharan, Latin American and Asian countries.

Poverty is an extremely complex, multifaceted societal issue - it is not simply about having no money to pay for food, shelter or clothing. It encompasses a situation which denies a citizen access to health care, transportation, education, utilities, land, justice; it also includes discrimination, marginalization, and social exclusion, lack of voice and opportunities, poor work productivity, crime escalation, erosion of social cohesion, all of which lead to economic, political and social instability. Until the 18th century, there was little distinction between developed and developing countries, as most of the population of the world were living under poverty (Ravallion, 2016), (How Do We Know the History of Extreme Poverty? - Our World in Data, n.d.), estimated at 84% in 1820 (Ravallion, 2016). The present day developed areas had an advantage and started to move in a fast trajectory. The problem of poverty began to be treated on modern lines, when Charles Booth in 1899ⁱ prepared a social map of London town (Ravallion, 2013). The onset of industrial revolution led to a significant reduction of poverty in the western world but the civil rights movements and the sociological studiesⁱⁱ on the inner-city poverty (Ravallion, 2016) have shattered the hitherto accepted understanding that poverty has found its solution in the 'golden age of capitalism'. With the rise of independent nations during the post-world war, poverty alleviation became one of the prime objectives of the developing countries. Green revolution (Mehta, 2018), international migration, (López-Videla & Machuca, 2014) industrialisation, (Alvarez et al., 2015) institutional reforms, (Hasan et al., 2006) spread of education and trade have tremendously improved the conditions of the developing world (Hasan et al., 2006). Meanwhile, the emergence of the World Bank during the 70s as the crusader of poverty has changed the western world's perception on poverty, motivating researchers and policy makers to conduct extensive studies on the subject. Thus, the global poverty level has been reduced to 9.1% in 2015 (Matthews, 2019) but poverty still persists both in the western and non-western world, though it differs in its nature, depth and sources. The trail of our experiences on poverty alleviation is "both sobering and encouraging". Divided into two parts, the first part of the paper studies the trends, patterns and geographical spread of absolute poverty from 90 onwards; the second part enquires into the emerging multidimensional nature and spread of poverty across the globe, with particular emphasis on the shifting geographies of poverty in the sub-Saharan, Latin American and Asian countries.

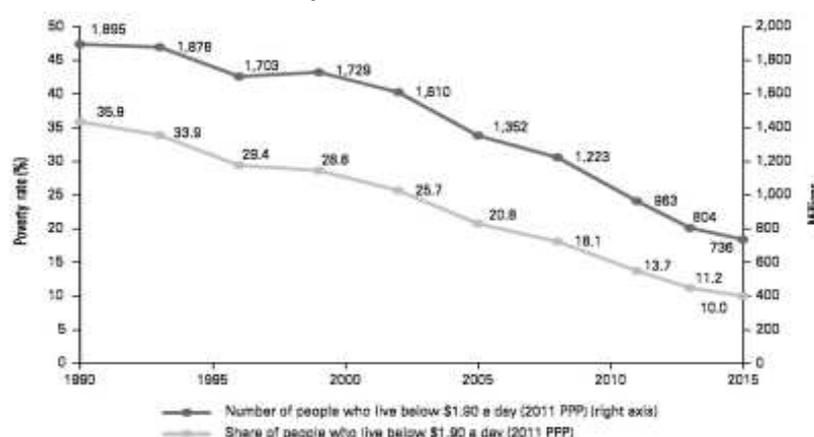
Trends in Global Poverty from 1990 onwards

The internationally comparable data on global poverty was available to the world only after the estimation of the world bank in 1980; since then, poverty began to decline in the 90s, especially after 2000. The characteristic feature during this period is that poverty has shown a decline in absolute numbers across all geographical regions, except in Sub-Saharan Africa. Global head count ratio was 35.9% in 1990, with a

size of 1895 million, declined to 25.7% in 2001. In 2011, it has almost halved to 963 million or 13.7% of humanity living below (\$1.9 PPP) poverty line and by 2015, extreme poverty has become 10% of the global population or 736 million. The impressive reduction of poverty in East Asia and South Asia, between 1990-2015, is reflective of the great strides achieved in China and India (World Bank, 2018). In the year 2018, poverty has come down to such a level "that majority of human kind is no longer poor" (Kharas & Hamel, 2018), except the case of sub-Saharan African nations, which continued to experience an absolute increase in poverty. However, the decline of poverty across the globe is not uniformly distributed and there existed many subtle interregional and intra-regional differences. As per the estimates of the World Bank, the monetary poverty ratio of the world was 11.8%, which is lower than the multidimensional poverty rate of 18.3%. This trend is true for all world bank regions (World Bank, 2018). The data also suggests prevalence of massive poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa whose MPI head count ratio is 64.3% and accounts for 65.4% of global poverty. South Asia is home to 17.7% of the global multidimensionally poor, with an HCR, 26.6 percentage. The difference between monetary poverty and multidimensional poverty in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa is very high, with the wedge being very sharp. Sub-Saharan Africa is slowly becoming the global poverty capital (Roser, Max and Ortiz-Ospina, 2019).

Figure 1 gives an estimate of the reduction of extreme poverty, based on \$1.9 PPP poverty line, from 1990 to 2015. The multi-dimensional and monetary poverty in Figure 2 provides glimpses of regional differences in poverty reduction and the skewed structure of poverty.

Figure 1 Trend in Global Extreme Poverty 1990-2015 (\$1.9 PPP)



Source: (World Bank, 2018)

Figure 2 : People Living Below Monetary and Multidimensional Poverty 2013#

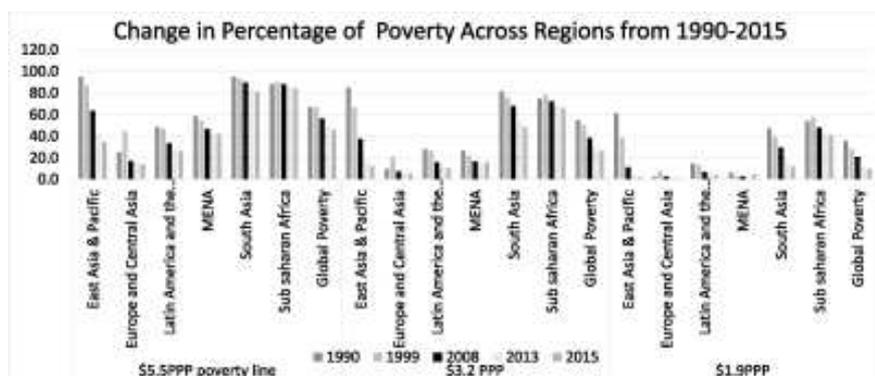
Region	Monetary Poverty*		Multidimensional Poverty**	
	Head Count Ratio*	Share of the poor	Head Count Ratio	Share of the poor
East Asia & Pacific	5.3	8.1	7.5	7.3
Europe & Central Asia	0.3	0.4	1.1	0.8
Latin America the Caribbean	3.9	5.7	6.1	5.8
Middle East and North Africa	3.2	22	5.9	2.6
South Asia	11.9	12.3	26.6	17.7
Sub-Saharan Africa	44.9	70.9	64.3	65.4
Rest of the World	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.3
Total	11.8	100	18.3	100

Source: (World Bank, 2018). *at 2011 price \$1.9 poverty line **Based on MPI of UNDP-OPHI# Estimates around 2013

Regional Perspectives on Poverty

A regional analysis of poverty reveals pockets of poverty, characterised by civic unrest, war, internal instability, bad political and economic institutions (Kharas & Hamel, 2018) (World Bank, 2018). Groups like ethnic minorities, rural dwellers, people living in geographically-isolated regions, children, elderly and female-headed families are dis-proportionately poor (Bank, 2019). The chequered pattern in the decline of poverty and unequal distribution of economic gains are visible within and between the nations (United Nations Development Programme, 2019).

Figure 3 below provides a poverty assessment using three poverty lines, 1.9PPP, 3.2PPP and 5.5PPP respectively.ⁱⁱⁱ



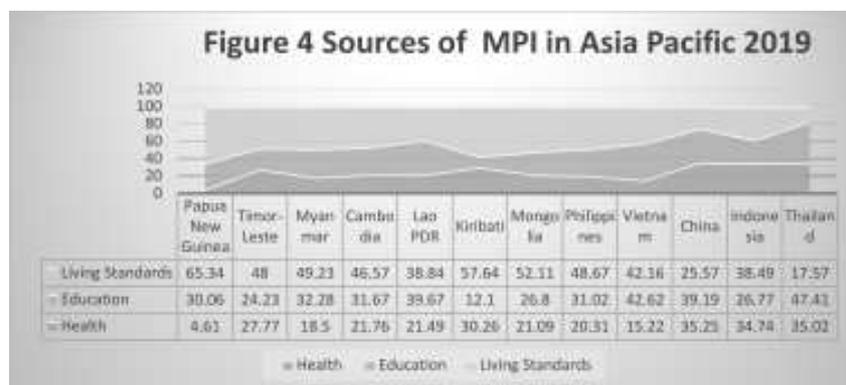
Source: WB 2018

To get a nuanced view of poverty, a comparative analysis of developing Asia, Africa, Middle East, South and Central America is done.

East Asia and the Pacific

The past three decades witnessed a huge fall in poverty due to favourable economic cycles, fuelled by investment in human and physical capital, (Nguyen et al., 2017). Yet the pockets of poverty persist in regions of instability, conflict zones, ethnic strife and unstable economies (Gustafsson & Sai, 2009) (Nguyen et al., 2017). For example, the Muslims in Mindanao Bay Island and Rohingyas in Rakhine province of Myanmar are victims of adverse incorporation or selective exclusion (World Bank, 2019); (Amnesty International, 2017). The geographically- isolated small Pacific Island state Tuvalu and Kiribati are vulnerable to ecological fragility. The accomplishment made by China has played a major role in the decline of poverty in East Asia and the Pacific region; however the pace of poverty decline is moderated due to the worsening inequality (Wan & Wang, 2018).

The Multi poverty index of poverty scenario in the region is done through the sources of MPI deprivation of each country. The most important contributors of multi-dimensional poverty can be seen in Figure 4.

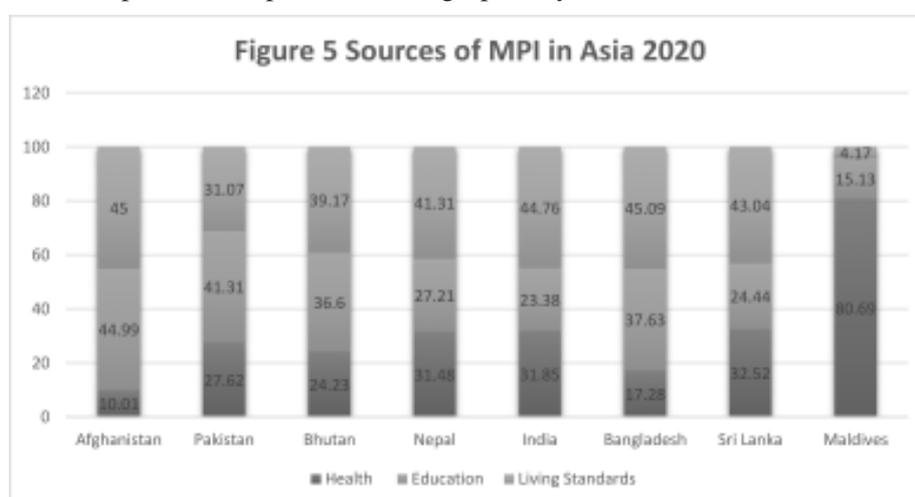


Source OPHI_UNDP

South Asia

South Asia has made stupendous achievement in the area of poverty alleviation from 47.3% in 1990 to 12% in 2015 (See fig 2), owing to the progress in India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan. However, the rate of poverty in Afghanistan, India and Nepal still remains high (Narayan et al., 2009). The political and armed revolts act as a stumbling block in tackling poverty in Afghanistan, Nepal and Myanmar. In India, the case of poverty is high among Muslims, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Thorat, 2010a) (Das et al., 2021) (Arora & Singh, 2015). The regional differences in poverty head count ratio and multidimensional poverty components are documented in India, where BIMARU states lag behind states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu, which lead both in terms of national poverty Head count Index and in Multidimensional Poverty Index (Panagariya & Mukim, n.d.) (Chatterjee et al., 2016)(Alkire & Seth, 2015). The Terai region of Nepal, housing Indian descendants is also extremely deprived. The primary reason for MPI in Maldives is health deprivation and in Afghanistan, the lack of education. This shows the stark differences among the regions in the sources of MPI. The incidence of female poverty is higher in almost all the countries (ADB, 2020).

Figure 5 explains that the most important sources of multi-dimensional poverty in South Asia are lack of education and low living standards. The stage of development and absence or presence of internal disturbances seem to be powerful explainers of high poverty in some contexts.

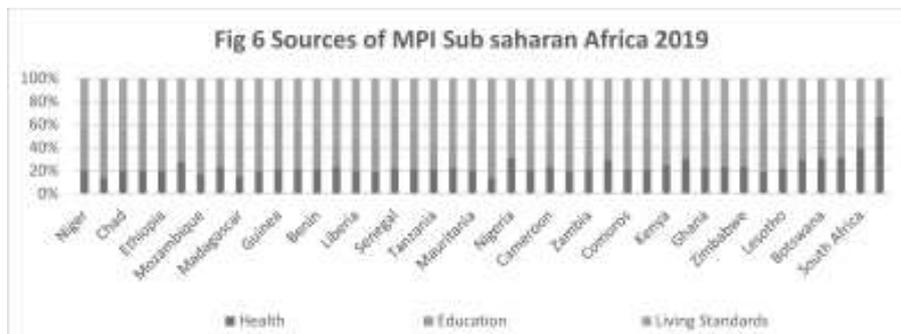


Sub-Saharan Africa

Africa has coastal resource rich countries, coastal resource poor countries, scarce landlocked and resource rich landlocked nations in terms of the geographical position of the continent. Top twenty countries with higher incidence of poverty are in Sub-Saharan Africa (OPHI, 2020). The burden of poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa is so huge (Sumner, 2010) that it shares half the burden of global poverty in 2015, compared to its position in 1990 as the third largest contributor in 1990 ('Piecing Together the Poverty Puzzle', 2018). The largest countries in Africa such as Nigeria, Congo, Sudan etc. are also countries with the highest poverty head count ratios (Sumner, 2010) (Roser, Max and Ortiz-Ospina, 2019). Many nations in Sub-Saharan Africa are prone to violent conflicts on ethnic lines, climate change, AIDS -related mortality and suffer due to lack of social overheads. Climate change and desertification of Sub-Saharan Africa add to the precarious conditions of the poor in Sahel. Most of the ethnic conflict zones of Africa are also the ones experiencing negative fallout from climate change. The region is also home to the largest growing population living below poverty. The context of population growth and low rural growth of African nations will attract more people from hinterlands in the coming decades (Serdeczny et al., 2017) (Irwin et al., 2020). Another problem comes from inequalities. For example, MPI in rural Uganda's poorest region is nearly 90%, whereas MPI in the Ugandan capital Kampala is only 6%. Yet another worrying fact is the high level of poverty rates among children (United Nations Development Programme, 2019). Two third of the poverty-stricken children (65.8%) are in Sub-Saharan Africa and are located in countries such as Nigeria, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo etc (Silwal et al., 2020).

Institutional failure, corruption, civic unrest, lack of health and education infrastructure, ethnic conflicts, (FCV)^{iv} war and climate-related shocks are the reasons for high levels of poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa (Simone et al., 2014). (World Bank, 2018) (OPHI, 2020). According to transparency International's Corruption Perception Index 2020, most of the corrupt countries are in Sub-Saharan Africa. Somalia along with South Sudan occupies the last position and the rank of 12 African nations are above 150 (Transparency, 2020). The prevalence of widespread mass poverty with very little civic and social infrastructure is reflected in the fact that more than 45% of the multi-dimensional poverty is due to the deprivation in living standards (OPHI, 2020). In countries like Niger, South Sudan, Chad, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Central African Republic, the MPI poor is more than 75% of its population. Amidst this, Seychelles and South Africa give a hopeful picture of only less than 10% of people as multi dimensionally poor (OPHI, 2020). Other aspects of poverty such as stunting, wasting and malnutrition also suggests a grave situation in Sub-Saharan Africa. The climate change shock will adversely affect the food security situation of the sub-Saharan African region (Hunger Index, 2020) (Research Institute (IFPRI, 2019), added to that, the simultaneous existence of conflicts and climate change make their lives miserable (Irwin et al., 2020).

Figure 6 provides a closer look at the components of the multi-dimensional poverty in the sub-Saharan nation, where the primary and secondary reasons of MPI are low quality of life and lag in education respectively.



Source: (OPHI, 2020)

Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

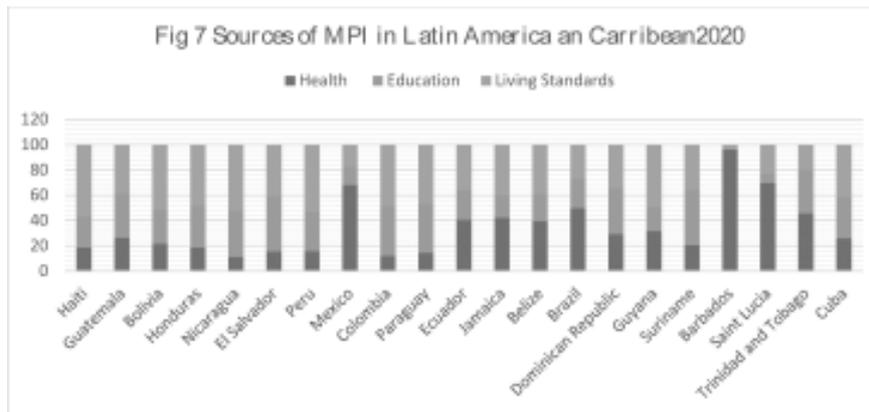
Even though the MPI poverty is lower in the Arabian Peninsula region, except in Yemen, (OPHI, 2020) the troubling problem is the lack of transparency, authoritarian regimes (Transparency, 2020) and rising inequality (OPHI, 2020). The fresh lease of violence which started during the Arab Springs has thrown countries into volatility and conflict. Poverty in conflict zones is on the rise, but so far, no data regarding this is available (Irwin et al., 2020)(Simone et al., 2014). The oligarchies, civil war and elites' control over resources in fragile nations have worsened the situation in already fragile nations like Yemen, Syria, Sudan, Libya, Iraq etc. In terms of freedom, democracy and transparency, the track record of the area is not very promising (Transparency, 2020), (Dominik, 2013).

Latin America and the Caribbean

The level of poverty that has been falling from around 45.4% in 2001 to around 27% in 2014, registered a sharp rise in absolute poverty after 2014, especially in countries such as Venezuela and Brazil, due to lower economic growth and crash in the prices of natural resources. As a result of commodity price crash, poverty in this zone has increased from 7.2% (164 million) in 2014 to 11.5% (191 million) in 2018. However, there has been a decline in poverty in the region except Brazil and Venezuela and intra-regional differences are not so sharp but moderate (measured at 1.9 \$PPP). Mexico and Honduras have more than 20% of their population living below poverty line whereas the incidence of poverty in Chile and Uruguay is below 5%. The poverty rate of Central America is lower than that of South America. The estimate of multi-dimensional poverty also follows similar patterns (CEPAL, 2019). Another notable feature of the poverty of the region is

that rural poverty in general is higher than the urban poverty, but compared to the corresponding levels in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, rural poverty is low in this region. Sabina Alkire and others estimated that 62.8% of the rural dwellers in Latin American and the Caribbean population are multidimensional poor (Alkire et al., 2014). There is high incidence of poverty among the Afro descendants, natives, the unemployed, women and children (CEPAL, 2019).

A more dissected data from the OPHI throws light on the fact that inadequate health and poor living standards are the two most important causes of multidimensional poverty of the region. There are substantial differences between the nations in terms of deprivations. Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua and Bolivia have higher percentage of multidimensionally poor. Even though the number of the poor is more in South America, the incidence of multidimensional poverty is more in Central America (OPHI, 2020). See Figure 7 for a comparative picture of the region.



Moving Beyond the Geographies of Poverty

The experiences of poverty have many subtle differences between and within the countries (Andy Sumner); (Robles Aguilar & Sumner, 2020). Aguilar worked out the composition of the global poverty based on the 2015 MPI data set and reported a higher concentration of multidimensionally poor in rural areas in almost all the regions of the world. The overlapping of deprivations can be seen among the poor of all regions (Robles Aguilar & Sumner, 2020). There exists a rural-urban divide and the major source of deprivation in urban area is lack of health, higher child mortality and absence of economic opportunities whereas the cause of rural poverty is more about infrastructure inadequacies. Large family size is yet another predictor of high poverty.

Another important emerging characteristic of global poverty is that the number of poor people in fragile nations is increasing and so is the number of fragile nations. In addition to the above points, it can be figured out from the data that a large number of poor is in middle income countries despite the fact the number of poor people there is rapidly declining. In Sub-Saharan Africa and small island states things are getting complicated due to the overlap of low-income status, environmental fragility and violent conflicts. The estimates too suggest an increase in the number of poor in FCVs in the coming decades. The incidence of poverty is higher among minorities and other deprived sections like SCs and STs in India (Panagariya & Mukim, 2014) (Thorat, 2010b), people living in FCVs, rural dwellers, (Robles Aguilar & Sumner, 2020) people in climate-sensitive areas, children (Newhouse et al., 2016), Afro descendants and natives in Latin America, women and the unemployed (ECLAC, 2019).

Suggestions and Conclusions

1. The challenge of poverty needs to be understood from a multidimensional angle. The remaining hubs of poverty are rural in nature. The concentration of child poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia has intergenerational effects like long term productivity losses and corrosive disadvantages. So, the declustering of disadvantages through education, nutritional fortification shall be given priority.

2. The investment in agriculture and social security sectors is a dire requirement in most of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. By nature, these economies are rural in character and the rural poverty as a percentage of their total poverty is much higher in Sub-Saharan Africa but investment in agriculture is negligible. The world data lab estimates (Hamelet al) that the number of extreme poor will increase in 20 countries, majority in SSA and three in Latin America.
3. Irrespective of the rural nature of poverty, African nations are experiencing fast urbanisation, characterised by the irony of poor investment in urban infrastructure. (Collier, 2007). The sprawling urban settlements without ample investments are doomed to become urban hells.
4. The public investment in education and health along with international aid is important because as per the MPI data, major contributors to MPI in many countries are health and education. The corrosive disadvantages from the low-quality education, lack of basic infrastructure and inability of parents shall have greater implications, feeding intergenerational and intra-generational poverty effects.
5. The increasing context of climate related conflicts in sensitive areas of middle east and SSA can be addressed through climate proofing (Dominik, 2013). Climate change add new dimensions to the global poverty ,increasing the woes of the sub-Saharan food security and livelihoods (Connolly-Boutin & Smit, 2016).
6. The guarantee of transparency is another relevant area that needs to be worked out as many countries with low MPI are also the countries with high scores in corruption perception index. Very high levels of kickbacks are especially true of countries which are characterised as FCVs (Dominik, 2013). Elite capture is another issue leading to further deprivation of the poor (Krishna et al., 2004); (Wagner & Arcand, 2013). In this context, fairness and transparency are inevitable. Any reform should be gradual, maintaining fairness and transparency.
7. Poverty is also an embedded problem that needs to be recognised by the international donors and so any bypassing of well -established traditional networks would repeat the history of South Sudan famine of 1998 (Harragin, 2004).
8. The social mobilisation of women is a lofty ideal which looks easier said than done but the examples from democratic experiences in certain African nations and state of Kerala in India, the micro finance experiments of Bangladesh and Indonesia provide enough evidence that women can move beyond their traditional role of care work. With global support, promotion of democracy and grass root decentralisation, women can come out as dynamic entrepreneurs. The challenges posed by deeply truncated societies of Asia and Africa can be solved only through a context sensitive policy.

An attempt is made here to provide a description of the poverty scenario from multiple angles, throwing light on the real plight of the people, to provide suggestions for the right kind of policies. The true facets of poverty situation cannot be discerned from a simple \$ 1.9 poverty line, so a more vivid description of the real problems of poverty is needed. Despite the challenges posed by Covid, we could achieve poverty reduction through vigorous anti-poverty policies and international cooperation. The multi-dimensional perspective suggests approaching poverty as an overlapping of deprivations; unshackling the unfreedoms^v rather than deprivation in income or consumption.

Notes

- (i) The study is based on the concept of a poverty line and came up with the idea of subsistence income. (Batallie 2011).
- (ii) The US national census of 1961 led to serious enquiries on American poverty. The works of J Kenneth Galbraith, Michel Harrington, Dwight Mc Donald in USA; Richard Titmus in UK unveiled the existence of invisible poor in the richest capitalist nations. (see (Have man et al., 2015) for a discussion). Oscar

Lewis' work is infamous for the prejudiced portrayal of poor but highlighted the massive poverty among Afro descendants.

- (iii) World bank use three poverty lines based on three indicators- \$1.9 PPP for low-income countries, \$3.2PPP for middle income countries and 5.5 PPP for high-income economies. World Bank has devised PPP poverty lines by using purchasing power parity dollars to make comparisons across counties easier. PPP is amount needed to buy goods to satisfy basic bundle of goods.
- (iv) Based on the intensity of the situation, World Bank grouped 39 fragile violent conflict (FCV) into high institutional and social fragility, high intensity conflict and medium intensity conflict categories.
- (v) Amartya Sen see development as the process of enjoying more freedom The major sources of unfreedom are the denial of political and cultural rights, economic opportunities , to live longer and healthy life and lack of education (Sen, 2001).

References

1. ADB. (n.d.): *Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2020* | Asian Development Bank. Retrieved July 3, 2021, from <https://www.adb.org/publications/key-indicators-asia-and-pacific-2020>
2. Alkire, S., Chatterjee, M., Conconi, A., Suman, S., & Vaz, A. (2014): Poverty in Rural and Urban Areas Direct comparisons using the global MPI 2014. *Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative*, 1-4.
3. Alkire, S., & Seth, S. (2015): Multidimensional Poverty Reduction in India between 1999 and 2006: Where and How? *World Development*, 72, 93-108. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2015.02.009>
4. Alvarez, S. A., Barney, J. B., & Newman, A. M. B. (2015): 'The poverty problem and the industrialization solution', *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 32(1), 23-37. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10490-014-9397-5>
5. Amnesty International. (2017): '*Caged without a roof*': Apartheid in Myanmar's Rakhine state. Amnesty International.
6. Arora, A., & Singh, S. P. (2015): 'Poverty across Social and Religious Groups in Uttar Pradesh: An Interregional Analysis' *Economic and Political Weekly*, 50(52), 100-109.
7. CEPAL, U. N. (2019): *Social Panorama of Latin America 2019*.
8. Chatterjee, U., Murgai, R., Narayan, A., & Rama, M. (2016): 'Pathways to Reducing Poverty and Sharing Prosperity in India', In *Pathways to Reducing Poverty and Sharing Prosperity in India*, World Bank. <https://doi.org/10.1596/24988>
9. Collier, P. (2007): 'Poverty reduction in Africa' In *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* (Vol. 104, Issue 43), <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0611702104>
10. Connolly-Boutin, L., & Smit, B. (2016): 'Climate change, food security, and livelihoods in sub-Saharan Africa' In *Regional Environmental Change* (Vol. 16, Issue 2). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10113-015-0761-x>
11. Das, P., Paria, B., & Firdaush, S. (2021): 'Juxtaposing Consumption Poverty and Multidimensional Poverty: A Study in Indian Context', *Social Indicators Research*, 153(2), 469-501. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-020-02519-0>
12. Dominik, Z. (2013): 'Political economies of corruption in fragile and conflict-affected states: Nuancing the picture', In *U4 Brief: Vol. 2013:4*. <https://www.cmi.no/publications/4901-political-economies-of-corruption-in-fragile-and>
13. ECLAC. (2019): 'Social Panorama of Latin America 2019' | Publication | Economic Commission for

- Latin America and the Caribbean, In *ECLAC*. <https://www.cepal.org/en/publications/44989-social-panorama-latin-america-2019>
14. Gustafsson, B., & Sai, D. (2009): 'Temporary and persistent poverty among ethnic minorities and the majority in rural China', *Review of Income and Wealth*, 55(SUPPL. 1), 588-606. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4991.2009.00332.x>
 15. Harragin, S. (2004): 'Relief and an Understanding of Local Knowledge: The Case of Southern Sudan', *Cultura and Public Action*, Anderson 1996.
 16. Hasan, R., Mitra, D., & Ulubasoglu, M. A. (2006): 'Institutions and policies for growth and poverty reduction: The role of private sector development', *ERD Working Paper Series*, 82, 1-54.
 17. Haveman, R., Blank, R., Moffitt, R., Smeeding, T., & Wallace, G. (2015): 'The War on Poverty: Measurement, Trends, and Policy', *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management?: [The Journal of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management]*, 34(3), 593. <https://doi.org/10.1002/PAM.21846>
 18. *How do we know the history of extreme poverty? - Our World in Data*. (n.d.). Retrieved 1 July 2021, from <https://ourworldindata.org/extreme-history-methods>
 19. Hunger Index, G. (2020): *2020 Global Hunger Index: One Decade to Zero Hunger-Linking Health and Sustainable Food Systems*.
 20. Irwin, A., Krishnan, N., Mahler, D. G., & Vishwanath, T. (2020): *Paul Corral AGAINST POVERTY*. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/33324>
 21. Krishna, A., Kapila, M., Pathak, S., Porwal, M., Singh, K., & Singh, V. (2004): 'Falling into Poverty in Villages of Andhra Pradesh: Why Poverty Avoidance Policies Are Needed', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 3249-3256.
 22. López-Videla, B., & Machuca, C. E. (2014): *The Effects of Remittances on Poverty at the Household Level in Bolivia: A Propensity Score Matching Approach*.
 23. Mehta, D. (2018): 'The Green Revolution did not increase poverty and hunger for millions', In *Nature Plants* (Vol. 4, Issue 10, p. 736), Palgrave Macmillan Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41477-018-0240-8>
 24. Newhouse, D., Suarez-Becerra, P., & Evans, M. C. (2016): *New Estimates of Extreme Poverty for Children Poverty and Shared Prosperity Report 2016: Taking on Inequality Background Paper*. <http://econ.worldbank.org>
 25. Nguyen, C. V., Tran, T. Q., & Van Vu, H. (2017): 'Ethnic Minorities in Northern Mountains of Vietnam: Employment, Poverty and Income', *Social Indicators Research*, 134(1), 93-115. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-016-1413-3>
 26. OPHI. (2020): *Global MPI 2020*, University of Oxford, Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative. <https://ophi.org.uk/multidimensional-poverty-index/global-mpi-2020/>
 27. Panagariya, A., & Mukim, M. (n.d.), 'A Comprehensive Analysis of Poverty in India',
 28. Panagariya, A., & Mukim, M. (2014): 'A comprehensive analysis of poverty in India', *Asian Development Review*, 31(1), 1-52. https://doi.org/10.1162/ADEV_a_00021
 29. 'Piecing Together the Poverty Puzzle', (2018): In *Piecing Together the Poverty Puzzle*. <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-1330-6>
 30. Ravallion, M. (2013): *Lessons from a history of thought on poverty*, December 2013, 1-4. <http://www.voxeu.org/article/lessons-history-thought-poverty>

31. Research Institute (IFPRI), I. F. P. (2019): *2019 Global food policy report*, <https://doi.org/10.2499/9780896293502>
32. Robles Aguilar, G., & Sumner, A. (2020): 'Who are the world's poor? A new profile of global multidimensional poverty', *World Development*, 126. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2019.104716>
33. Roser, Max and Ortiz-Ospina, E. (2019): Global Extreme Poverty-Our World in Data. *OurWorldInData.Org*, 1-10. <https://ourworldindata.org/extreme-poverty%0Ahttps://ourworldindata.org/extreme-poverty?%0Ahttps://ourworldindata.org/extreme-poverty%0Ahttps://ourworldindata.org/extreme-poverty%0Ahttps://ourworldindata.org/extreme-poverty#how-much-does-the-reduction-of->
34. Sen, A. (2001): Development as Freedom-Google Books. In *Sen, Aamrtya*. https://www.google.co.in/books/edition/Development_as_Freedom/QPqNDwAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0
35. Serdeczny, O., Adams, S., Baarsch, F., Coumou, D., Robinson, A., Hare, W., Schaeffer, M., Perrette, M., & Reinhardt, J. (2017): 'Climate change impacts in Sub-Saharan Africa: From physical changes to their social repercussions', *Regional Environmental Change*, 17(6). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10113-015-0910-2>
36. Silwal, A. R., Engilbertsdottir, S., Cuesta Leiva, J. A., Newhouse, D. L., & Stewart, David. (2020): *Global Estimate of Children in Monetary Poverty: An Update*. <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/966791603123453576/global-estimate-of-children-in-monetary-poverty-an-update>
37. Simone, F. De, Cmi, U., & Taxell, N. (2014): *U4 brief-Political economies of corruption in fragile and conflict-affected states: Nuancing the picture* (Issue February).
38. Sumner, A. (2010): 'Global Poverty and the New Bottom Billion: What if Three-quarters of the World's Poor Live in Middle-income Countries?' *IDS Working Papers*, 2010(349). https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2040-0209.2010.00349_2.x
39. Thorat, A. (2010a) : 'Ethnicity, caste and religion: Implications for poverty outcomes', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 45(51), 47-53.
40. Thorat, A. (2010b) : 'Ethnicity, caste and religion: Implications for poverty outcomes', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 45(51), 47-53.
41. Transparency, I. (2020). 2020-CPI - *Transparency.org*. <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2020/index/nzl#>
42. United Nations Development Programme. (2019): *Human development report 2019*. In UNDP.
43. Wagner, N., & Arcand, J.-L. (2013): *Elite Capture Revisited: Does Community Driven Development Improve Inclusiveness? - Evidence from Senegal*.
44. Wan, G., & Wang, C. (2018) : *Poverty and inequality in Asia: 1965-2014* (WIDER Working Paper, Vol. 2018). UNU-WIDER. <https://doi.org/10.35188/UNU-WIDER/2018/563-3>
45. *Who Are the World's Poor? | Center For Global Development*. (n.d.). Retrieved June 19, 2021, from <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/who-are-the-worlds-poor>
46. World Bank. (2018): 'Piecing Together the Poverty Puzzle, In *Piecing Together the Poverty Puzzle*', Washington, DC: World Bank. <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-1330-6>
47. World Bank. (2019): World Bank East Asia and Pacific Economic Update, April 2019: Managing Headwinds, In *World Bank East Asia and Pacific Economic Update, April 2019: Managing Headwinds*. <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-1412-9>

Digital Divide and IT Enabled Education in Schools in Kerala: An Appraisal

Vidya Nair

The 'new normal' envisages education in the online mode. Paradoxically, the Right to Education Act (2009) which guarantees free and compulsory education for all children between the age of 6 to 14 years received a major setback due to the Covid 19 Pandemic as it has widened the digital divide. Though education switched to the digital mode, Kerala was ill prepared for the sudden shift in teaching learning methods. In this context, the paper examines the inter-school and inter-district variations in availability, access and utilization of ICT tools in education in three districts in Kerala, namely, Kasaragod, Palakkad and Thiruvananthapuram.

Children today need to be equipped to face the multidimensional shifts in the world of health, education and employment. IT enabled education and skill development is crucial in the current scenario where the mode of work and learning has become online. Although, the Government of Kerala through the Kerala Right to Education Rules (2011) and IT @ School project which is presently part of Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE) have made efforts to ensure access to IT enabled education in schools, its outreach and efficacy have not spread evenly across schools and districts in Kerala. In this context, this paper seeks to analyze the inter-district and inter-school variations in availability, access and effective utilization of IT enabled educational tools and technology in three districts in Kerala, namely, Kasaragod, Palakkad and Thiruvananthapuram.

Methodology

To ascertain the spread of digital literacy and application of IT enabled education across schools in Kerala, a questionnaire survey was conducted in three districts in Kerala. Twentyfive schools from Thiruvananthapuram, Palakkad and Kasaragod districts were selected randomly for the field study of which 10 were Government schools, 10 aided and the remaining five unaided. Three different sets of questionnaires were administered in these schools and data was gathered from Principals, teachers and parents. In all, 25 school Principals, 102 teachers and 115 parents responded to the questionnaires, bringing the total sample to 242. The software 'R' was used to process the data. Open-ended interview schedules were administered to members of civil society and bureaucrats which helped in gaining relevant insights into the various aspects of IT education and skill development of students. The major results from the field survey are as follows:

Computer Availability, Accessibility and Usage

For IT based education to be successful, it is imperative that there are sufficient number of computers in schools and students must have easy and regular access to them. The perception of Principals regarding the accessibility of computer facilities to all students and its usage is given below.

Table 1 : Computer Accessibility and Usage (Principals) (in%)

School Type/ District	Computer Accessibility for Students			Computer Usage by Students					
	Yes	No		Regularly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never		
All	80	20	24	48	12	16			
Government	60	40	30	30	10	30			
Aided	90	10	20	50	20	10			
Unaided	100	0	20	80	0	0			
Trivandrum	100	0	37.5	50	12.5	0			
Kasaragod	55.6	44.4	11.1	33.3	11.1	44.5			
Palakkad	87.5	12.5	25	62.5	12.5	0			

Source: The Survey

The unaided schools with 100% computer accessibility and its regular and sometimes usage tops the list (100%). Aided schools have the facilities but usage is unsatisfactory. In Government schools, only 60% Principals reported computer accessibility for all. Computer usage is very poor in Government schools with 30% reporting that students never use computers. Once again, better computer facilities and its proper usage by students is another attraction for students to join unaided schools. Among the districts, in Kasaragod 44.5% have never used computers and only 11.1% use them regularly. In the other districts also regular use has to be ensured to initiate children into the digital world.

IT Based Teaching

In a digital world, teacher's knowledge of computer and multimedia and its application and use in classrooms is inevitable. How far this is being achieved in reality is the root question. The survey conducted by the researcher throws some interesting facts.

Table 2 : Teachers Knowledge of Computers, Training and Usage (in%)

School Type/ District	Basic Knowledge of Computers		Trained to Use Computer Multimedia		Aware of Subject Wise Multimedia			Use Subject Wise Multimedia		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	All	Some	None	Always	Some times	Never
All	91.2	8.8	59.8	40.2	16.7	53.9	29.4	10.8	49	40.2
Govt.	97.5	2.5	50	50	17.5	55	27.5	5	65	30
Aided	88.1	11.9	66.7	33.3	14.3	57.1	28.6	4.7	42.9	52.4
Unaided	85	15	65	35	20	45	35	35	30	35
Trivandrum	87.1	12.9	54.8	45.2	6.5	64.5	29	9.7	61.3	29
Kasaragod	94.4	5.6	63.9	36.1	11.1	58.3	30.6	16.7	38.9	44.4
Palakkad	91.4	8.6	60	40	31.4	40	28.6	5.7	48.6	45.7

Source: The Survey

Though, basic knowledge of computers is remarkably high in all categories with the teachers working

in Government schools topping with 97.5% followed by aided (88%) and unaided (85%), those who are trained in computers falls short of expectation at 59.8%. Those trained in computer and multimedia are more in aided schools (66.7%) than in unaided (65%) and Government schools (50%). Sadly, awareness of subject-wise multimedia is very low in all categories, highest being 20% in the unaided schools. This shows that concerted efforts are needed to impart training and in the use of subject-wise multimedia to popularize new tools of education. A study by Bajpai (2013) on the compliance of RTE in Uttar Pradesh corroborates this finding as he states that there is a need to upgrade the training of teachers especially in using computers. As regards districts in Kerala, the results of the survey conducted by the researcher are more or less on the similar lines cutting across different categories. However, in Palakkad awareness of subject-wise multimedia is higher (31.4%) as compared to Kasaragod (11.1%) and Trivandrum (6.5%). Why Trivandrum is lagging so much behind others in this regard needs to be analyzed.

The usage of subject-wise multimedia in classrooms is even worse. With more than half (52.4%) of the teachers in the aided schools reporting that they have never used it in the class rooms, followed by unaided teachers (35%) and Government teachers (30%). Among the districts, Trivandrum is better off with 61.3% teachers reporting that they use this technology sometimes, followed by Palakkad (48.6%) and Kasaragod (38.9%). The regular usage of subject-wise multimedia falls short of expectations with only 10.8% teachers reporting that they use it always in their classrooms. Unaided schools are better off in this regard. One important reason for the lack of proper use of modern technology in classrooms is also due to the highly inadequate infrastructure facilities in Government and aided schools. Many schools do not have smart classrooms and uninterrupted power supply and many of them had not received the CDs related to different subjects even after several months of the beginning of the academic year. The reality in the field is a far cry from the IT enabled education that the Government schemes seek to implement.

Skill Development

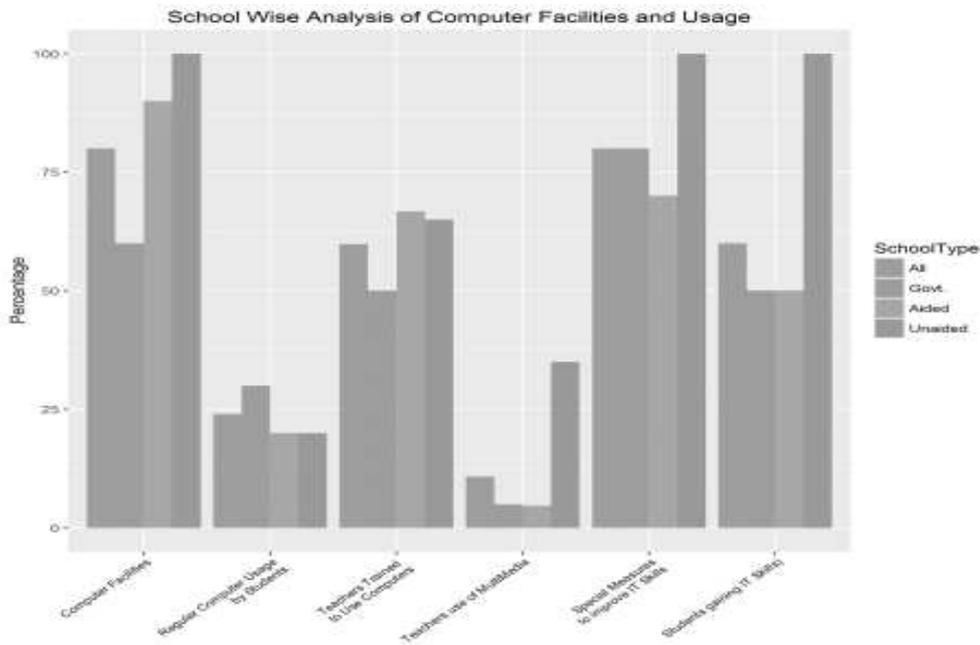
Skill development especially IT skills are essential in the modern competitive world. Political leaders were of the opinion that this is an area of major concern. According to a senior leader of the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) (Rajagopal: 2015), skill development today is a national problem as most of the educated people are unemployable today. In the modern technology driven world which throws open multitude of opportunities, skills are essential. Education today should help develop the capacities of children and help them get an occupation. To him the Modi Government has given priority to skill development and there is a Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. There is a need to understand the aptitude and skills of each child and develop and promote that, he opined. Some students (Murari: 2015, Samrudhy: 2015), were of the opinion that, every school should have IT-cum-language lab with proper broad band connectivity. Teachers should be equipped to access the huge learning opportunities which internet opens up. The Government needs to ensure that every student gets ample exposure to IT skills.

Senior bureaucrats (Sreenivasan: 2015, Jacob: 2015, Rajesh: 2015), in the field of education were of the opinion that IT needs to be an integral part of the curriculum. IT skills need to be integrated along with academic performance. The Government has made it mandatory that every Lower Primary School (LPS) should have one computer at least and Upper Primary School (UPS) should have five or more. However, there are no specific teachers for this. Some schools have appointed guest teachers with the help of PTA funds. The State Institute of Educational Technology (SIET) and SCERT are involved in preparing educational CDs but many teachers are reluctant to use them. There are problems of power connectivity and lack of trained teachers. Skill development is now an extra- curricular activity and not taken seriously according to them. Learning by doing should be the basic approach. It is difficult to integrate skill development with present system since teaching learning process is focused on routine methods of rote learning.

In terms of computer skills of students, unaided schools are far better than the other schools due to

better computer access, facilities and exposure. The school-wise variations in terms of computer usage and facilities and content and process of teaching and learning are given in the figure below.

Fig. 1



Source: The Survey

Table 3 : Student’s IT Skills (%)

School Type/ District	Special Measures to Improve Students IT Skills		Are Students Gaining IT Skills?		Satisfaction with IT@School Project	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
All	80	20	60	40	50	50
Govt.	80	20	50	50	50	50
Aided	70	30	50	50	50	50
Unaided	100	0	100	0	NA	NA
Trivandrum	100	0	75	25	71.4	28.6
Kasaragod	55.6	44.4	33.3	66.7	28.6	71.4
Palakkad	87.5	12.5	75	25	50	50

Source: The Survey

Though measures have been taken to improve IT skills of students in all schools, unaided with 100% fares far above the Government and aided schools, where 70 to 80% reported of measures being taken by the authorities and only 50% expressed the view that IT skills of the students have improved. Trivandrum leads the districts in taking measures (100%), and the level of gaining IT skills here is 75%. Palakkad is next best with 87.5% on measures taken and 75% in gaining IT skills. Kasaragod is way behind in both these aspects with 55% on special measures and awfully low (33.3%) gaining IT skills. This shows that though the Government is making serious attempts for imparting IT education, it has not achieved the desired level yet.

Regarding satisfaction with IT @School project, only 50% of the Principals reported that they were satisfied with it. Satisfaction with the project is highly varied among districts with Trivandrum being well

placed at 71.4%, followed by Palakkad 50% and Kasaragod very low at 28.6%. The main reason for dissatisfaction with the IT@School project in Government and aided schools according to the Principals is that the computer-student ratio is inadequate. In many of the schools surveyed, there is a single functional computer available for use by students. Besides, majority of the teachers have not received computer training and the existing training is not satisfactory. Computers are often tampered by students causing damage to the machines. Thus, maintenance becomes a problem. Many stated that hardware maintenance is expensive and there are also no maintenance funds available and no supervision of this at the official level. Another problem is that old computers are no longer compatible with the new softwares. Lack of uninterrupted power supply and special class for computers is another problem mentioned by the Principals. Some cited that lot of e-waste gets dumped in the schools with no proper means of disposing it. In many schools there are no smart classrooms and computer labs. IT related educational CDs although a part of curriculum had not been received by most of the schools. Thus, inaccessibility of computers to all students, its irregular usage by students and lack of trained teachers is the main reason for lack of IT Skills among students of most of the government and aided schools. Thus, it is clear that the spread of basic educational facilities and outcomes are uneven and imbalanced among regions as well as among different types of schools.

Conclusion

The pandemic that rages across the world unabated has further widened the digital divide in Kerala. For over a year, educational institutions have remained closed and education has switched to the online mode. The Government of Kerala, through its First Bell programme via VICTERS channel has been telecasting classes since last June. However, it is a fact that many remote areas do not have access to cable T.V., computer, mobile phones, internet connection and regular electric supply. The data from the field survey also reveals the inter-district and inter-school gaps in acquiring equal and easy access to digital learning tools. Even where these resources are available it has not been translated into adequate IT skill development among students. Government of Kerala through its initiative under KITE has sought to provide Hi Tech computer labs to over 9000 primary and upper primary schools in the year 2020 (<https://kite.kerala.gov.in/KITE/index.php>). The post pandemic era will open new vistas of blended learning. Adequate assistance from all stakeholders is essential in ensuring that these resources are utilized effectively and aid in creating skilled and trained students capable of coping with the challenges posed by the technology driven world.

References

1. Bajpai, B.K. (2013): 'Performance Assessment of Elementary Education towards Compliance of RTE in Uttar Pradesh', *Giri Institute of Development Studies Working Paper*, February, Lucknow.
2. Government of India (2009): *Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009*, Gazette of India, 27th August.
3. _____ (2011): *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan: Framework for Implementation Based on the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009*, MHRD, New Delhi.
4. Government of Kerala (2011): *Kerala Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules*, Kerala Gazette, 30th April. <https://kite.kerala.gov.in/KITE/index.php/welcome/ict/24>, accessed on 30th May 2021.
5. Jacob, Lida: Chairperson, Commission for Right to Education Act, Kerala, Interview at Trivandrum on 12th June, 2015.
6. Murari, Samyukta: M.A. Economics, Government College for Women, Trivandrum, Interview at Trivandrum on 17th June, 2015.
7. Rajagopal, O.: Former M.L.A, former M.P. and Union Minister of State in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Interview at Trivandrum on 9th December, 2015.

8. Rajesh, M.: Former District Project Officer, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Trivandrum, Interview at Trivandrum on 23rd June, 2015.
9. Samrudhy, S.R.: B.A. English Literature, All Saints' College, Trivandrum, Interview at Trivandrum on 17th February, 2015.
10. Sreenivasan, T.P.: Former Vice Chairman and Executive Head, Kerala State Higher Education Council, Government of Kerala, Interview at Trivandrum on 11th January, 2015.
11. UNICEF (2000): *Defining Quality in Education*, UNICEF, New York.
12. Varghese N.V. and K.S. Sajeev (1997): *Educational Process and Progress: A Study of Primary Schools in Kasaragod District, Kerala*, NUEPA, New Delhi.