

EXTENT OF ABSOLUTE POVERTY AMONG THE TRIBAL AND NON-TRIBAL FARMERS: A STUDY OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

The minimum food requirement is 'necessary but not sufficient' for the existence of mankind. A certain minimum amount of non-food items is equally important for the survival of human being. In the present study due consideration is given to the non-food items. No specific norms comparable to minimum calories requirement has far been suggested by any Government agency or individual scholars for non-food items. Due to the variation in the topography, climatic conditions, nature, type and intensity of economic activities carried out, the minimum non-food requirement also varies from country to country and even from region to region within the country. Therefore, in order to find out the value of poverty index the value of 'minimum non-food items requirement' has been worked out by calculating the ratio of total non-food expenditure to food expenditure. In this paper an attempt has been made to examine the nature and extent of poverty among the tribal and non-tribal farmers in Himachal Pradesh with the help of nutritional and nutritional plus approach.

Keywords: Nature, Extent, Absolute Poverty, Himachal Pradesh

INTRODUCTION

The poor people live without fundamental freedoms of action and choice that the better-off take for granted. They often lack adequate food and shelter, education and health deprivations that keep them away from leading the kind of life that everyone values. They also face extreme vulnerability to ill health, economic dis-location and natural disasters. They are often exposed to ill treatment by institutions of the state and society and are powerless to influence key decisions affecting their lives. Poverty is measured both in relative and absolute terms. The relative poverty is measured in terms of inequalities of income and is found to exist even in the most affluent societies, the absolute poverty is measured in terms of minimum calorie norms required to keep a worker in normal health and efficient working position. In the State of Himachal Pradesh during the year 1994 about 258859 households (i.e. 26.69percent) were falling below the poverty line. During the years 2002-07 the highest percentage of poor i.e. 54.15 per cent exist in Chamba district followed by Lahaul and Spiti district (43.50 percent). The whole of Kinnaur district Lahaul and Spiti district and Pangi and Bharmour block of Chamba district are inhabited by the tribal population. The lowest percentage of poor in the State of Himachal Pradesh has been recorded in Una and Kullu district of the State. The overall percentage of poor in Himachal Pradesh in 2002-07 was 25.81 per cent which came down to 21.9 per cent in 2011-12. In the present study an attempt has been made to examine the nature and extent of absolute poverty among the tribal and non-tribal farmers. The present study based upon both primary and secondary data. A multistage random sampling technique has been adopted in order to select a representative sample of 200 farmers out of which 100 from tribal and 100 from non-tribal area. At the first stage all districts arranged in an ascending order on the basis of population and one tribal and non-tribal district viz.; Kinnaur and Mandi has been selected randomly. At the second stage all the blocks in the selected districts has been arranged in an ascending order on the basis of population and one block in each district has been selected randomly, i.e. Pooh block in Kinnaur district and Dharampur block in Mandi district. After this all panchayats in selected blocks have been arranged in ascending order on the basis of population and one panchayat in each selected block has been selected randomly, i.e., Pooh panchayat in Pooh block and Sadhot Panchayat in Dharampur block respectively. After this a sample of 200 farmers has been selected randomly according to



their land holdings in selected panchayats. Absolute level of poverty has been worked with the help of 'normative approach' by taking into account both the minimum food and non-food items required for keeping a worker and/or a person in good health and in efficient working condition. In the present study the value of poverty line has been worked out on the basis of the value of minimum nutritional requirements, i.e. 2400 calories per consumer unit per day as has been suggested by the Government of India, Planning Commission. The value of the minimum per consumer unit per day consumption basket has been calculated by multiplying the quantities of different food items by their respective actual retail prices prevailing in the sample area during the period of investigation i.e., 2015-16. The total number of males, females and children of varying age have been converted into 'standard consumer units' or 'adult man value' or persons by applying the scale of coefficient suggested by the Indian Council of Medical Research. Keeping in view the hilly topography covered with snow and the extreme climatic variations in the area under study the minimum food requirements are 'necessary' but not 'sufficient' for the survival of mankind. Therefore, in order to work out the value of 'poverty line', allowances have also been made to the minimum non-food requirements by working out the ratio of total non-food expenditure to the total food expenditure of the poor households.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Expenditure on Food Items: In the tribal area per consumer unit per day consumption expenditure on food items came out Rs. 53.87, out of which the expenditure on cereals, was maximum i.e. 35.31 per cent followed by vegetables (18.56 percent), milk (11.51percent), non-vegetables (11.14 percent), oil (7.43 percent), pulses and sugar (5.57 percent each), fruits (3.99 percent) and other items (0.93 percent) respectively.

Table: 1: Expenditure on food items among the sample farmers

(Value in Rs.Per Consumer Unit per Day)

Sr. No.	Particulars	Tribal	Non-Tribal	Overall
1.	Cereals	19.02 (35.31)	18.10 (39.69)	18.56 (37.31)
2.	Pulses	3.00 (5.57)	2.10 (4.60)	2.55 (5.13)
3.	Vegetables	10.00 (18.56)	9.00 (19.74)	9.50 (19.10)
4.	Milk	6.20 (11.51)	5.00 (10.96)	5.60 (11.26)
5.	Meat	6.00 (11.14)	4.00 (8.77)	5.00 (10.05)
6.	Oils	4.00 (7.43)	3.00 (6.58)	3.50 (7.04)
7.	Sugar	3.00 (5.57)	2.00 (4.38)	2.50 (5.03)
8.	Fruits	2.15 (3.99)	2.00 (4.38)	2.08 (4.18)
9.	Sub Total (1 to 8)	53.37 (99.07)	45.20 (99.12)	49.29 (99.09)
10.	Other Items*	0.50 (0.93)	0.40 (0.88)	0.45 (0.90)
11.	Grand Total (9+10)	53.87 (100)	45.60 (100)	49.74 (100)

Source: Primary Probe

*Includes value of Salt, Spices and Intoxicant etc.

Note: Figures in parentheses denote percentages to the column total.

While in the non-tribal area the per consumer unit per day consumption expenditure on food-items at local prevailing prices came out Rs. 45.60, out of which the expenditure on cereals was maximum i.e. 39.69 percent followed by vegetables (19.74 percent), milk (10.96percent), non-vegetables (8.77 percent), oil (6.58 percent), pulses (4.60 percent), sugar and fruits (4.38 percent each) and other items (0.88 percent) respectively.

At overall level the per consumer unit per day consumption expenditure on food-items at local prevailing prices came out Rs. 49.74, out of which the expenditure on cereals was maximum i.e. 37.31 per cent followed by vegetables (19.10 percent), milk (11.26 percent), non-vegetables (10.05 percent), oil (7.04 percent), pulses (5.13 percent), sugar (5.03 percent) and fruits (4.18 percent) and other items (0.90 percent) respectively.

Expenditure on Non-Food Items: In the tribal area per consumer unit per day expenditure on non-food items came out Rs. 45.10, out of which the expenditure on fuel and light was maximum i.e. 15.74 percent followed by amusement, fairs and festivals (11.20 percent), clothing (11.09 percent), education (11.08 percent), expenditure on other items (9.98 percent), footwear (9.09 percent), conveyance and postage charges (7.76 percent), expenditure on furniture, utensils, beddings (7.32 percent), health (6.65 percent), expenditure on toilet requisite and cosmetics (5.10 percent) and sports and toys (4.99 percent) respectively.

Table 2: Expenditure on non-food items among the sample farmers

(Value in Rs. Per Consumer Unit perDay)

SN	Particulars	Tribal	Non-Tribal	Overall
1.	Fuel & light	7.10 (15.74)	6.30 (17.51)	6.70 (16.52)
2.	Clothing	5.00 (11.09)	3.00 (8.34)	4.00 (9.86)
3.	Footwear	4.10 (9.09)	3.00 (8.34)	3.55 (8.75)
4.	Amusement, Fairs, Festivals etc.	5.05 (11.20)	4.00 (11.12)	4.53 (11.17)
5.	Sports & Toys	2.25 (4.99)	2.10 (5.84)	2.18 (5.38)
6.	Education	5.00 (11.08)	4.10 (11.40)	4.55 (11.22)
7.	Health	3.00 (6.65)	2.00 (5.56)	2.50 (6.17)
8.	Expenses on Toilet Requisite & Cosmetics	2.30 (5.10)	2.02 (5.61)	2.16 (5.33)
9.	Conveyance & Postage Charges	3.50 (7.76)	3.10 (8.62)	3.30 (8.14)
10.	Expenses on Furniture, Utensils an Beddings etc.	3.30 (7.32)	3.20 (8.89)	3.25 (8.01)
11.	Other*	4.50 (9.98)	3.15 (8.76)	3.83 (9.45)
12.	Grand Total	45.10 (100)	35.97 (100)	40.55 (100)

Source: Primary Probe

* Expenditure on Newspapers, Books, Magazines, Fee & payment to Doctors, Lawyer and Patwari.

Note: Figures in parentheses denote percentages to the column total.

While in non-tribal area the per consumer unit per day consumption expenditure on non-food items at local prevailing prices came out Rs. 35.97, out of which the expenditure on fuel and light was maximum i.e. 17.51 percent followed by education (11.40 percent), amusement, fairs and festivals (11.12 percent), expenditure on furniture, utensils and bedding (8.89 percent), expenditure on other items (8.76 percent), conveyance and postage charges (8.62 percent), clothing and footwear (8.34 percent each), sports and toys (5.84percent), health (5.56 percent) and expenditure on toilet requisite and cosmetics (5.61percent) respectively.

At overall level the per consumer unit per day consumption expenditure on non-food items at local prevailing prices came out Rs. 40.55, out of which the expenditure on fuel and light was maximum i.e. 16.52 percent followed by education (11.22 percent), amusement, fairs

and festivals (11.17 percent), other items (9.45percent), footwear (8.75percent), conveyance and postage charges (8.14 percent), expenditure on furniture, utensils, bedding (8.01percent), expenditure on health (6.17 percent) sports and toys (5.38 percent), health (5.56 percent) and expenditure on toilet requisite and cosmetics (5.33 percent) respectively.

Ratio of non-food items to food items: The ratio of non-food items to food items in the tribal, non-tribal and overall level has been worked out 83.72, 78.88 and 81.52 percent respectively.

Table 3: Ratio of non-food items to food items

(Value in Rs. Per Consumer Unit per Day)

SN	Particulars	Tribal	Non-Tribal	Overall
1.	Value of Food Expenditure	53.87 (54.43)	45.60 (55.90)	49.74 (55.09)
2.	Value of Non-Food Expenditure	45.10 (45.57)	35.97 (44.10)	40.55 (49.51)
3.	Total Value (1+2)	98.97 (100)	81.57 (100)	90.29 (100)
4.	Ratio of Non-Food Expenditure to Food Expenditure	83.72	78.88	81.52

Source: Primary Probe

Note: Figures in parentheses denote percentages to the column total.

VALUE OF POVERTY OF INDEX

The composition of per consumer unit per day recommended average diet which has been suggested by the Nutrition Experts is presented in Table 4. The data in the table reveals the value of recommended diet at the local prevailing prices in the tribal area the value of per consumer unit per day diet at local prevailing prices has been worked out Rs. 53.25. The per consumer unit, per month, value of the recommended diet, in the study area came out Rs. 1597.50. The ratio of total non-food expenditure to the total food expenditure has been worked 83.72 percent, which account for Rs. 1337.43 per consumer unit per month for meeting out the minimum non-food requirements. By taking into account the value of both the food and non-food items, the value of poverty index came out Rs. 2934.93 (i.e. Rs. 1597.50 on food items and Rs. 1337.43 on non-food items).

Table 4: Recommended diet among the Sample Farmers

(Value in Rs. and Quantity in Grams per Consumer Unit Per Day)

SN	Particulars	Quantity	Tribal	Non-Tribal	Overall
1.	Cereals	540	32.40	21.60	27.00
2.	Pulses	12	1.44	1.20	1.32
3.	Vegetables	99	8.91	6.93	7.92
4.	Milk	80	4.40	4.00	4.20
5.	Non-Veg.	05	2.50	2.25	2.38
6.	Oils	15	1.95	1.80	1.88
7.	Sugar	13	0.65	0.59	0.62
8.	Fruits	05	1.00	0.50	0.75
Total			53.25	38.37	46.06

Sources: C. Gopalan, B. V. Ramashastri and S. C. Balasubramaniam, *the Nutritive Values of Indian Foods*, the Indian Council of Medical Research, Hyderabad, 1980, p. 10.

TRIBAL

The per consumer unit per month required consumption expenditure on food items= Rs. 53.25 X 30 = Rs. 1597.50.

The per consumer unit per month required Consumption expenditure on non-food items (i.e. 83.72 per cent of the per consumer unit per month value of food items = Rs. 1337.43.

Value of poverty index = Rs. 2934.93.

NON-TRIBAL

The per consumer unit per month required consumption expenditure on food items= Rs. 38.37 X 30 = Rs. 1151.10.

The per consumer unit per month required Consumption expenditure on non-food items (i.e. 78.88 per cent of the per consumer unit per month value of food items = Rs. 907.99.

Value of poverty index = Rs. 2059.09

OVERALL

The per consumer unit per month required consumption expenditure on food items= Rs. 46.06 X 30 = Rs. 1381.80.

The per consumer unit per month required Consumption expenditure on non-food items (i.e. 81.52 per cent of the per consumer unit per month value of food items = Rs. 1126.44.

Value of poverty index = Rs. 2508.24.

Further in the non-tribal area the value of per consumer unit per day diet at local prevailing prices has been worked out Rs. 38.37. The per consumer unit, per month, the value of recommended diet came out Rs. 1151.10. The ratio of total non-food expenditure to the total food expenditure has been worked 78.88 percent, which account for Rs. 907.99 per consumer unit per month for meeting out the minimum non-food requirements. By taking into account the value of both food and non-food items, the value of poverty index came out Rs. 2082.95 (i.e. Rs. 1166.10 on food items and Rs. 919.82 on non-food items).

At overall level the value of per consumer unit per day diet at local prevailing prices has been worked out Rs. 46.06. The per consumer unit, per month, value of the recommended diet, in the study area came out Rs. 1381.80. The ratio of total non-food expenditure to the total food expenditure among the poor has been worked 81.52 per cent, which account for Rs. 1126.44 per consumer unit per month for meeting out the minimum non-food requirements. By taking into account the value of both food and non-food items, the value of poverty index came out Rs. 2508.24 (i.e. Rs. 1381.80 on food items and Rs. 1126.44 on non-food items).

Extent of Absolute Poverty: The extent of absolute poverty among the sample households with help of Nutritional and Nutritional plus Approach is presented in Table 5.

**Table5: Extent of Absolute Poverty among the Sample Households-
A Nutritional and Nutritional plus Approach**

Particulars	Tribal		Non-Tribal		Overall	
	Nutritional Approach	Nutritional Plus Approach	Nutritional Approach	Nutritional Plus Approach	Nutritional Approach	Nutritional Plus Approach
No. of Poor persons	172	214	167	203	339	417
Percentage of Poor	48.47	57.07	40.24	48.91	42.91	52.78
Total no. of Persons	375	375	415	415	790	790

Source: Primary Probe

The data in the Table 5 depicts that in the tribal area with the help of nutritional and nutritional plus approach 48.47 and 57.07 percent persons were poor. While in non-tribal area these percentages came out 48.47 and 57.07 percent respectively. At overall level with the help of nutritional and nutritional plus approach 42.91 and 52.78 percent persons were poor among the sample households.

CONCLUSION

The results reveal that with the help of nutritional and nutritional plus approach the percentage of poor was comparatively high in tribal area as compared to non-tribal area. This happened due to the uneconomic size of holdings, high percentage of illiteracy and dependency, meager household income, lack of gainful employment opportunities, lack of irrigation facilities and high burden of debt repayment. In order to reduce the incidence of poverty and to raise the levels of living of the poor households Government must increase the availability of productive assets, provide skill formation and gainful employment opportunities. The emphasis should be placed on minor irrigation, soil conservation works, rural roads, safe drinking water, employment generated education and health facilities. Government must provide High yield variety of seeds, manure, fertilizer, sapling of fruit plants and insecticides-pesticides on subsidized rate to the poor farmers. Livestock of improved breed should be distributed to the poor farmers on subsidized rate so they can enhance their farm income. In the last it can be concluded that the success of any set of policies and programmes adopted for the eradication of poverty entirely depends upon the availability of finances, loyal, honest and efficient administration, honest politicians, dedicated intellectuals and institutional reforms which will impart a greater re-distributive bias to public policies in favour of the poorest sections of the society on the one hand and an active involvement and participation of the weaker sections in this vital undertaking on the other.

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