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# CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	PERCEPTUAL MAPPING OF STUDENTS FOR ENGAGEMENT IN CLASS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF STUDENT APATHY TOWARDS HIGHER EDUCATION <i>DR. D. S. CHAUBEY &amp; K. R SUBRAMANIAN.</i>	1
2.	EFFECTIVE FOOD PACKAGE DESIGN AND CONSUMER ATTRACTION <i>DR. R.RAJESWARI &amp; T.RAMYA</i>	9
3.	DO ASIAN STOCK MARKETS INTERACT? <i>PRASHANT JOSHI</i>	14
4.	A STUDY ON CUSTOMER MOBILE APPLICATIONS USAGE PATTERN AND THEIR SATISFACTION <i>ABDULKHADAR J. MAKANDAR, SANJAY HANJI, BRIJMOHAN VYAS &amp; DR. M. M. MUNSHI</i>	19
5.	EVALUATION OF RAJIV AAROGYASRI SCHEME IN ANDHRA PRADESH AND SURVEY OF PATIENTS OPINION <i>DR. D. SHREEDEVI</i>	25
6.	STUDY ON THE TIME DURATION OF INTERNSHIP IN HOTEL MANAGEMENT COURSE CURRICULUM <i>DR. ANIL CHANDHOK &amp; DR. BHAVET</i>	30
7.	HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT MODEL FOR NEW GLOBAL ECONOMY: OVERVIEW <i>DR. GEETANJALI V. PATIL, DR. V. S. PURANIK &amp; RAMESH S. NAIK</i>	40
8.	CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS ON SERVICE QUALITY IN BANKING SECTOR: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS IN RAJASTHAN REGION <i>DR. POONAM MADAN &amp; PREETI SHARMA</i>	45
9.	DETERMINANTS OF FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT INFLOWS IN THE TRANSITION ECONOMIES OF EUROPEAN UNION <i>YILMAZ BAYAR &amp; HASAN ALP OZEL</i>	49
10.	INCIDENCE OF POVERTY AMONG THE RURAL LABOUR HOUSEHOLDS: A STUDY IN CHITTOOR DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH <i>DR. TRIPURANENI JAGGAIAH &amp; DR. TRIPURANENI BALAJI</i>	54
11.	FINANCIAL BEHAVIOUR Vs. PERSONALITY TYPES: A MECHANISM TO IMPROVE CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT <i>NATARAJ B &amp; MADHUMITHA T</i>	58
12.	FINANCIAL INCLUSION: AN INSTRUMENT THAT PULLS MILLIONS OF RURAL INDIANS OUT OF THE CLUTCHES OF POVERTY - A REVIEW <i>ANSHA JASMIN S.N</i>	65
13.	POVERTY ERADICATION THROUGH INTEREST FREE FINANCE: A CASE STUDY <i>AHSANATH.MK</i>	69
14.	EMPLOYEE RETENTION STRATEGIES: AN OVERVIEW <i>RUHANI SOHAL</i>	72
15.	A STUDY ON EMPLOYEES' INVOLVEMENT TOWARDS EFFECTIVENESS OF TEAM WORK IN GLOBAL SCENARIO <i>K. KALAIVANI &amp; P. SASIKALA</i>	75
16.	COMPARATIVE STUDY OF UNORGANISED AND ORGANISED RETAIL: THE CASE OF INDIAN GROCERY MARKET AT NCR <i>SHASHANK MEHRA &amp; MOONIS SHAKEEL</i>	78
17.	HAPPINESS MAKES GOOD BUSINESS SENSE <i>PRAKRITI CHAWLA &amp; SHILPI ARORA</i>	85
18.	RISK MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN YES BANK <i>DR. N. FATHIMA THABASSUM</i>	89
19.	THE EFFECT OF THE CHANGE IN SHORT-RUN FOREIGN DEBT STOCK IN TURKEY ON THE OUTPUT VOLATILITY <i>DR. OZGE UYSAL SAHIN &amp; DR. SEVDA AKAR</i>	93
20.	A CASE STUDY ON SELF-HELP GROUPS: MARKETING PERSPECTIVES & LEARNING <i>SOUVIK ROY &amp; CHAITALI DATTA</i>	98
	<b>REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK &amp; DISCLAIMER</b>	101

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## INCIDENCE OF POVERTY AMONG THE RURAL LABOUR HOUSEHOLDS: A STUDY IN CHITTOOR DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

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### ABSTRACT

The world development report (1990) defines the poverty as the inability to attain a minimal standard of living. Poverty is normally defined by a critical level of money income or expenditure. This is just one of the multiple dimensions of poverty, which ranges from the basic economic needs of individuals to their social, political and cultural rights. UNDP (2000) addresses poverty as a denial of human rights. According to it, good health, adequate nutrition, literacy and employment are not favours or acts of charity bestowed upon the poor by governments and international agencies. They are basic human right, as valid today as they were 50 years ago when the universal declaration of human rights was adopted. Poverty, therefore, needs to be explained from a perspective of sustainable human development. Poverty is a multi-dimensional concept. The new method The Human Development Report 2003 of UNDP has provided the details of Human Poverty Index (HPI) and the method of calculating HPI. Keeping in view the methodology for the estimation of Human Poverty Index (HPI), the formula has been adopted in calculating HPI for the study. In constructing HPI, 6 deprivations have been taken into consideration.

### KEYWORDS

rural labour, poverty.

### INTRODUCTION

Income-poverty, defined as a basic minimum calorie intake, captures a limited perspective of what poverty really connotes. Human poverty is more than income poverty - it is the denial of choices and opportunities for living a tolerable life (UNDP 1997a). Human deprivation has several forms which include poor survival chances, unjust employment of children, child prostitution, bonded labour, hunger, environmental pollution, domestic violence, and social exclusion, which arise out of caste and gender discrimination and are not related to income in a predictable manner. To capture all the facets of poverty, a multi-dimensional, people-centered concept is required which takes into account along with income and consumption, other aspects of human life.

For a long time, development had been conceived as economic development and often related to the level and structure of income. Though economic growth, increasing trade and investment, technological advance - are very important, but development process tends to focus on more and more people rather than mere economic growth of any nation or state in all. Subsequently, focus has shifted to human development (HD), which is about people, about expanding their choices to live full and creative lives with freedom and dignity. The concept of human development has got wide acceptance among academicians, researchers, planners and policy makers and is equally accepted among developing and developed countries. The genesis of the term human development as popularized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) may be found in the writings of the Nobel laureate, Amartya Sen and Mahbubul Haq. In 1990, the UNDP brought out its first global Human Development Report (HDR). Ever since its publication, under the guidance of Mahbubul Haq, efforts have been made to devise and further refine the measures of human development (McGillivray, 1991, McGillivray, White 1994, Srinivasan, 1994, Streeten, 2000, Neumayer, 2001, Noorbakhsh, 1998a, 1998b, 2002, Malhotra, 2006). The report ranks countries on the basis of composite index, popularly known as Human Development Index (HDI) 2 for most of the countries in the world.

The process of human development can be seen as a 'process of expanding the capabilities of people' (Sen, 1984). Capabilities refer to the alternative combinations of functioning the person can achieve, and from which a person can choose a collection. The notion of freedom is embodied in the term 'capabilities' - the range of options a person has in deciding what kind of a life to lead (Muellbauer, Kanbur, Williams, 1987, Sen, 1992, 1993). Human development has also been defined as the process of 'enlarging the range of people's choices' (UNDP, 1990) as fundamental to expanding human choices is building human capabilities and increasing the range of accessible things. Acquisition of knowledge, the need to lead a long and healthy life and the need to have access to resources required for a decent standard of living have been identified as three essential choices for the attainment of human development. Additional choices valued by people include political, economic and social freedom to opportunities for being creative, productive and also to enjoy personal self-respect and guaranteed human rights. Therefore, the development must be more than just an expansion of income and wealth. Its focus must be people (UNDP, 1990). In this line, the introduction of ethical considerations has been the hallmark of human development approach. Pushing the frontiers of measurement has always been a keystone of this approach. The approach has enabled innovative thinking about progress by capturing the simple but powerful idea that the development is about much more than income. Seen in this perspective, main goal of development is- people free from poverty as high poverty level is synonymous with poor quality of life, deprivation, malnutrition, illiteracy, indicating low level of human development. Over the years the HDI has introduced new measures to evaluate progress in reducing poverty.

As far as poverty is concerned, poor's are identified as those unable to get minimum required calorie per day to keep body and soul together. The proportion of population not able to attain the specified level of expenditure is segregated as poor (Bhagwati, 1988). Using such an approach, the Planning Commission, Government of India, has been establishing the head-count ratio (HCR) of the poor at state level, separately for rural and urban areas, for over three decades. The Planning Commission has defined poverty line as a minimum consumption expenditure requirement for an average per capita food energy norm of 2400 and 2100 calories per day for rural and urban areas, respectively (Minhas, Kansal, Jagdish, Joshi, 1986, Bagchi, Choudhury, 1989). The required per capita income, to get minimum food to meet the required calorie, is rupees (Rs.) 328 (\$ 8) and Rs.456 (\$11) per month in rural and urban areas, respectively, at 1999-2000 prices. That is, a family of five requires at least Rs. 1640 and Rs. 2280 income per month, respectively. The Planning Commission recently (March 20th, 2012) has revised the required per capita income to Rs. 22.42 (\$ .44) and Rs. 28.35 (\$ .56) per day i.e. Rs. 672.6 (\$13.32) and Rs. 850.5 (\$16.84) per month in rural and urban areas, respectively, to meet minimum consumption expenditure.

### NEED FOR THE STUDY

The design of the study, the concepts and definitions and the schedules have all hinged to this basic objective. The living conditions of the rural labourers vary from region to region depending upon the stage of agricultural development, irrigation and agro-climatic conditions. Chittoor district is one of the districts of

chronic drought prone Rayalaseema region. The agriculture in the district mainly depends on well irrigation and rainfed crops. Against this backdrop, the present region specific micro level study on " **Incidence of Poverty among the Rural Labour Households: A Study in Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh**," has been taken up.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To assess the incidence of poverty among the rural labour households.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### SAMPLING DESIGN

The sample households for the study have been selected using three stage random sampling method. The study is confined to Chittoor district. All the mandals in the district have been considered for the selection of first stage units of sampling. Based on the levels of irrigation, i.e., percentage of net irrigated area to net area sown, all the revenue mandals have been classified into three groups: group A, group B and group C. The mandals in group A have more than 60 per cent of net irrigated area to net sown area. The mandals in group B are moderately irrigated with the percentage of net irrigated area to net sown area ranging between 30 and 60 per cent. The mandals classified under group C category are less irrigated with less than 30 per cent of net sown area under irrigation. From each group, 2 mandals were selected. The study, on the whole, covered 6 revenue mandals representing 3 groups. From each mandal, three villages were selected using random sampling procedure as second stage units of sampling. Rural labour household is the last stage unit of sampling. From each sample village, 17 rural labour households have been selected randomly. Above all, the study covers three hundred and six sample rural labour households which spread over eighteen revenue villages from six revenue mandals in the district.

Rural labour household has been defined for the study on the basis of income criteria. The rural labour household is one which derives more than fifty per cent of the annual family income in the form of wages earned through hiring out labour of the members of the family in the preceding year of enquiry. Rural labourer is defined as one who does manual work in rural areas in agricultural and / or non-agricultural occupations in return for wages in cash or kind or both.

### COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The study has 2009-10 agricultural year (July-June) as the reference year. The required data on various aspects of the study were collected with the help of a pre-tested schedule specifically designed keeping in view the objectives of the study. Interview method was used as a tool to explore the required information through personal discussions held with the head of the sample household. Sufficient cross checks have been made to ensure reliability and accuracy of data. All the filled in schedules were passed for tabulation after proper scrutiny of data. The human development index measures average achievement in a country in the basic dimensions of human development like a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living. The human poverty index measures the deprivations in the various dimensions of human development. Human poverty index has been worked out and the results are used in the analysis of poverty among the sample rural labour households.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Of late interest in redefining poverty has been triggered off by the initiative undertaken by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in devising two new measures of human deprivation, viz. the Capability Poverty Measure (CPM) in 1996, and a Human Poverty Index (HPI) in the 1997 report. Commenting on the inadequacy of the income measure of poverty, the 1995 report states that "income-poverty" is only a part of the picture. Just as human development encompasses aspects of life much broader than income, so poverty should be seen as having many dimensions' (UNDP 1996: 27). While the reports attract attention to human deprivation to complement income measures of poverty, their focus is on the percentage of poor who lack the basic or minimal capabilities (1996) as well as access to minimal facilities (1997) rather than on the average attainment of minimum capabilities by individuals.

The CPM is a composite index which considers the lack of three basic capabilities. The capability to be well-nourished and healthy, represented by the proportion of children under five who are underweight; the capability for healthy reproduction, represented by the proportion of births unattended by trained health personnel; and the capability to be educated and knowledgeable, represented by female illiteracy. These three deprivations have equal weights. It is evident that the index captures deprivations suffered by women and children.

The HPI extends the concept of CPM to other dimensions. Three indicators are included: (i) survival deprivation represented by people not expected to survive up to the age of 40 (ii) deprivation in education and knowledge represented by the adult illiteracy rate and (iii) deprivation in economic provisioning which is a combined index of the indicators of population without access to safe drinking water, sound health services and of undernourished and malnourished children below the age of 5.

A common shortcoming of the CPM as well as the HPI is that they do not distinguish between outcome and process indicators, and deprivations based on the individual, household, community and region. An additional shortcoming arises from the differing dimensions of the indicators used for calculating the indices.

Despite its limitations, the HPI may be considered to be a useful first attempt at including education and health deprivations in the measurement of poverty.

### THE HUMAN POVERTY INDEX FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (HPI-1)

The Human Development Report 2003 of UNDP has provided the details of Human Poverty Index (HPI) and the method of calculating HPI.

While the HDI measures average achievement, the HPI-1 measures deprivations in the three basic dimensions of human development captured in the HDI:

- A long and healthy life-vulnerability to death at a relatively early age, as measured by the probability at birth of not surviving up to the age of 40.
- Knowledge-exclusion from the world of reading and communications, as measured by the adult illiteracy rate.
- A decent standard of living - lack of access to overall economic provisioning, as measured by the unweighted+9 average of two indicators, the percentage of the population without sustainable access to an improved water source and the percentage of children underweight for age.

Calculating the HPI-1 is more straightforward than calculating the HDI. The indicators used to measure the deprivations are already normalized between 0 and 100 (because they are expressed as percentages), so there is no need to create dimension indices as for the HDI.

In fact, the measure of deprivation in a decent standard of living also included an indicator of access to health services. But because reliable data on access to health services are lacking for recent years, in this year's Report deprivation in a decent standard of living is measured by two rather than three indicators - the percentage of the population without sustainable access to an improved water source and the percentage of children under weight for age.

### CALCULATING THE HPI-1

The formula for calculating the HPI-1 is as follows:

$$HPI-1 = \left[ \frac{1}{3} (P_1^\alpha + P_2^\alpha + P_3^\alpha) \right]^{\frac{1}{\alpha}}$$

Where,

- |          |   |   |
|----------|---|---|
| $P_1$    | = | Probability at birth of not surviving up to the age of 40 (times 100)   |
| $P_2$    | = | Adult illiteracy rate   |
| $P_3$    | = | Unweighted average of population without sustainable access to an improved water source and children under weight for age |
| $\alpha$ | = | 3   |

### THE HUMAN POVERTY INDEX FOR SELECTED OECD COUNTRIES (HPI-2)

The HPI-2 measures deprivations in the same dimensions as the HPI-1 and also capture social exclusion. Thus, it reflects deprivations in four dimensions.

- A long and healthy life - vulnerability to death at a relatively early age, as measured by the probability at birth of not surviving up to the age of 60.
- Knowledge-exclusion from the world of reading and communications, as measured by the percentage of adults (aged 16-65) lacking functional literacy skills.



- A decent standard of living - as measured by the percentage of people living below the income poverty line (50% of the median adjusted household disposable income).
- Social exclusion-as measured by the rate of long-term unemployment (12 months or more).

**CALCULATING THE HPI-2**

The formula for calculating the HPI-2 is as follows:

$$HPI-2 = \left[ \frac{1}{4} (P_1^\alpha + P_2^\alpha + P_3^\alpha + P_4^\alpha) \right]^{\frac{1}{\alpha}}$$

Where,

- P<sub>1</sub> = Probability at birth of not surviving up to age of 60 (times 100)
- P<sub>2</sub> = Adult functional literacy skills
- P<sub>3</sub> = Population below income poverty line (50% of median adjusted household disposable income)
- P<sub>4</sub> = Rate of long-term unemployment (lasting 12 months or more)
- a = 3

Keeping in view the above methodology for the estimation of Human Poverty Index (HPI), the following formula has been adopted in calculating HPI for the study. In constructing HPI, 6 deprivations have been taken into consideration.

$$HPI = \left[ \frac{1}{6} (P_1^\alpha + P_2^\alpha + P_3^\alpha + P_4^\alpha + P_5^\alpha + P_6^\alpha) \right]^{\frac{1}{\alpha}}$$

Where,

- P<sub>1</sub> = Illiteracy
- P<sub>2</sub> = Non-Availability of safe drinking water
- P<sub>3</sub> = Inadequate access to health facilities
- P<sub>4</sub> = Low calorie intake below the poverty norm
- P<sub>5</sub> = Unemployment (days)
- P<sub>6</sub> = Poor Housing
- a = 3.

Table 1 presents the values of the human poverty index for the sample rural labour households.

**TABLE-1: MEASURES OF DEPRIVATIONS IN HUMAN POVERTY INDEX FOR THE SAMPLE RURAL LABOUR HOUSEHOLDS**

Si.No.	Indicator of Deprivations	Percentage of Deprivation Ns
1	Illiteracy	60.78
2	Non-availability of safe drinking water	38.72
3	Inadequate health facilities	49.67
4	Low calorie intake below the poverty norm	48.46
5	Unemployment	53.86
6	Poor housing	47.71
Human Poverty Index		50.74

From the table it is observed that the human poverty index for all the sample households is estimated 50.74 per cent, which indicates that the sample households are deprived of the basic indicators to the extent of 50.74 per cent. Among the six dimensions, the highest deprivation is observed in the case of illiteracy at 60.75 per cent with unemployment following closely with 53.86 per cent. The deprivation due to inadequate health facilities, low calorie intake and poor housing are worked out to 49.67 per cent, 48.46 per cent and 47.71 per cent respectively. The lowest deprivation is observed in the case of inadequate safe drinking water with 38.72 per cent.

Table – 2, shows the percentage of deprivation of different indicators of the human poverty index of sample households of different income groups.

**TABLE-2: MEASURE OF DEPRIVATIONS IN HUMAN POVERTY INDEX OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS OF DIFFERENT INCOME GROUPS**

Si.No.	Indicator of Deprivations	Income Levels (in Rupees)			
		Below-12000	12000-18000	18000-24000	Above24000
1	Illiteracy	63.64	64.66	61.64	52.05
2	Non-availability safe drinking water	39.42	38.59	33.13	34.16
3	Inadequate health facilities	68.18	38.79	53.42	52.05
4	Low calorie intake below the poverty norm	59.97	52.33	44.30	42.74
5	Unemployment	25.08	52.77	60.92	58.72
6	Poor housing	61.36	50.00	46.58	36.99
Human Poverty Index		56.78	51.12	51.87	47.75

It is observed from the table that the human poverty index is worked out to 56.78 per cent for the households having an income of less than Rs. 12,000. Among the six dimensions, inadequate health facilities account for 68.18 per cent of the deprivation followed by illiteracy with 63.64 per cent and poor housing with 61.36 per cent. Low calorie intake has been one of the deprivations accounting for 59.97 per cent, lack of safe drinking water for 39.42 per cent and lack of gainful employment for 25.08 per cent. For the sample households in the income bracket of Rs. 12000-18000, the human poverty index is estimated at 51.12 per cent. Among the various deprivations, illiteracy, low calorie intake, unemployment and poor housing are the major 5 factors accounting for 64.66 per cent, 52.33 per cent, 52.77 per cent and 50.00 per cent respectively. The human poverty index for the sample households in the income group of Rs. 18000-24000 is estimated at 51.87 per cent. Illiteracy and unemployment are the major factors of deprivation accounting for 61.64 per cent and 60.92 per cent respectively. Inadequate health facilities account for 53.42 per cent of deprivation.

For the sample households in the top income bracket of above Rs. 24,000, human poverty index is estimated at 47.75 per cent. Unemployment accounts for 58.72 per cent of deprivation as against 52.05 per cent of deprivation in the case of illiteracy and inadequate health facilities.

Table 3 shows the human poverty index of the sample households of different groups of mandals.

TABLE-3: MEASURE OF DEPRIVATIONS IN HUMAN POVERTY INDEX OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS OF DIFFERENT GROUPS OF MANDALS

Sl. No.	Indicator of Deprivations	Percentage of Deprivations		
		Group A	Group B	Group C
1	Illiteracy	54.90	61.76	65.89
2	Non-availability of safe drinking water	28.12	34.13	41.82
3	Inadequate of health facilities	46.08	62.75	40.20
4	Calories intake below the poverty norms	49.32	55.81	39.87
5	No. of days unemployed	52.17	54.84	54.45
6	Inadequate of pucca house	66.67	36.27	40.20
	Human Poverty Index	52.00	53.31	49.31

For the sample households in the mandals classified under Group A, human poverty index is worked out to 52.00 per cent. Among the six dimensions, poor housing is one of the major deprivations accounting for 66.67 per cent followed by illiteracy with 54.90 per cent and unemployment with 52.17 per cent. The human poverty index of sample households in group B mandals is estimated at 53.31 per cent. Inadequate health facilities are identified as the chief factor of deprivation accounting for 62.75 per cent followed by illiteracy accounting for 61.76 per cent and low calorie intake for 55.81 per cent. For the sample households in group C, the human poverty index is worked out to 49.31 per cent. Among the six dimensions, illiteracy is the major deprivation with 65.89 per cent followed by unemployment with 54.45 per cent.

## CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions emerge from the results of the study.

- Sizeable proportions of the rural labour households are still living below the poverty norm on the basis Human Poverty Index (HPI).
- The rural laborers remain unemployed for a significant part of the year for want of work. The employment of these labourers depends on the availability of irrigation facilities which intern determines the cropping pattern and cropping intensity.
- Sizeable proportion of the rural labour households is indebted.
- Implementation of suitable employment generation schemes in the lean periods, the schemes which can provide non-farm and off farm employment opportunities and the programmes which can supplement the wage income shall push these unfortunate rural labourers to come out of the poverty problem.
- It is important to note that the income of these labourers depends on the rainfall and agricultural production conditions of the regions in which they are living. Successive failure of monsoons often creates disaster in the levels of living of the rural labour households. It underlines the need of expansion of economic activities and educational facilities along with their equitable distribution.

Thus, it can be concluded that to raise the level of human development concrete efforts at grass root level, not only towards raising economic resources and developmental opportunities but also to ensure their equal distribution, should be made.

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