

Sociological Understanding of The Interface Between Poverty And The Community: A Study of Mahashas of J&K, India

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Abstract: Understanding poverty is a major area in the study of social stratification and inequality. The reasons of poverty could not be evaluated by any uni-dimensional approach, rather it requires overall holistic approaches to deal with the issue. In India especially when we have to deal with the structure based on caste system, issue becomes more complex and thus we need multi-dimensional lens to find the solutions. This study is an endeavour to explore the underlying reasons of poverty among one of the scheduled caste community in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir, India. The community under study is Mahasha. The results showed that the pathetic condition of the community cannot be attributed singly to economic, cultural or social factors. In fact it seems to be a complex combination and it is difficult to separate them as cause and effect.

Keywords: Poverty, Culture of Poverty, Scheduled Caste, Role of Capital

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I INTRODUCTION

The question of poverty has come to the centre stage with the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD), held in March, 1995 in Copenhagen, Denmark, expressing its commitment to eradicate it. Poverty still needs to be researched if we seriously wish to move from pious platitude and administration of untested prescriptions. While the problem of poverty is Global, its solution will have to be local. According to Yogesh Atal, "we have to bring back local culture in our scheme of things. This is the essence of the new demand for "Think Globally, Act Locally". For more than 5 decades the world has focused on development and yet the destination is not in sight. The prime focus of development work in the past was on the eradication of poverty. And yet it is poverty that has defied all prescriptions (Atal, 2002).

II CONCEPT AND DEFINITION OF POVERTY

The origin of the concept of poverty can be traced back to the writings of ancient religious thinkers, moralists and scriptures of the theological states. They viewed poverty as an act of God, a curse on sinners for their vices. This view was very much prevalent up to the end of 19th century in the west and has been taken by some anthropologists (Jain, 1987). In India, poverty is like an old disease and the demand for its amelioration has gathered momentum with an increasing awareness of what poverty means. Every society has tried to define poverty in their terms but in majority everyone has agreed on the vision of minimum or good life in the society.

In general, two types of poverty have been outlined in the economic literature: the absolute and the relative. In India, various studies have been conducted to define poverty in absolute terms. The first attempt of defining poverty was made in the Indian Labour conference, 1957. Then Planning Commission (1962), Calorie criteria recommended by Task Force (1977), Dandekar and Rath (1971), Bardhan (1973) and Ahluwalia (1978) defined poverty on the basis of calorie intake. Sundaram and Tendulkar (2003) studied Headcount Ratio, Poverty Gap Index to measure poverty. Gupta (2004) used Human Poverty Index and Capability Poverty Index. Ray and Lancaster (2005) used alternative definitions of poverty line.

Famous economist, Amartya Sen (1985, 1999) also tried to overcome some of the limitations of the poverty based on only income approach and focused on multidimensional aspects of poverty which includes people's capabilities and potentialities in dealing with deprivation (Kakwani & Silber, 2008). Himanshu (2010) is the first who, used new methodology of expert group, gave a new poverty line for India. Hence poverty is viewed as a product of a lack or deficiency in such instrumental variables as economic opportunities, political freedom, social facilities, transparency guarantees, and protective security (Alkire, 2007).

The pioneering study of poverty by first sociological researcher, 'Rowntree' in England, at the turn of 20th century defined it as, occurring in families where total earnings are insufficient to obtain the minimum necessities for the maintenance of merely physical efficiency. But what we mean by necessities? Adam Smith in 1776 pointed out, "I understand not only the commodities which are indispensably necessary for the support of

life, but whatever the custom of the country renders it indecent for creditable people, even of the lowest order, to be without" (Townsend, 1979).

Therefore, the definition of an absolute standard of living is not without its problems. This difficulty comes when we compare living standards between people or groups of people. What unit of measurements to be used or the parameters that should be employed for comparisons are only a few issues that complicate the process. Poverty has different meaning to different people and is the source of much debate in the public arena. This is largely due to the fact that there are many potential causes of poverty, ranging from those that could be categorised as causes stemming from one's personal choices and actions, while other are causes stemming from structural constraints and inequalities in society or the causes that arise from government welfare entitlement programs (Westover, 2008).

The poverty question is much more complicated and it requires different strategies to handle it. Poverty should not be taken as uni-dimensional aspect rather it is a multi-dimensional concept. Studies by Wang and Alkire (2009), Alkire and Foster (2010) and Wang et al. (2013) suggested that poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Definitions of poverty and its causes vary by gender, age, culture, and other social and economic contexts. They have brought conditions of housing, health, education and other indicators into the evaluation system so that they can comprehensively measure and analyze the poverty.

In general, poverty is a social phenomenon in which a section of the society is unable to fulfil even its basic necessities of life. When a substantial segment of society is deprived of the minimum level of living and continues at bare subsistence level, that society is said to be plagued with mass poverty (Neelaiah, 2017). Thus, for understanding poverty, various approaches are needed to measure or define poverty. Poverty is essentially a relative term, and each person's feelings and experiences of poverty are individual and unique but the feeling of "powerlessness" and "resourcefulness" is possessed by all the poor people. The statistics showed that the percentage of persons below poverty line has declined from 41.8 in 2004-05 to 25.7 in 2011-12 for rural areas and same has declined from 25.7 to 13.7 for urban areas in the same period (Handbook on social welfare statistics, 2016). But still it has been seen that the incidence of poverty among Scheduled Castes is significantly higher than the non-scheduled castes.

In Indian context it is seen that caste and class usually go together, where in caste which is lower in social hierarchy is also poor. Weber pointed that caste and class, economically, act as status groups and the status generally gives a distinctive style of life and a certain consciousness of kind to belonged groups. Mukherjee also mentioned that Caste and class became a catchy formulation to denote the social structure of Indian Society (Mukherjee, 1999). Thus the present study is an attempt to understand this caste-class nexus by focusing on the interface between poverty and a community. After independence, "Indian government proceeded to promote the individual rights and equality of all. Lower caste advancement was considered a necessary first step in the promotion of individual rights" (Saxena, 2017). The community under study is one of the SC of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) called Doom or in local language "Mahasha".

III OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the study is to find out the reasons of poverty among Mahashas who are considered to be far beyond economic deprivation. For instance, the incidence of land distribution under land reform programme of the government of J&K after independence could not help them to raise their living standards substantially. Thus, the paper examined the other causes of poverty among the Mahashas that work in combination with economic aspect. Correspondingly, the study also brings out certain suggestions to tackle poverty among SCs in particularly the community called Mahasha.

IV METHODOLOGY

The universe for the present study is 120 households, out of which 40 households were taken as the sample for the study. The method of sampling was interval sampling method. This technique was appropriate as Mahasha community in the selected area is more or less a homogenous one with most members being at the same social, cultural and economic level. From the total population every third household was selected by this method to constitute a sample for an in-depth study. As the universe constituted 120 households, residing in this particular settlement, one-third of the household suited the requirement of the study, keeping in view the homogeneity of the population. The total sample size therefore became 40.

The tool for the collection of data was interview schedule through which the first-hand information collected by given respondents. The interview schedule was preferred over the questionnaire, because of high incidence of illiteracy in the population. In-depth interviews and informal discussions were also conducted especially with the older generation of the community to get the historical background of the community.

Study location

The area selected for the study is the Kalibari area of Kathua district. The community under study settled in this area after migration. Kalibari is the starting point of Kathua district of J&K. Kathua is the south-eastern corner of the state. The said community is geographically dispersed in three parts of the Kalibari region namely: ChakSonaNupa, ChakGanda and RakhSarkarPalai. Before the Town Area Committee was constituted the whole community came under rural criteria but the shunting was done, two parts remained in rural and one part, that is RakhSarkarPalai, came under Town Area Committee.

The area under study is urban part which came under Town on 15th December, 2000. The area is now known as ward no. 16. This area is not exclusive to the community being studied. Mahashas have maintained their exclusivity. The upper part of the colony is of this community. It includes around 120 households. Earlier, the whole ward belonged to them (they became landlords after the Land Reform Act, 1976), but later they sold their land to others at cheaper rates. With the settlement of others, this place got colonized wherein mostly middle class people came to reside. This colony is named as Shiva-Nagar. According to 2011 census Kathua has population of 616,435 of which number of males and females were 326,109 and 290,326 respectively. SC population constitutes 22.9% of the total population.

Situating theMahashasfrom their background

The members of the community residing in the area under study are not the original habitants of the area but are migrants. The area basically belonged to some influential people, mainly to a person called General KhudaBaksh, which was later on inherited by his son Taj-Mohi-ud-in, who was also the minister of Public distribution and consumer affairs, Government of Jammu and Kashmir. In addition to the higher authorities, the part of land was also belonged to some landlords of Punjab. It was basically used for agricultural purposes and the members of the community were the landless tillers. They were employed as workers and were exploited by landowners, or Zamindars. When land reforms were introduced, the Zamindari system was abolished and the Mahashas were given ownership of the land where they used to work as cultivators.

It was quite remarkable that the landless Mahashas became the owner of land and it was a landmark decision implemented by the government of J&K to upgrade economic and social conditions of the downtrodden community. Everywhere in the world, land is perceived to be the most valuable possession. In the traditional mould and in agriculture economy it is even more valuable because along with the financial security it also carries great social status and psychological satisfaction.

When the Land Reform Act was introduced it was believed that the economic and social condition of members of the present community would improve. However, their living condition did not improve as expected. It is more or less the same as it was in the earlier times. The Mahashas are still facing different forms of deprivation like low living standard, low literacy rate and other social issues like wife-battering, gambling and drinking.

When the Mahasha community members became landowners they started selling their lands at cheaper rate and whatever money they got from that land was used for their daily expenses. Considerable amount was wasted on drinking and gambling by men though some of them constructed their houses. As a result of which their agricultural land turned into residential colonies and they do not even have a small piece of land which they can use for cultivation purposes. They have again become landless tiller and thereby even leading more miserable life.

In earlier Zamindari system they were tied in Jajamani ties and managed to get food grains in lieu of their work. Besides, now a day, large scale of labour migrated from other states which are posing a big challenge to the Mahashas who work as daily wage earners. Local people also prefer these migrant labourers because as compared to the Mahashas these migrants are considered to be hard working and regular. Thus, the coming of these migrant labourers, '*Bhagrias*'* in local language, created problems for the Mahashas as they do not find work easily and whatever little they owned has already been lost to a considerable extent.

Further, a large chunk of the amount that they got from selling their land was used in construction of houses and these houses mostly lack basic amenities like toilet, bathrooms and kitchen. The lack of toilet facility inside the house is a major problem for the women of this community as they have to go to far off places for attending nature's call. Besides this, large family size has also become a big contributor to the already existing poverty. In addition to this social-evils like drinking, smoking and gambling are other reasons for their poverty.

The pathetic condition of the community cannot be attributed singly to either economic factors or social factors. In fact it seems to be a complex combination of both and it is difficult to separate them as cause and effect. Poverty has become a social-cultural aspect of the society. This study is an endeavour to explore the underlying reasons for the worsening condition of the community to understand, as to why, in spite of all the exposure, it has not been able to break the shackles of socio-economic shambles they are living in. The problem of study holistically comprises of economic as well as social-cultural parameters, not in exclusivity but in conjunction with each other.

Theoretical framework of the study

This study uses the lens of theoretical triangulation to examine the phenomenon of poverty among Mahashas. Theoretical triangulation is an approach that uses multiple theoretical perspectives to interpret the results of a study. This study enjoys the eclectic mix of Bourdieu's concept of capital and Lewis's concept of culture of poverty. The culture of poverty theory has been employed to find out the reasons for the community's present conditions and the degree of its backwardness. Poverty is measured both in materialistic and idealistic terms. Poverty "is the lack of resources necessary to permit participation in the activities, customs and diets commonly approved by society" (Townsend, 1979, p. 88). Thus it includes material possession as well as the cultural aspects of human beings. The concept of the culture of poverty was introduced by the American anthropologist, Oscar Lewis.

Cultural traits and material possession shape individual's personality. Further, the social conditions create social reality, by which people make their assumptions, perceptions and meanings of particular situations and circumstances. Culture is a process of adaptation in which people share the same set of ideas, interests and tastes. Oscar Lewis (1965) prepared a list of 70 traits of 'culture of poverty' like poor housing condition, unemployment, absence of savings, lack of privacy, physical violence in child training, fatalism, mistrust, strong feelings of powerlessness, marginality, helplessness, female centred family, dependence, inferiority etc. (Coward et.al, 1973).

Miller (1976) studied impoverished area of rural south of the U.S. From the analysis of secondary data he found that the people from culture of poverty have some traits different from the rest and the main reason of their exclusion is the low rate of social participation. Miller supported Lewis's theory and argued that there are some evidences of cultural traits which supported poverty.

Using Bourdieu's capital as a broader theoretical lens, the questions related to the structural, economic and cultural aspects of poverty among the Mahashas have been explored. Bourdieu divides 'capital' into economic, cultural and social capitals (Richardson, 1986). He is the first sociologist who attempted to enlarge the concept of capital, which was generally used in economic sense and emphasized its social and cultural aspects. In his own words:

It is in fact impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms and not solely in the one form recognized by economic theory (Moore, 2012, 101).

Studies done by Wilson (1987), Sampson & Wilson (1995), Wilson (1996) and Hannerz (2004) pointed out that no doubt cultural and structural factors foster poverty and inequality but culture also stems from economic and structural conditions of a group/community/race etc. Chilman (1966) outlined some traits like family, lifestyles, behavioural and attitudinal traits of the very poor people and pointed out that due to their (poor people) different life-styles and tastes they are not able to become the part of dominant American society.

V DATA PRESENTATION

Socio-economic status of the Mahashas:

The occupational structure is a very significant indicator to assess the levels of economic development of a village in different population group. More than that it also acts like a major component in the establishment of general, social and economic position (Singh, 1989). In India caste is believed to be the most influential factor in determining a person's dignity in terms of socio-economic indicators. Since Mahasha have lost major part of their land which they got due to one of the reform policies of the government so now they are engaged in different set of activities for their livelihood. Due to large family size and poor conditions in most of the cases both male and female of the community are engaged in some kind of wage labour, though female labours are less in number.

Majority of the male members of this community are engaged in unskilled daily wage menial jobs (32.5%), followed by those who are barbers (5%) or are in private jobs (12.5%). Besides this, few are retired army personnel. So far as the types of occupation taken up by women are concerned, majority (15%) are working as a maid in nearby colonies, and only a few are working in tailor shops or in beauty parlours. It has also been found that females work harder than males but their educational status is so low that they are not able to fetch any prestigious jobs.

Following occupational status it has been said that income is one of the most important criteria for measuring the economic status. Mahasha community of this region constitutes a low-income group and majority of them have a meagre income to subsist upon. Majority belonged to the group that makes less than Rs.10, 000 per month. This depicts that Mahashas are financially very weak and some families find it hard to even fulfil the basic necessities of life. Thus, due to low income capability, Mahashas stay indebted to shop keepers (from where they get their grocery or other items for use) most of the time. Though their debts are not so high but they feel burdened by it. They have no other option but to borrow at the time of crisis as their meagre incomes are unable to deal with emergencies like illness, marriage etc.

Table no 1: Economic Profile of the community

Occupation	Percentage
Daily Wager	32.5
Private Employee	12.5
Retired Govt. employee	5
Housemaid/Servant	15
Tailor	10
Barber	12.5
Any other	12.5
N	40
Income and Savings	
Monthly (income in Rs.)	
0-10,000	35
10-20,000	25
20-30,000	20
30-40,000	10
40000 & above	10
N	40

Large family size of the community has also given them an additional push towards poverty. Family consideration and influences play an important role in poverty measurement. Poverty is directly correlated to increase in family size as well. The larger the family, the lower the per capita income and lower the standard of living (Ahuja, 2003). It is evident from the data that the size of family ranges from 2 members to 12 members. It is also seen that family burden is very high among them. Apart from this the demand for male progeny and young girls who are getting married at an early age are also the major factors responsible for large family size. Moreover, the family planning methods endorsed by the community are adopted only after 4-5 children are born.

Table no 2: Family size of the Respondents

Number of family members	Percentage
1-4 members	22.5
4-8 members	52.5
8-12 members	15
12 and above	7.5
N	40

An attempt has also been made to assess the household assets of respondents to evaluate the economic position and their attitude towards various belongings. Though regular visits and after establishing rapport with them, it is found that although they have basic amenities at their home, but majority of the items are 2nd or 3rd hand or are gifted by their masters especially to women workers.

In addition, it is also seen that the consumption and pattern of various food items also depends up on the income and economic condition of the people. Few studies examined that the impact of increment in food prices day by day is impacting the income and poverty in the developing countries of Asia and Africa adversely (Ivanic and Martin, 2008; De Hoyos and Medvedev, 2009; World Bank, 2010).

In India the major items of consumption are; wheat, pulses, vegetables, sugar, edible oil and rice. It has been found that instead of being a rice eater, these people prefer to consume wheat due to its low price. In vegetables they mostly cook potatoes due to easy availability and cheap rate. Milk is used only for the purpose of making tea and even children never get to drink milk. It is also found that instead of three times they are able to cook and eat only twice, i.e., in the morning and in the evening. Children up to 14 years of age get their lunch in nearby Government Middle School as Mid-Day meal. It is also seen that the major motivation of parents to send their children to schools is the availability of free uniforms and food in government schools.

In India the provision of providing mid-day meal started in August 1995, under the banner of, 'The National Program of Nutritional Support' to Primary Education. This scheme has mandated cooked meals in all public primary schools. India's midday meal scheme is the largest school nutrition program in the world. It has been observed that India in 2006 has provided lunch to 120 million children in government primary schools every school day (Kingdon, 2007). Powell et al. (1998), Jacoby E. and E. (1996) and Kremer and Vermeersch (2004) have also found that the school breakfasts in Jamaica, Peru and Kenya, respectively has impacted on

school enrolment. Khera (2002) finds that 23% increase in enrolment in 63 Rajasthan schools happened due to the introduction of school lunches. Dr`eze and Goyal (2003) found increment in the enrolment by 18%, 11%, and 14% in their Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Karnataka village studies, respectively.

Table no 3: Consumption pattern of Major Food Items

Food Item	Household using food items		Percentages of Frequency of consumption of Food Item					
	Numbe rs	Percenta ge	Daily	Weekl y	Monthl y	Occasio nal	Sometim es	Nev er
Rice	31	77.5	35	27.5	5	2.5	7.5	22.5
Wheat	40	100	100	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Maize	10	25	0	0	0	10	15	75
Pulses*	40	100	100	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Vegetables **	40	100	100	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Edible Oil	40	100	100	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Ghee***	25	62.5	10	10	20	0	22.5	37.5
Sugar	40	100	80	0	0	0	20	0
Milk	30	75	35	0	0	0	40	25
Curd	30	75	5	0	0	0	70	25
Tea	38	95	85	0	0	0	10	5
Sweets	38	95	0	0	0	90	5	5
Non- Veg****	36	90	40	37.5	7.5	2.5	0	50
Fast Food	12	30	0	0	0	10	20	70
N^= 450								
N^=Multiple Responses								
NA= Not applicable								

*- Major pulses they consumed are; Udad and Channa Dal, **- Major consumption of vegetable is Potatoes, ***- Dalda Ghee, ****- majority of the consumption is by male members of the society.

Pooja Devi, aged 30, a female respondent, whose husband works as unskilled manual labourer and she herself works as housemaid in 4-5 houses in a nearby colony, reveals:

We usually cook food two times in a day. We cannot spend money to cook meals three times like other (especially rich people) do. We have to save our money for fuel and wood. In spite of this we don't have time to cook as well. We have to work outside the home from morning to evening. Thus, one meal of the 'day' time usually misses out. Although during work hours we sometimes get tea and snack from our masters. And children get their food from government school. After coming back from the work we have to go for collection of wood and sometimes our children do accompany us.

Thus, the above case makes it evident that they cut down on their meals to survive and isalso dependent on others. However, it has also been found that they do consume non-vegetarian food sometimes. But majority of the male members consume it outside the home and after return from work. The habit of drinking is also very much prevalent among them. Bhutto Devi, another female respondent, considered it to be the major factor of their poverty:

My Husband earned Rs350/daybut not able to get work for the whole month. Local people have now started hiring 'Bhagrias'. Most of the time, whatever my husband earns does not contribute fully for the daily expenses. Moreover, when my husband gets full day salary, he spends his for his own pleasure that is on drinking, gambling, smoking. That is why I work as housemaid to bear my household needs.

Cultural ethics and their values

Many researchers noted that the life style of the poor differs in certain respects from other members of the society. Poverty and life styles share common characteristics. The circumstances of poverty are similar in many respects in different societies. Similar circumstances and problems tend to produce similar responses, and these responses can develop into a culture, that is learned, shared, and socially transmitted behaviour of a social group (Upreti, 2004). Earlier the concept of 'poverty' was predominantly thought of under the supervision of economists. Even poverty scholars provided a rather superficial understanding of culture. Cultural sociologists

produced so many theoretical and empirical researches which proved the link of cultural factors with poverty and inequality.

Many scholars immersed in sociological traditions believed that culture itself stems from economic and structural conditions. Culture includes many aspects of social structure. But the main aspects which have been considered here are; age at marriage, concept of dowry, decision-maker of the family, religion and their faith, reasons of voting, their personal views on poverty etc.

Attitude towards marriage: The age of marriage of girls in this community has been found to be between 18-19 years. Maximum respondents are in favour of it. On the other hand maximum age of boys for marriage is 23-24 years. Marriage has also been found to be the ending point of career and education for girls. Krishna Devi reveals the fact:

When a girl is not able to complete her education it is better to marry her off, so that we can get rid of our tensions as soon as possible, as a girl is the property of another house. Moreover what is the fun of giving higher education to them, as we are not able to provide them with higher education in meagre income?

Some studies also depict that in India majority believes and depicts girl's position as '*parayadhan*' (the financial asset of a future marital family) who is destined for reproductive, caring and household roles and this leaves caregivers with little incentive to educate their daughters (beyond the minimum) or to delay their marriage (Dasra, 2015). Besides we still have cultural values which typically favour a boy, and the social norms which drive many parents to have higher educational aspirations for their sons than for their daughters. The mind-set of Indians may be revealed through a famous phrase quoted in India 'bringing up a daughter is like watering a plant in another's courtyard' (Crivello et al., 2014)

Furthermore, the concept of dowry and male dominance is very much prevalent in this community. Majority of males in the community are the decision makers of the family. While interacting with the respondents, I also came to know about the items they usually give as dowry. Dowry in this community includes- T.V, Air-Cooler, Refrigerator, few clothes, and jewellery. Jewellery mostly made of silver. Due to low economic condition they are not able to exceed this.

Beliefs and faith

Religion is a very important social indicator which provides a strong bond of social fabric among the masses especially in Indian context. It has a strong bearing on the economic activity of the people too. But gradually with the increasing level of education the attitude towards religion is changing. Weber is of the opinion that, different social classes believe in different functions of religion. For example the economically privileged classes do not need to search for salvation; religion for them has the function of legitimising their life pattern and social status in the society (Weber 1966).

Among Mahashas, it has been found that all the respondents believe in God and perform some or other ritual practices. Besides they have faith in black magic and consult pundits (priests) during their bad times. At the time of illness they first consult black magician instead of doctor. On the other hand functionally literate persons believe less in such things due to high level of awareness.

Political awareness

Politics is so deeply interwoven in the fabrics of our daily life that no facet of it can remain in political isolation. The Scheduled castes that have a major consolidated vote bank have also become more conscious about their political rights and privileges (Mohammad, 2006). But their level of awakening is not uniform across the country. Among Mahashas it has been seen that all the respondents are very active and vote during elections but they are not aware of the overall political picture of the country. Rather their knowledge is limited to local politics.

VI DISCUSSION

Poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon and is caused by a variety of factors. Its manifestation also differs from context to context. There is no linear chain of cause and effect, an interrelated web of economic, social, psychological, cultural and political factors influence the occurrence and persistence of poverty. Real poverty may not be apparent and apparent poverty may not be real. Thus there cannot be a single strategy to eradicate it in different societal contexts. Only monetary measures may not be a reliable way to determine poverty or classify a person as a poor.

In the case of Mahashas it is also seen that there are many reasons of poverty among them. They are not just economically backward but poor in culture and social status as well. Members of the community are benefitted by some government schemes but are not able to make full use of it. Lack of awareness, illiteracy, bad-habits is the main reasons of their backwardness. The concept of dowry is very much prevalent, and there is gender-discrimination in various aspects. Patriarchal dominance is also prevalent. Women are considered as

subordinate and are not involved in the decision making process. Government is helping poor sections through various welfare schemes which can improve their condition economically, but the management capability is absent in the community.

Understanding poverty is a major area in the study of social stratification and inequality. Most theories of the poverty focus on the characteristics of the poor, rather than the relationship between poverty and the great accumulations of wealth found in the most capitalist societies (Johnson, 2000). In case of Mahashas the vicious circle of poverty has been found, which is the complex combination of culture, social and economic aspects. Majority of them are illiterate and a considerable number of them have already sold their land which was supposed to be their property asset for the future.

VII CONCLUSION

Thus, poverty among them is not only perpetuated because of low income and occupational status but equally due to the mismanagement of money and lack of the habit of saving as well as wasting on such things as drinking. It has been concluded that the picture of poverty among Mahashas is not only taken by uni-dimensional approach. They are plagued from many other aspects of poverty. Thus a multi-dimensional criterion of poverty has been found among them. New methods are in need to be inculcated to identify the complexity of poverty among the lower caste people in India. The multi-dimensional aspect provides us an alternative lens through which we can completely understand the complexity of the present issue. The multi-dimensional aspect leaves a departure from traditional uni-dimensional approach towards many steps further. Poverty among Mahashas has never resulted from the lack of one thing but there are many interlocked factors which are clustered in their life's experiences.

Economic criterion alone is not sufficient for poverty measures and poverty alleviation. The socio-economic profile of the respondents suggests that they are still trapped in the circle of illiteracy, large family-size, and low occupational structure. On the whole, all these issues are interconnected and present in them from generation to generation. Sociological understanding says that poverty cannot be alleviated simply by giving money to poor or transferring money from 'rich to poor'. A holistic approach, proper frame of mind, congenial milieu, and access to legitimate means for ascendancy, are other essential requisites. The nexus between caste and class as this study shows still continues and is a reason for great concern.

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