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Dealing With Hunger, Malnutrition and Eradicating Poverty

Neelam C Dey
Sh. JJT University, Rajasthan, India
neelam.phd16@gmail.com

Abstract: The population of Christian Community in India is about 2.3% (Census 2011). There are few states where good number of Christian populations fall below Poverty line. The rural and remote areas of states like Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Bihar have a large number of such Christian people around. The material basis of survival includes livelihood, Housing and Health. The hunger, malnutrition and poverty are the outcome of large disparities in income slabs but also due to discrimination in income opportunities etc. The people of Christian Community in India living in rural and remote areas have to fight hard to come out from the situation for which they have to move to Megapolis/ Metropolitan Cities in the search of food, good living and better health prospects, eg. Girls working as House maids in Megapolis/Metropolitan Cities where they get complimentary food, shelter and health facilities along with their salary. The Christian people of urban areas are generations of educated Christian people who migrated to cities after independence for better life. The goal of this paper is to focus on issues of Christian Community with regard to the hunger, malnutrition and poverty and to assess; as to how the understanding, knowledge and implementation of the Government Schemes can help these to be dealt with firmly.

Key Words: Hunger, Malnutrition, Poverty, Christian Community, Global Hunger Index

1. *Introduction*

The material basis of survival includes livelihood, Housing and Health. Hunger, malnutrition and poverty are the outcome of large disparities in income slabs and also due to discrimination in income opportunities etc. The people in India living in rural and remote areas have to fight hard to come out of the situation for which they have to move to Megapolis/ Metropolitan Cities in the search of food, better living and better health facilities, e.g. Girls working as Housemaids in Megapolis*/Metropolitan Cities where they get complimentary food, shelter and health facilities along with their salary. The Christian people of urban areas† are generations of educated Christian people who migrated to cities after independence for a better life.

1.1 CHRISTIAN RELIGION CENSUS 2011(State-wise)

States	Total Population	Christian Population	% of the Total Population
Nagaland	1,978.502	1,739,651	87.93
Mizoram	1,097,206	9563,331	87.16
Meghalaya	2,966,889	2,213,027	74.59
Manipur	2,855,794	1,179,043	41.29
Arunachal Pradesh	1,383,727	418,732	30.26 %
Goa	1,458,545	366,130	25.10 %
Andaman Nicobar Islands	380,581	80,984	21.28 %
Kerala	33,406,061	6,141,269	18.38 %

* supercity, also called a megaregion, is a group of metropolitan areas which are perceived as a continuous urban area through common systems of transport, economy, resources, ecology, and so on.
† *Christian* communities do not merely exist in rural areas but also *urban* locales , they actively transform space into place and in doing so generate a society of urban Christians.

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Sikkim	**610,577**	**60,522**	**9.91 %**
Puducherry	**1,247,953**	**78,550**	**6.29 %**
Tamil Nadu	**72,147,030**	**4,418,331**	**6.12 %**
Tripura	**3,673,917**	**159,882**	**4.35 %**
Jharkhand	**32,988,134**	**1,418,608**	**4.30 %**
Assam	**31,205,576**	**1,165,867**	**3.74 %**
Orissa	**41,974,218**	**1,161,708**	**2.77 %**
Chhattisgarh	**25,545,198**	**490,542**	**1.92 %**
Karnataka	**61,095,297**	**1,142,647**	**1.87 %**
Dadra Nagar Haveli	**343,709**	**5,113**	**1.49 %**
Andhra Pradesh	**84,580,777**	**1,129,784**	**1.34 %**
Punjab	**27,743,338**	**348,230**	**1.26 %**
Daman and Diu	**243,247**	**243,247**	**1.16 %**
Maharashtra	**112,374,333**	**1,080,073**	**0.96 %**
Delhi	**16787941**	**146093**	**0.87%**
Chandigarh	**1,055,450**	**8,720**	**0.83 %**
Gujarat	**91,276,115**	**658,618**	**0.72 %**
West Bengal	**60,439,692**	**316,178**	**0.52 %**
Lakshadweep	**64,473**	**317**	**0.49 %**
Uttarakhand	**10,086,292**	**37,781**	**0.37 %**
Madhya Pradesh	**72,626,809**	**213,282**	**0.29 %**
Jammu & Kashmir	**12,541,302**	**35,631**	**0.28 %**
Haryana	**25,351,462**	**50,353**	**0.20 %**
Himachal Pradesh	**6,864,602**	**12,646**	**0.18 %**
Uttar Pradesh	**199,812,341**	**356,448**	**0.18 %**
Rajasthan	**68,548,437**	**96,430**	**0.14 %**
Bihar	**104,099,452**	**104,099,452**	**0.12 %**

Source: Census of India: 2011

1.2 Hunger, Malnutrition and Poverty

Hunger and Malnutrition[‡] are situations in which a person is not able to become satisfied with the daily need of food required for survival. The undernutrition[§] indicators speak about the health of the people. The most nutrition-deprived communities (Community Nutrition)[**] are the people who are living in the rural parts of the Country. Mostly, it harms the health of Women and as a result thereof, low level of nutrition converts into anemia, low birth weight of the Children and many other related diseases. It is an urgent need to accelerate[††] the level of nutrition among the rural people.

[‡] Malnutrition refers to all deviations from adequate and optimal nutritional status, including energy undernutrition
[§] The term 'undernutrition' is used to refer to generally poor nutritional status, but also implies underfeeding
[**] Group of activities linked to Applied Nutrition within the context of Public Health, whose main goal is to tailor individual and population food patterns according to updated scientific knowledge, in a certain region with a final aim of health promotion
[††] Measure of a well-balanced ratio of the essential nutrients such as carbohydrates, fat, protein, minerals, and vitamins in items of food or diet concerning the nutrient requirements of their consumer.

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In March 2021, National Nutrition Mission was launched to accelerate improvements in nutrition levels in India, for which annual targets have been set up, for a reduction in levels of stunting, undernutrition, anemia and low birth weight, targeted to be achieved by the year 2022. (Srivastava.S 2021).
Poverty is defined as an inability to express the feeling of 'Power' and 'Resources'. One who has 'Resources', has the 'Power' to express or to show. It is a critical situation for Policies and Politics which leads to several debates. "How we define Poverty is critical to Political, Policy and academic debates about the concept. It is bound up with explanations and has implications of solutions" (Holborn and Haralambos, 2008:214)
In Pre- Independence India, Dadabhai Naoroji, (4 September 1825 – 30 June 1917) was the first person to discuss Poverty in India. Post-Independence, Alagh Committee was a task force constituted by the Planning Commission under the Chairmanship of YK Alagh. It recommended and constructed a poverty line for rural and urban areas based on nutritional requirements and related consumption expenditure.

1.3 There are several percepts which are defined to explain the dimensions of Poverty

i. **Psychological Needs**: The amount of money which is required for a person to survive. When a person is unable to satisfy the daily needs of self, the family is known to be as Below Poverty Line. The minimum requirement for fulfilling the daily needs is Nutritional Food, Safe Shelter, Protective and Preventive healthcare[‡‡]. At that time, the cost of food required a person to earn a minimum income and source of income.
ii. **Lack of Resources**: Hunger, Malnutrition and poverty, affects people living in rural areas as well as people who are living in coastal areas of the Country because they lack resources. In forest areas, there remain loss of resources. People are agriculturists and non-agriculturists both. In coastal areas, living conditions deteriorates because of natural calamity/disasters, environmental degradation[§§] and depletion of stock for resources[***].
iii. **Frustrations**: People are frustrated if they are agriculturists because they do not have resources for industrial uses.
In such a situation, their source of income does not improvise and they are not able to come out of the situation of Poverty.
iv. **Feeling of Insecurity**: Being poor, people feel neglected and a feeling of insecurity develops in them.
v. **No social relations**: If people are poor, they do not have social relations because it is a natural phenomenon that if a person is poor, he will cut off from the Society and he will have fewer social connections.
vi. **No Materialistic Possessions**: Poor people do not have any materialistic possessions such as their own pucca house, cattle, agricultural field etc.
vii. **Falling below the minimum standard of living**: It is a fact that poverty brings down the bear minimum standard of living of any person.

The first Poverty line drawn in India in 1978 was based on a per capita daily intake of 2400 calories for the Rural and 2100 for the Urban areas. At that time, the cost of food grain to fulfil the regulating standard was Rs. 368 for the rural areas and Rs. 559 for the urban areas to buy 650 grams of food grains required for the day. The current poverty line is 1,059.42 Indian Rupees per month in rural areas and 1,286 Indian rupees per month in urban areas.

[‡‡] *Preventive healthcare* deals with the prevention of illness to decrease the burden of disease and associated risk factors. Preventive measures can be applied
[§§] Flooding and erosion are the main forms of coastal degradation,
[***] exhaustion of raw materials

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2 There are two types of Poverty :

I. Rural Poverty
II. Urban Poverty

2.1 Causes for Rural Poverty:

i. Lack of awareness, inadequate and ineffective implementation of the anti-poverty program
ii. A large number of people are engaged in agricultural and fishery
iii. Non- availability of resources for farming and other agricultural activities
iv. Low level of education
v. Very less Women cooperate in developmental activities
vi. Inter caste rivalries and conflicts
vii. Rural people are bound with customs, mores and traditions
viii. Absence of Community Education[†††]

2.2 Causes of Urban Poverty:

i. Rapidly rising Population
ii. Under-utilized resources
iii. Low economic development
iv. High Prices
v. Unemployment[‡‡‡]
vi. Underemployment[§§§]
vii. Shortage of Capital for start-up of business
viii. Social factors: caste, traditions, customs, the law of inheritance

3. Impact on Christian Community:

All the above causes equally apply to the Christian Community in India as well. In Rural Areas as well as in Urban areas, where Christian people are living, the described causes of poverty affect them badly. Most of these people do not want to leave their native places and are forced to live in Poverty or with whatever resources they have. They do not have nutritious food to eat. They have kaccha houses and before the arrival of the Monsoon every year they repair their huts so that the rainwater does not enter their shelters. Some people from Central India such as Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh are engaged in lower-grade employment in Urban Areas.

The men folk are forced to work in industrial units and women and girls are forced to work mostly as housemaids in Urban Areas. In this process of earning a livelihood and coming out from the situation of Hunger, Malnutrition and Poverty, sometimes, they fall prey to the exploiters, wrongdoers and criminals in the Cities, who mislead them to unlawful means and wrong doings. In the new generational changes in India of the 21st Century, when everyone speaks much about women empowerment, there are pieces of evidence that mostly the Christian girls from rural belt have been targeted and lured on the pretext of

[†††] programs to promote learning and social development work with individuals and groups in their communities using a range of formal and informal method
[‡‡‡] condition of one who is capable of working, actively seeking work, but unable to find any work.
[§§§] underuse of a worker because a job does not use the worker's skills, is part-time, or leaves the worker idle.

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getting a good job in cities; sometimes straight away from their villages and sometimes, when they reach big cities like Delhi and Mumbai. The Christian People living in Rural Areas are not educated enough to understand the Schemes of the Government and the initiatives run by the NGOs, on their own. They are engaged in various forms of labour with naturalistic orientations. Concerning the development of the more naturalistic viewpoint[****] of the city people, they are also engaged in various forms of work but they are mostly service class people. Most of the migrant families are the family of older generations who had migrated to the Metropolitan Cities long back in search of better opportunities for education of their children and better livelihood opportunities. These Christian families have settled families who have better resources and yet, the lack of awareness among the Christian People living in Urban Areas about the Schemes and Initiatives run by the Government and NGOs pull them back from advancement and progression.

4. Strategies to eradicate Poverty

For eradicating and alleviating poverty, following plan of action should be taken:

i. There are several Government Schemes eg., Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna, Rozgar Yojna, Swarozgar Yojna, Self-Help Groups, MNREGA /NREGA / MNREGS, Food Security Schemes, Elimination of Black Money. These schemes should reach the social groups for creating awareness of the Community.
ii. Agriculture and Industrial use items should be available at a lower cost
iii. Household Industries and initiatives for more new startups should be activated
iv. More and more Awareness Programmes should be organized in the Rural and Urban Areas as an active initiative from the Government and NGOs etc
v. More and more focus should be laid on education
vi. More and more 'Praudh Shiksha Abhiyan' and 'Evening Schools' [††††]should be started to give education to the Older People and Women of the Households
vii. Evaluation of the successful implementation of the Government Schemes should also be done on regular basis and remedial measures be taken promptly
viii. Safeguards carrying transparency in the implementation of the Schemes should be implemented and ensured
ix. It should be assured that the ultimate benefit of whole of the Welfare Schemes have reached the beneficiaries and proper monitoring system should be in place
x. The Work Plan and its relating Guidelines should be informed to the beneficiaries in effective manner and on regular basis

5. Conclusion:

The Christian Community living in the Rural and Urban Areas of the Country is facing several problems, hardships and social setback because these people are not much aware of the Progressive Schemes around them and they are not in the mainstream yet. Moreso, they do not have active participation in the Social and Political Arena of the Indian Society. They are a peace-loving, soft and a conducive Community living aloof and in a secluded way though they are the third largest

[****] Arthur Newell Strahler states: "The naturalistic view is that the particular universe we observe came into existence and has operated through all time and in all its parts without the impetus or guidance of any supernatural agency." "
[††††] course for adults that is taught in the evening rather than during the day.

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population of the Country. There is an urgent need for their upliftment so that the people of the Christian Community who are farmers, fishermen and other very low earning people also who are facing the issue of Poverty should also become beneficiaries of the Government Schemes and Programmes. It is also evident from few other related studies on issues of the Christian Community in India which have found that being a Minority Community, the Christian Community still remain marginalized on many fronts though it is the 21st Century.

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