Urban Poverty and Vulnerabilities in South West National Capital Region: Exploring the Spatial Dimension

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Abstract: *Ending poverty, bridging the development gap and to envisage a policy that is economically viable socially just and environmentally sustainable is the avowed objectives of our social planners, development strategist and policy makers. This paper is a modest attempt to look into the spatial dimension of criteria adopted by Prof. Hasim committee on urban poverty, to reflect upon the newly devised and adopted criteria of urban poverty in socio economic caste census 2011 in a spatial dimension.*

Keywords: Urban poverty, Vulnerabilities, Automatic Exclusion, Inclusion, Deprivation Indicators,

Gurgaon and Mewat are two distinctive spaces in all their contextual frameworks of process acting upon them be it religious, social, political, economic and administrative. Mewat is a culturally distinctive region, known for its economic backwardness whereas Gurgaon has its own story of economic performance peeping into these two spaces may reveal some perplexing question of urban poverty and vulnerabilities of these spaces. The present paper examines the poverty and vulnerabilities of two urban spatial unit's one ward 31 of Gurgaon and another ward 11 of Mewat districts of Haryana. The criteria of urban poverty is followed that of given by Prof.Hasim committee and the data is obtained from the draft list produced by socio-economic caste census

2011(www.secc.gov.in). Poverty, which is fundamentally a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity, it means lack of basics capacity to participate effectively in society, it means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion. It means susceptibility to violence. The World Development Report (2001) describes poverty as "pronounced deprivation of well-being". Poverty exists in all countries and is a sum total of a multiplicity of factors that include not just income and calorie intake but also access to land and credit, nutrition, health and longevity, literacy and education and safe drinking water, sanitation and other infrastructural facilities.

Loughhead (2000*)* viewed urban poverty as distinct from rural poverty as problems faced by the two are different. He argued that rural poverty can be associated with isolation, lack of roads, poor infrastructure and limited institutional presence while urban poverty is generally associated with poor quality housing, overcrowded, unsanitary slum settlements, ill-health related to spread of infectious diseases, the threat of exposure to environmental hazards and fear of eviction from illegal scatter settlements in precarious locations. In India, we conventionally equate poverty with material deprivation and define poor as those individuals whose level of per capita consumption or income falls below the chosen cut off point, or poverty line. This poverty line has been defined

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by various committees, expert groups, scholar on the basis of different criteria at different point of time all through the history. In early 1970s the Planning Commission appointed a task force on 'Projections of minimum needs and Effective Consumption Demand' under the chairmanship of Alagh (1979). The task force defined the urban poverty line as per capita consumption expenditure Rs.56.64.Later on it has been questioned, re-questioned and fresh methods were proposed by subsequent committees i.e. Lakadawala (1993), Tendulkar committee (2009) but here in this paper we have adopted the criteria proposed by Prof. Hasim, which is considered more comprehensive and effective to capture poverty and vulnerability.

Poverty in its most general sense is the lack of necessities like basic food, shelter, medical care, and safety for human life and dignity. Valentine (1968) states, "the essence of poverty is inequality. In slightly different words, the basic meaning of poverty is relative deprivation". If we look into the everyday pattern of life it reveals that certain people are at risk. These risk or susceptibility to threats are actually vulnerabilities. Vulnerability and poverty has linkages the poor people has a very high risk for illness, injury, loss of livelihood, and man-made violence. Holzmann (1999) coined the phrase Social Risk Management (SRM) refer to the social management of risks. SRM includes the broad range of formal and informal proactive and reactive risk management strategies by individuals, communities, nations and communities of nations. SRM perspective stresses how vulnerable households can be helped to better manage risks and become less susceptible to welfare losses.

Vulnerability is basically defined as the probability of experiencing a loss in the future relative to some benchmark of welfare, therefore, a household can be said to be vulnerable to future loss of welfare and this vulnerability is caused by uncertain events. The degree of vulnerability depends on the characteristics of the risk and the household's ability to respond to the risk. Coudouel and Hentschel (2000) outlined definitions and measures of vulnerability. They state vulnerability is a broad concept , encompassing not only income vulnerability but also such risks as those related to health, those resulting from violence, and those resulting from social exclusion all of which can have dramatic effects on households.

In India recently an expert group committee under the chairmanship of Prof. S. R. Hasim recommended a new methodology to look into the identification of urban poor. This committee after detailed deliberations and discussions, the Expert Group recommended a three Stage identification process (i) Automatic Exclusion (AE); (ii) Automatic Inclusion (AE); and (iii) Scoring Index. In the first stage, a household fulfilling any of the indicators given in stage one will be automatically excluded from the BPL List. The remaining households are then screened for automatic inclusion as per the criteria set in stage second. All the household satisfying criteria set in stage second are automatically included in the BPL List. The residual households are then assigned scores from 0 to 12 based on a scoring pattern. The households with score zero are added to the 'excluded' set, i.e., they are not eligible to be in the BPL List. Those households with scores from 1 to12 are to be considered eligible for inclusion in the BPL List in the increasing order of the intensity of their deprivations. That is, those with higher scores are more deprived. The sequence of automatic exclusion, automatic inclusion and scoring index is of vital importance for the proper identification of urban poor. In it's automatically inclusion criteria the

committee talk about residential, social vulnerability and occupational vulnerability and propose a criteria though identify the poor and it look into the vulnerabilities.

Table 1: Automatically Excluded Households

Indicators (Automatic Exclusion)	Ward31 (Gurgaon)	Ward 11 (Mewat)
Households which have number of dwelling rooms 4 and above (Pucca house)	13.07	5.41
Households possessing 4-wheelers	10.57	4.50
Households possessing A C	5.07	NIL
Households possessing Computer/Laptop with internet	1.19	3.60
Households having any three of these: Refrigerator, Landline phone, Washing Machine, 2- wheeler vehicle	19.48	14.41
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	49.39	27.93
Source : Socio- Economic Caste Census (SECC- 2011)		

On applying the Hasim committee criteria of automatic exclusion on the wards of Gurgaon and Mewat one striking revelation is the development among the two districts and in terms of automatic exclusion nearly 50 per cent people are above the poverty line in the ward of Gurgoan whereas in that of Mewat it is around 28 per cent (Table 1). However, people who get excluded due to laptop and internet is higher in the ward of Mewat. Households with assets such as 4- wheelers, AC, washing machine are largely used by better off groups. The results clearly indicates that households in ward 31 are on upper hand and have better socio- economic condition and a richer resources and asset base. Therefore, it can be inferred that level of development in ward 31 of Gurgoan is at better end than that of ward 11 of Mewat. Total number of household excluded is a manifestation of economic value possessed by the household total number of household excluded are higher in case of Gurgaon which

indicate the good level of socio-economic condition of Gurgaon.

World Development Report (2001) highlights the interface between empowerment, security, opportunity and poverty. Use of the term "vulnerability" has proliferated in recent times, the term refers to the relationship between poverty, risk, and efforts to manage risk. Social Risk Management (SRM) is a new means of looking at poverty, risk, and risk management that has recently been presented in the World Bank's Social Protection strategy. The SRM perspective addresses how vulnerable households can be helped to better manage risks and become less susceptible to welfare losses. There is a great inclination among scholars to look at poverty through vulnerabilities.

Moser and Holland (1998) define vulnerability as, 'the insecurity of the well-being of individuals, households, or communities in the face of a changing environment'. They note that since people move in and out of poverty the concept of vulnerability better captures

processes of change than static measures. The idea that poor are more vulnerable is an idea which is well accepted in the literature. Poverty and vulnerability are not synonymous, but are closely related many households that are now not poor are certainly vulnerable to falling into poverty. But vulnerability to poverty, using common economic definitions of poverty, is not the only form of vulnerability that exists. Many non poor are vulnerable to poverty and also to other negative outcome. If we glance the automatic inclusion table (Table 2) in all the six indicators condition of Mewat is not as compare to the Gurgaon. Automatic inclusion criteria is the one where the condition of household is gauged through occupational vulnerability and social vulnerability the first three indicator speak of occupational vulnerability and population living in the ward of Mewat is more at risk. One notable feature here is on second indicator, it is the ward of Gurgaon which has high vulnerable population, which speaks of informality and uneven development in Gurgaon. Since the second indictor is rag picking and such akin occupation and the phenomenon is more in Gurgaon due to urban waste dump yards in such cities. Whereas in terms of social vulnerability indicator five which is concerning they the bread earner of the household and it is nearly 5 per cent population in Mewat's ward where no able bodied person is there, which speaks of low human resource.

Table 2: Automatically Included Households

AUTOMATIC INCLUSION BY OCCUPATIONAL VULNERABILITY			
AI	Indicators	Ward 31	Ward 11
1	Households having no income from any source	2.79	9.00
2	Households having member (including children) engaged in a vulnerable occupation like beggar/rag picker, domestic worker (who are actually paid wages) and sweeper/sanitation worker /mali)	14.42	4.50
3	Households with members daily wagers or irregular wagers	10.62	23.42
	TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	27.82	36.94
AUTOMATIC INCUSION SOCIAL VULNERABILITY			
4	Child-headed household	0.50	NIL
5	Households with no able-bodied person aged between 18 and 60 years	0.62	4.50
6	Households with adult members either disabled, chronically ill or aged more than 65 years	0.21	NIL
	TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	1.32	4.50
AUTOMATIC INCLUSION RESIDENTIAL VULNERABILITY			
7	If the household is houseless	NIL	NIL

8	If the household has a roof and wall made of plastic / polythene	0.25	NIL
9	If the household has a house of only one room or less with the material of wall being grass, thatch, bamboo, mud, un-burnt brick or wood and the material of roof being grass, thatch, bamboo, wood or mud	1.1	NIL
	TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	1.21	NIL
Source: Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC- 2011) Note:-AI stands for Automatic Inclusion			

Apart from the above discussion Prof. Hasim committee, some more indicator to capture social and occupational vulnerability. The very first indicator which is how many household are there which are headed by a female. Its high in case of the ward 11 of Mewat. In the social vulnerability the indicator of literacy has performed very badly in case ward 11.

Table 3: Socially Vulnerable Households

	Indicators	Ward 31	Ward 11
SV 1	Female-headed households	0.73	4.50
SV 2	Household with a widow below the age of 50 years as a member of that household	1.130	1.80
SV 3	Scheduled Caste (SC) households	6.19	NIL
SV 4	Scheduled Tribe (ST) Households	NIL	NIL
SV 5	Households with no literate adult	3.05	9.90
SV 6	Households with no adults educated up to primary level	3.31	9.90
SV 7	Households with disabled and chronically ill person	1.14	1.80
	TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	15.55	27.93
Source: Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC- 2011) Note:-SV stands for Social Vulnerabilities			

There is a sharp contrast in terms of education in the ward 11 and 31. Education which is indicative of level of social development has a low performance in ward 11. In the social vulnerability indicator number five, which is household with no literate adult it is nearly 10 per cent (table 3). An overall nearly 28 per cent household are vulnerable in case of ward 11 which belong to Mewat where as it is nearly 15 per cent in case of Gurgaon's ward which is only half of that of Mewat. Mewat which was a part of Gurgaon itself earlier but poses a

distinctive character in all the socio-economic parameters.

Level of development seems contrasting in Gurgaon and Mewat. Occupation which speaks of level of economic development and many other socio-economic processes revealing here that nearly 80 per cent people in ward 11 are occupationally vulnerable. In ward 11 workers are more in to casual and informal work, which make them insecure, fragile, prone and vulnerable to poverty traps. However Gurgaon is often projected as a developed districts but a nearly 45% household occupationally vulnerability makes the claim hollow.

Table 4: Occupationally Vulnerable Households

	Indicators	Ward 31	Ward 11
OV 1	Any of the following occupations of the head of the household:Streetvendor/cobbler/hawker/Construction/plumber/mason/labour/painter/welder/security guard/Home-based/artisans/Tailor/Transport worker/ driver/conductor	18.27	23.42
OV 2	Any of the following occupations of the head of the household: Shop-worker / Assistant/Helper/Peon in small establishment /Attendant/Waiter /Electrician / mechanic / assembler / repair worker	8.73	30.63
OV 3	Households where the main source of income is through a weekly /daily wage earning.	16.21	16.21
OV 4	Households where there is no enterprise / wage earning	2.78	9
	TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	45.99	79.28
Source: Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC- 2011) Note:-OV stands for Occupational Vulnerabilities			

Since the real estate got a boom in the near past in Gurgaon more in migration of laborer in construction sector took placed. A high concentration of household in casual work and more occupational vulnerability even in Gurgaon may be attributed to these migrant construction which used to migrate to Delhi is probably absorbed by Gurgaon. Level of poverty has been seen in many ways Prof. Hasim's criteria provides a new insight and looks more comprehensive as it succeeds in capturing the risk factor and target the poor directly in demarcation of line. Poverty and vulnerability nexus reveal lot many hidden social dynamism of deprivation. The comparative analysis of two wards also provides an insight in to the spatial dimension of urban poor and their distinctive vulnerabilities. The ward of Gurgaon is

WARD 31(Gurgaon)   Ward 11(Mewat)
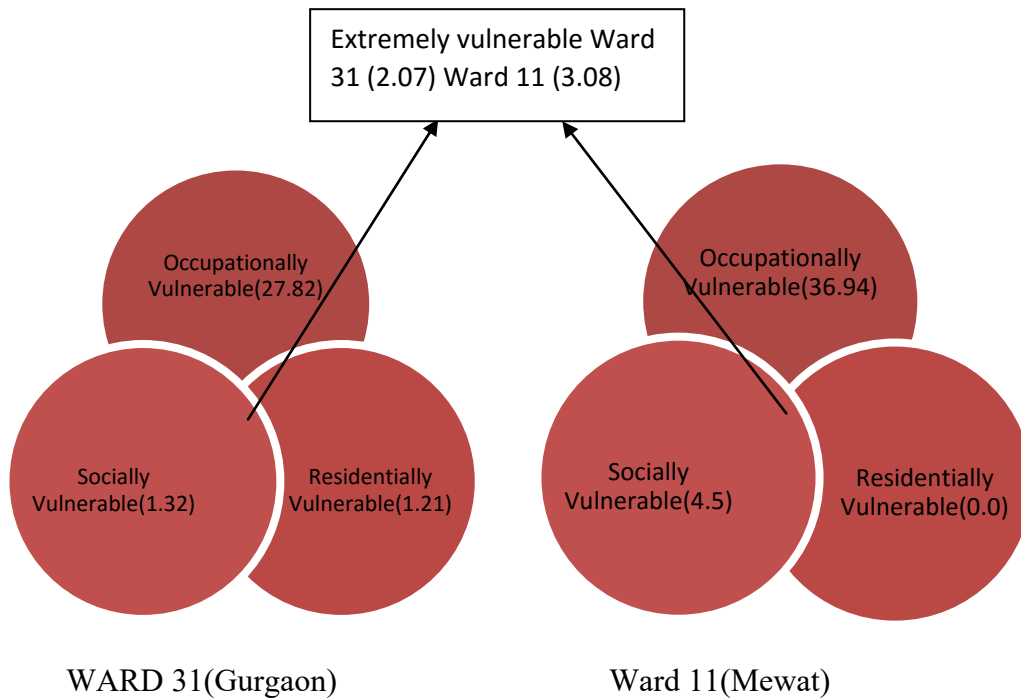
more vulnerable in terms of residence however social and occupational vulnerability is higher in ward of Mewat. Schemes like Indira Awas Yojna does not seems working in core more populated urban construct as Gurgaon seems more residentially vulnerable. Every place and space has distinctive character and peculiar problem therefore an understanding of spatial peculiarities of vulnerabilities is the dire need of academics to give the urban poor recognition security and stability.

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