

Short Edit

Dear Reader,

The recently released Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC) has been in the news for various reasons, the least of it being the almost shocked realisation that despite the progress we have made in reducing poverty in the past decade or so, there seem to be more poor people in India than was previously thought. The SECC, a UPA initiative, was designed to be an “informational database to identify households for various government benefits such as the public distribution system, social pensions and so on.” As originally envisaged it is now up to line ministries and State Governments to use this database and fix the final criteria for benefits, as well as identifying the individuals and households who will benefit from various programs that will be rolled out by the numerous arms of the government.

It is a matter of some concern that the Union government has shown no urgency in using the data as yet, and at the state level very few governments have started using the SECC for identification of beneficiaries for schemes like the National Food Security Act. Further, some NDA states have not even finalised the lists of individuals who are covered under various categories captured in the SECC, which raises serious questions on the NDA government’s commitment (both at the State and Central level) to using the SECC data for the purpose it was originally designed for.

Finally, while the SECC was certainly not meant to be an estimate of poverty, by association it raises some debate on the fundamental issues related to poverty – the metrics and the goals. In fact, how we measure poverty is a concern that the world will address in September this year when member countries meet to discuss the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), under the aegis of the United Nations. The first two targets of the first SDG states “eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere” by 2030, and the second target states “reduce at least by half the proportion of.... [people] living in poverty.....according to national definitions.” Before India and the world accept these goals we should define poverty so that we can truly move ahead with evidence based policy making and plan for meaningful change in poverty levels.

As a lead piece in The Hindu states today the SECC data actually allows us to question the need for defining poverty in terms of income alone as that limits possible solutions to those that can raise income, i.e. development via economic growth.

The true success of the SECC exercise will be seen in a new policy making and implementation paradigm.

We do hope that you’ll enjoy this reading this issue of Policy Watch and look forward to you hearing from you.

*Ms. Barkha Deva
Associate Director*

In This Issue

COVER STORY:

- Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC), 2011: Rural Scenario

HEADLINE OF THE WEEK:

- Economic Census Bares Impact of Cuts in Social Sector Spend
- Rohingya Muslims Put Under Scanner

SECTION 1: THE ECONOMY

- Centre Wants to Break Forex Reserves

SECTION 2: GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

- **Development:** Why the Socio Economic Caste Census Might Carpet Bomb India's Poor; How Smart is Ahmedabad?;
- **Government:** Existing Mechanisms to Protects those Filing RTI Failing;
- **Social and Economic Exclusion:** Manual Scavenging still a Reality; All Good, but Only on Paper;
- **Education:** Mumbai has 18,625 Out-Of-School Children, Reports Statewide Survey; A Sad Tale of Higher Education Reform in India
- **Health:** A Million TB Cases in India have Escaped Detection Says Leaked Report; WHO Urges Govts to Raise Tobacco Taxes to Beat Smoking; Every Third Person in World is Obese, Says Study
- **Environment:** Most Western Ghats Villages Back Prohibition on Mining: Government

SECTION 3: SOCIETY

- **History:** Arunachal Heritage Bill Passed

SECTION 4: INDIA AND WORLD

- **International Affairs:** UN Health Agency Recommends Taxing Tobacco Products to Curb Deadly Global Epidemic; Global Education Targets at Risk Amid Surge in Out-of-School Numbers, Says UN Report

SECTION 5: OPINION/BOOKS

- **Opinion:** Elusive Smartness;
- **Books:** More on Law, Less on Justice;

Cover Story

Socio Economic & Caste Census, 2011: Rural Scenario

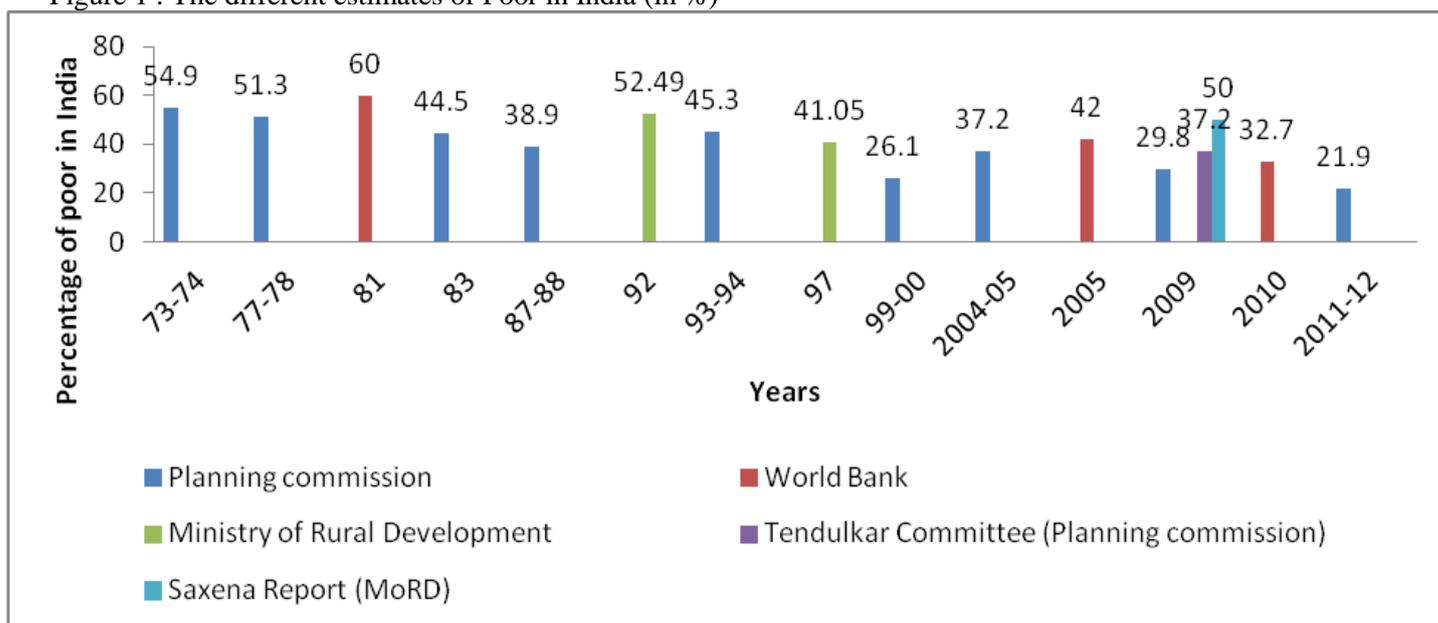
Introduction

Defining poverty and the poor has always remained one of India's persistent challenges. The controversy around the term and its definitional clarity has been one of the major concerns for our great visionaries and scholars like Jawaharal Nehru and Dadabhai Naoroji as well as amongst policy making institutions like the Planning Commission. The history of counting the poor in India can be dated back to the 19th century when the first attempt to estimate poverty was undertaken by Dadabhai Naoroji's in his "Poverty and Un-British Rule in India" in which he estimated a subsistence-based poverty line at 1867-68 prices.

Over the years there have been many estimates of the number of poor in the country by various scholars like Dandekar & Rath (1962), but the most notable are the ones by Planning Commission. A proper record of India's poverty ratio began in 1971 when the Planning Commission started estimating the number of people below the poverty line at both the national and state levels based on consumer expenditure data or the NSSO. The Planning Commission based its classification of poverty levels on the cost of calorie consumption in rural and urban India. Thus defining poverty in terms of calorie intake became an accepted criterion in India, and estimation continued with both quinquennial and annual reports of the NSSO based on Uniform Reference Period (30 day recall period) along with the inflation index in both rural and urban India at the national and state levels. Though the poverty ratio majorly depicted a falling trend in both rural and urban India from 1973-74 to 2009-10, the total population under poverty in both rural and urban India kept increasing (from 321.3 million to 354.68 million) throughout the same period, as per the Planning Commission data.

The varying definitions and approaches to count the poor have produced a range of estimates and Figure1 depicts the variety of estimates of the poor in India based on five different approaches.

Figure 1 : The different estimates of Poor in India (in %)



Further during the evolution of these varying methodologies to estimate the number of poor, it has been realized that poverty has multiple dimensions. A poor person would himself define his poverty more broadly by including humiliation and lack of education, health, housing, empowerment, employment, personal security and more. Thus, indicating the relevance of factors other than income in estimating the level of poverty. A study by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) using a Multi-dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) found that there were 650 million people (53.7% of population) living in poverty in India.¹ A 2010 report by OPHI states that 8 Indian states namely, Bihar,

Cover Story

Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal have more poor people than 26 of the poorest African nations combined which totals to more than 410 million poor in the poorest African countries.² Based on these experiences it was felt that there was a need for a broader census including social and economic aspects of the people and accordingly, the UPA government initiated a Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) in 2011. The SECC was designed to generate information on a large number of social and economic indicators relating to households across the country. It was conducted by the respective State Governments and Union Territory Administration, with technical and financial support from the Centre.

SECC had three components:

1. Census in Rural areas for identification of BPL households
2. Census in Urban areas for identification of BPL households
3. Caste Census throughout the country

The SECC, 2011 had the following three objectives:

- To enable households to be ranked based on their Socio- Economic status. State Governments can then prepare a list of families living below the poverty line
- To make available authentic information that will enable caste-wise population enumeration of the country
- To make available authentic information regarding the socio economic condition, and education status of various castes and sections of the population

SECC in Rural India

The Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, commenced the Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) in June 2011 through a comprehensive door to door enumeration across the country. This is the first time such a comprehensive exercise has been carried out for both rural and urban India. It is also expected to generate information on a large number of social and economic indicators relating to households across the country.

For the purpose of the Census, the following set of information was to be collected at an individual and household level in rural areas:

Sl. No.	Information Collected	Sl. No.	Information Collected
1	Occupation	7	Employment
2	Education	8	Income and source of income
3	Disability	9	Assets
4	Religion	10	Housing
5	SC/ ST Status	11	Consumer Durables and Non- Durables
6	Name of Caste/ Tribe	12	Land

Based on the collected information, households were to be ranked in rural areas through three step process. The three step process is as follows:

1. A set of households will be automatically **excluded** based on 14 parameters
2. A set of households will be automatically **included** based on 5 parameters
3. The remaining households will be ranked using 7 deprivation indicators. Households with the highest deprivation score will have the highest priority for inclusion in the list of households below the poverty level.

On Friday, July 3, 2015, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, Minister Rural Development, Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation, Shri Chaudhary Birendra Singh, jointly released on-line the provisional data from the Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) 2011 for Rural India.

Cover Story

The survey has been completed in all the 640 districts. So far out of 640 districts in the country, 617 districts have published the draft list and 175 districts have even published the final list after dealing with claims and objections. It is being released as its use in evidence based planning for rural development and poverty reduction needs to be undertaken immediately. The data addresses the multi dimensionality of poverty and provides a unique opportunity for a convergent, evidence based planning with the Gram Panchayat as the core unit. The data is an opportunity to make evidence based selection, prioritization and targeting of beneficiaries in different programmes.

Key Findings of SECC in Rural Areas

The SECC findings, released on Friday, July 3, 2015 brings out statistics reflecting the state of poverty and deprivation in rural India as well as crucial social trends such as ownership of assets, gender dynamics, marital status, educational and employment.

Some broad highlights from the data collected are:

- The total number of households in the country including both rural and urban stands at 24.39 crore.
- Out of the total households, 17.91 crore households are in rural areas i.e. 73.4% of households resides in rural areas.
- 39.39% of total households are excluded households in rural areas (based on fulfilling any of the 14 parameters of exclusion) i.e. 7.05 crore rural households are excluded households.
- Only 0.92% of total households in rural areas are automatically included (based on fulfilling any of the 5 parameters of inclusion) i.e. only 16.50 lakh rural households are automatically included.
- **10.69 crore households in rural areas are considered for deprivation.**

The data collected during this ambitious exercise had various dimensions. It was collected not just at the level of total households, but was also categorized across caste, gender and disability. Figure 2 represents the percentage share of different categorizes of households in rural areas.

Figure 2: Share of different categorizes of Households in Rural Areas (in %)



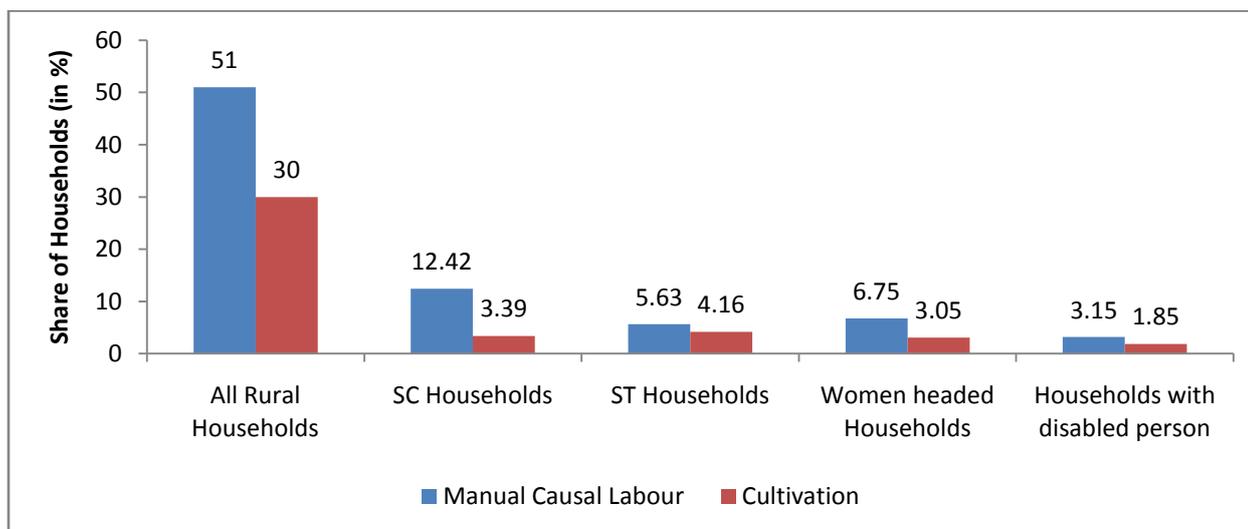
Source: SECC, 2011

Following are pictorial representation of some of the parameters across different categories of households representing rural distress.

1. Figure 3 represents the dependence of rural households on cultivation and casual labour as the main source of income. 51% of rural households are dependent on manual casual labour and 30% on cultivation as the main source of income. But, the percentage of households dependent on the same sources of income is relatively small in case of SC/ST and other households.

Cover Story

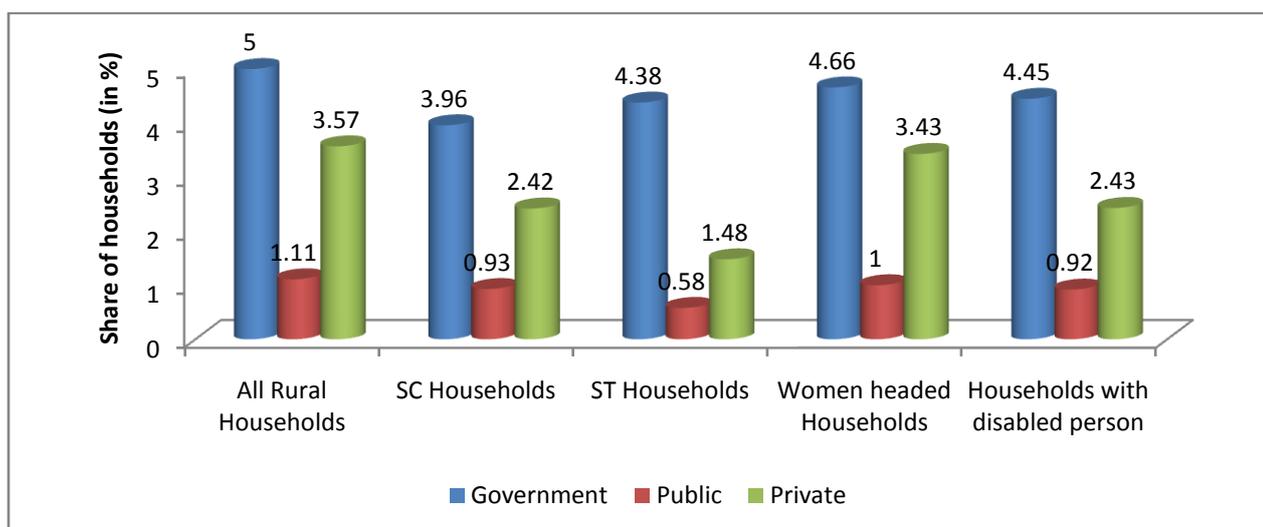
Figure 3: Share of households based on source of income (in %)



Source: SECC, 2011

- Figure 4 represents the share of salaried households in different sectors. The share of salaried households employed in government jobs stands at the highest amongst the three sectors, i.e. government, public and private across all the categories of households.

Figure 4: Share of salaried households across different categories (in %)

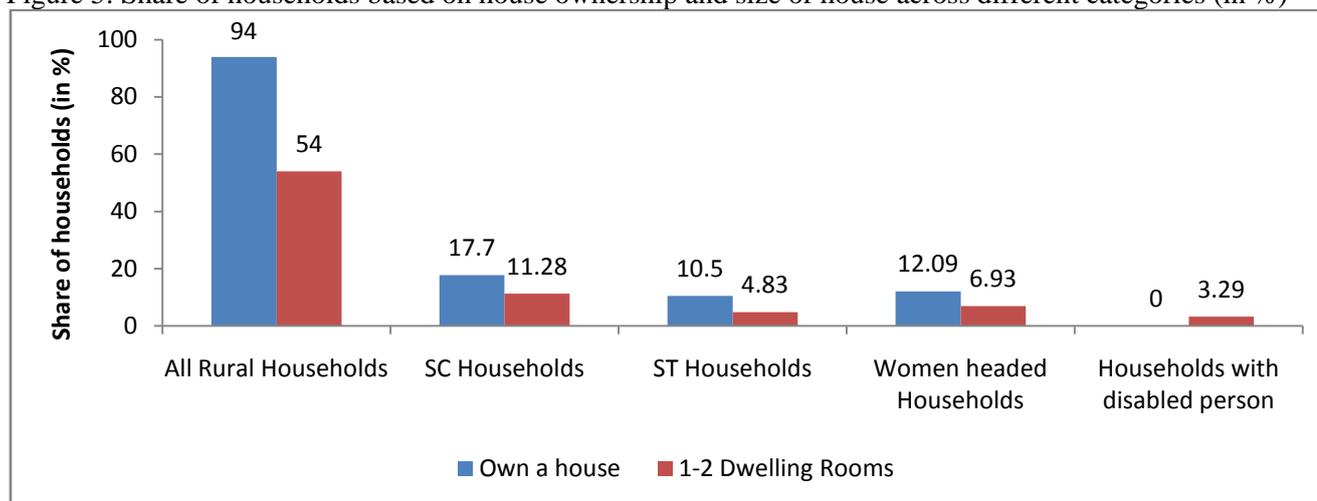


Source: SECC, 2011

- Figure 5 represents the share of households owning a house across all the categories of households and the ownership based on size of the house. The situation is poor when it comes to the house ownership as well as the house size in case of SC/ ST, Women headed and Households with disabled persons.

Cover Story

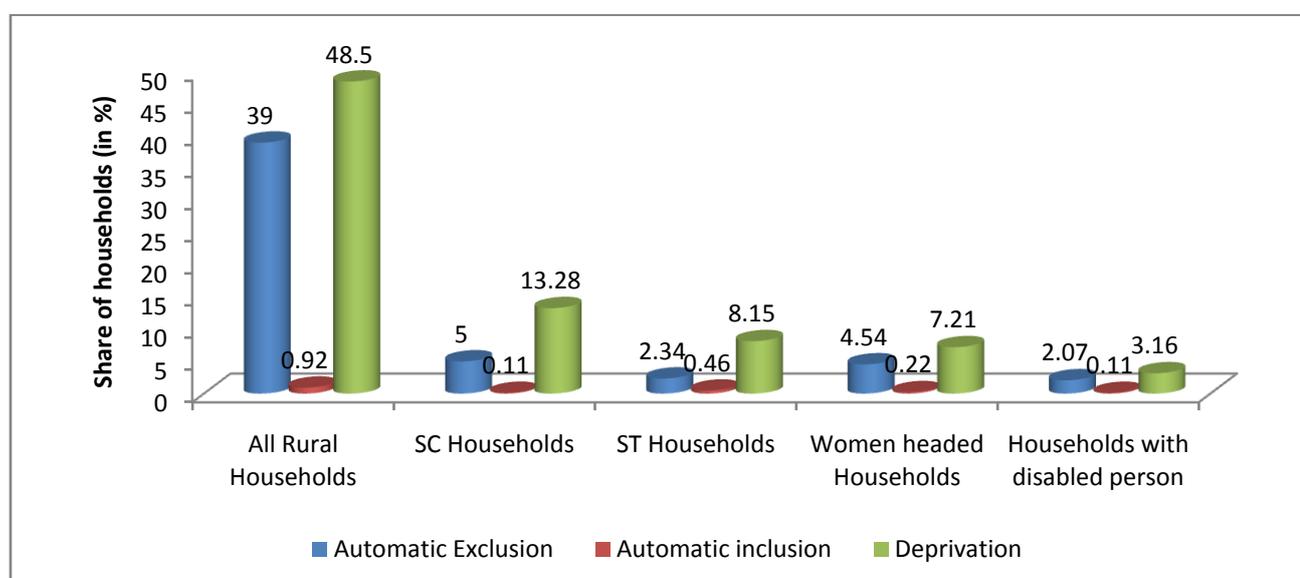
Figure 5: Share of households based on house ownership and size of house across different categories (in %)



Source: SECC, 2011

4. Figure 6 represents households which have been automatically excluded, automatically included and ranked based on deprivation criteria. 39% of total rural households, 5% of SC households and similarly households from other categories are automatically excluded based on the 14 parameters. Only 0.92% of total rural households, 0.11% of SC households and similarly very marginal share of households from other categories are automatically included based on the 5 parameters. 48.5% of total rural households, 13.28% of SC households and similarly households from other categories are ranked using 7 deprivation indicators.

Figure 6: Share of households automatically excluded, automatically included, ranked based on deprivation criteria across different categories (in %)

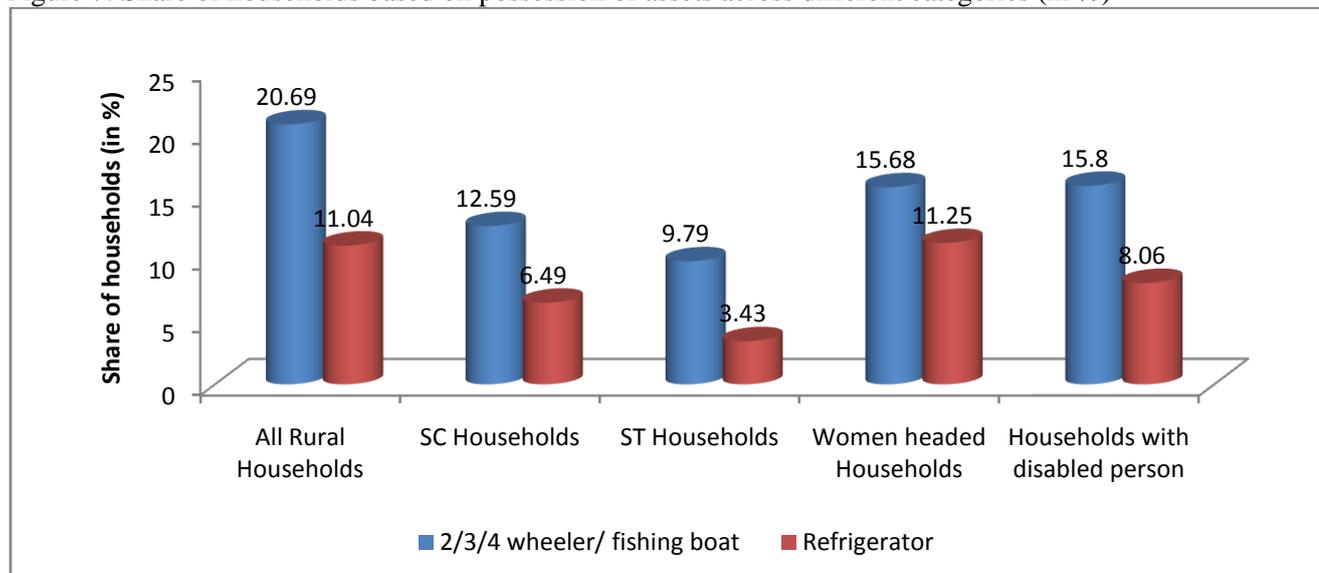


Source: SECC, 2011

5. Figure 7 represents the share of households based on the possession of assets. Only 20.69% of total rural households own a 2/3/4 wheeler/ fishing boat and 11.04% own a refrigerator. Similarly the share of households based possession of assets is even lower in case of SC/ ST, women headed and households with disabled persons.

Cover Story

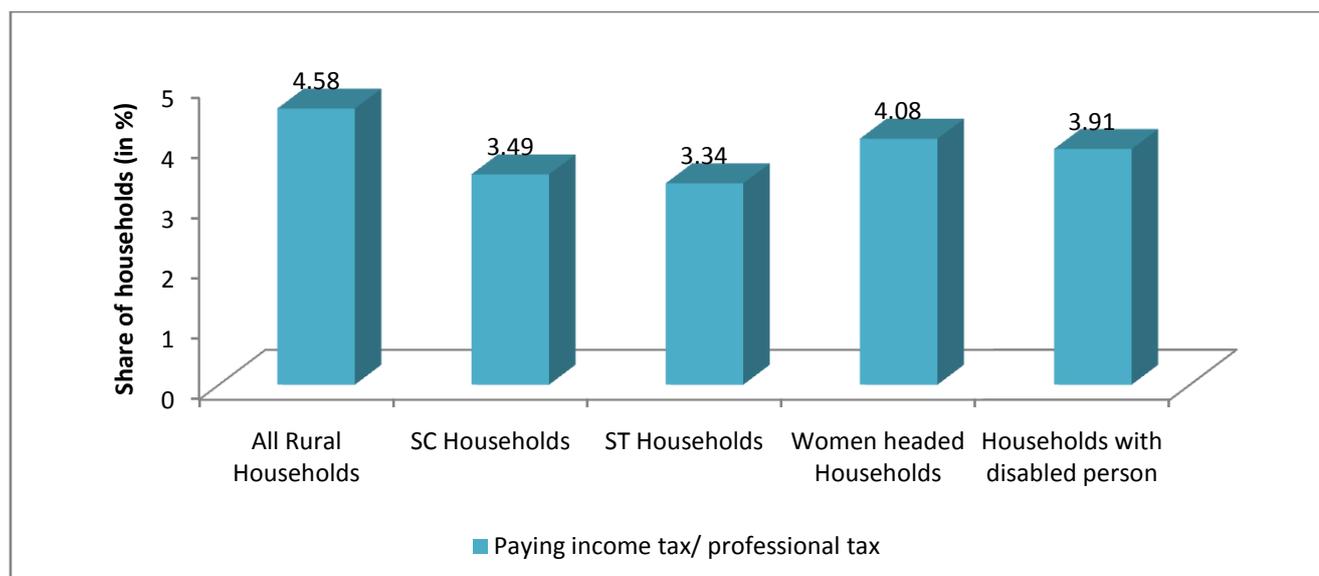
Figure 7: Share of households based on possession of assets across different categories (in %)



Source: SECC, 2011

6. Last, but not the least, figure 8 represents the share of households paying income tax or professional tax. The share is very low even for aggregated rural households. Only 4.58% of total rural households are paying income tax or professional tax. The share is even lower for other households.

Figure 8: Share of households paying income tax/ professional tax across different categories (in %)



Source: SECC, 2011

Cover Story

Way Forward

This data representation clearly indicates the distress faced by rural households. It further indicates the vulnerability faced, particularly by the SC/ST, Women headed households and Households with Disabled Persons, since their situation is even worse off. In such a scenario, this data can play a very important role in 'focused and targeted intervention' in poverty reduction and rural development programmes. The data listed above is a clear recognition that poverty is multi dimensional and each dimension needs to be tackled with a specific programme. Though, this clearly indicates the need for government spending for the welfare of its poor citizens, but also suggests for rational spending.

The benefits of some of the programmes have to be universal like that of MGNREGA, health, primary education, sanitation, mid-day meals, etc, but benefits of some of the programmes have to be specific. For example the data collected through SECC on homeless should be used to identify the people entitled to the benefits of Indira Awaas Yojana. Similarly data on disabled should be used to entitle them to enjoy the benefits of disability pensions, irrespective of whether or not they have a BPL card.

Thus, hoping for a more rational use of SECC data and not to arbitrarily reduce the number of people entitled to benefits under different programmes of the government will be the only way to take the country a step forward. Withdrawal of government support might push these poor and vulnerable a step back.

Prepared by:

Shruti Issar

References

1. Report, 'Country Briefing: India', Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, Oxford, at "[Country Briefing: India, Multidimensional Poverty Index \(MPI\) At a Glance](#)"
2. '8 Indian states have more poor than 26 poorest African nations', The Times of India, India, at "[8 Indian states have more poor than 26 poorest African nations](#)"
3. Shah Mihar, (2015) 'Chuck the BPL', The Indian Express, July 10, 2015, Available at <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/chuck-the-bpl-card/3/>
4. Article, (2015) 'Provisional data of Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) 2011 for rural India released', Press Information Bureau, July 3, 2015, Available at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=122963>
5. Report, 'Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) 2011', Available at <http://secc.gov.in>.

Headlines

Economic Census Bares Impact of Cuts in Social Sector Spend

(The Hans India, July 9, 2015)

The Census results indicate how the government is not adequately prepared, and intends to continue being ill-prepared if one is to assess its intent, through its budgetary decisions, to deal with the problem of providing basic entitlement of quality education and health to households deprived on multiple counts as reflected in the SECC. It is worth noting that the only flagship rural development interventions introduced by the current Government - Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana and Atal Pension Yojana are ones that do not involve any budgetary commitment for putting in place minimum infrastructure to be able to deliver tangible basic services.

Read more: <http://www.thehansindia.com/posts/index/2015-07-09/Economic-census-bares-impact-of-cuts-in-social-sector-spend-162319>

Date Accessed: 12.7.2015\

Rohingya Muslims Put Under Scanner

(Free Press Journal, July 07, 2015)

Concerned over more than one lakh Rohingya Muslims settling in India, the Centre has convened a meeting of top officials of seven states, including UP and Jammu and Kashmir, on July 20 to discuss monitoring of Rohingya Muslims's activities given their vulnerability to radicalization.

Read more: <http://www.freepressjournal.in/rohingya-muslims-put-under-scanner/>

Date Accessed: 09.07.2015

Economy

Table 1: General Inflation Rates in Indian States: May 2015 (%)

States	Rural	Urban	General
All India	5.68	4.88	5.17
Northern Region			
Jammu & Kashmir	9.88	4.77	7.78
Himachal Pradesh	11.26	4.31	9.44
Punjab	9.45	6.70	8.07
Chandigarh	13.46	0.55	0.98
Uttarakhand	4.41	4.76	5.65
Haryana	7.14	6.91	9.17
Delhi	8.51	6.46	8.57
Uttar Pradesh	3.80	3.76	5.39
Western Region			
Rajasthan	7.60	7.42	4.98
Gujarat	3.68	6.75	4.27
Maharashtra	7.73	4.78	9.14
Goa	8.75	7.92	3.15
Lakshadweep	15.06	3.89	16.25
Daman & Die	13.95	11.40	5.05
Dadra Nagar & Haveli	19.79	7.34	17.09
Central Region			
Madhya Pradesh	5.21	6.75	4.27
Chattishgarh	11.47	5.15	4.99
Southern Region			
Andhra Pradesh	5.02	-	-
Karnakata	7.35	4.73	3.21
Kerala	6.60	3.23	3.36
Tamil Nadu	4.82	4.60	10.34
Puducherry	15.09	8.77	0.52
Andaman & Nicobar Island	11.65	2.44	6.96
Northeastern Region			
Arunachal Pradesh	9.14	5.50	9.75
Assam	6.29	3.68	3.84
Manipur	20.64	6.46	21.20
Meghalaya	-2.13	7.47	-4.57
Mizoram	8.52	12.81	10.36
Nagaland	15.05	4.49	2.77
Tripura	9.66	-1.92	6.37
Sikkim	9.93	2.79	8.81
Eastern Region			
Bihar	3.90	3.59	-0.19
Jharkhand	5.25	2.76	5.94
West Bengal	-0.81	1.94	1.79
Odisha	9.01	2.72	9.01

- Source: State-wise monthly inflation rates are estimated from year on year Consumer Price Index (CPI) data of MOSPI.
- There is one month time lag in CPI data (From the month February 2015 onwards the New Series is introduced with base 2012=100) provided by MOSPI, Government of India.
- The 2014 May data at state-level with base 2010 is here converted to new base 2012 with linking factors of MOSPI 1.22, 1.20 and 1.21 for rural, urban and combined respectively

Economy

Centre Wants to Break Forex Reserves

(The Hindu, July 9, 2015)

The Modi government is examining if India's foreign exchange reserves held by the Reserve Bank can be deployed for funding infrastructure projects or re-capitalizing public sector banks. These bad loans-ridden banks, according to rough estimates of the Finance Ministry, would require capital infusion of about Rs. 40,000 crore over two years. India's forex reserves touched a record \$355.46 billion on June 19. The proposal, however, does not as yet enjoy unanimous support within the government. The idea, in fact, caused considerable unease in the Finance Ministry. "The government doesn't own the country's foreign exchange reserves," a Ministry official said.

Read more: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/centre-wants-to-break-forex-reserves/article7400569.ece>

Date Accessed: 09.07.2015

Governance and Development

DEVELOPMENT

Why the Socio Economic Caste Census Might Carpet Bomb India's Poor

(Shriyah Mohan, Catch news.com, July 4, 2015)

The government released its much-awaited provisional data - the Socio Economic Caste Census 2011. If the rich volume of data has to be summarised in a single sentence, it is this - nearly 50% of India's rural households are deprived.

Read more: <http://www.catchnews.com/india-news/why-the-socio-economic-caste-census-might-carpet-bomb-india-s-poor-1435996290.html>

Date Accessed: 07.07.2015

How Smart is Ahmedabad?

(Darryl D'monte, India Together, June 30, 2015)

As the Prime Minister launches his vision for cities in the country, it is pertinent to ask what his record has been in the largest city of the state where he was Chief Minister before becoming PM. A recent study notes "A number of recent top-down urban development policies - even those intended to benefit poor families - have negatively affected poor people and damaged relations between government and civil society as they failed to understand people's concerns and priorities. ... Moreover, the shift in policy focus - aimed to attract investment by creating a 'global' city - demands rethinking how progress is defined and whom it is intended to benefit."

Read more: <http://indiatogether.org/how-smart-ahmedabad-government>

Date Accessed: 11.7.2015

Governance and Development

GOVERNMENT

Existing Mechanisms to Protects those Filing RTI Failing

(*Scroll, July 9, 2015*)

Cases of harassment, violence and even murder directly linked to the filing of RTI requests have become a regular occurrence in India. While there has been some discussion on the number of RTI requests piling up and the delay in filling the vacancies at the Central Information Commission, the vulnerability of ordinary citizens using the RTI Act often gets little attention. The Whistleblower's Protection Act, which was passed on May 9, 2014, is yet to become operational. Existing mechanisms to protect those who file RTIs are clearly failing.

Read more: <http://scroll.in/article/739440/at-least-39-people-who-used-right-to-information-law-have-been-murdered-over-the-last-decade>

Date Accessed: 09.07.2015

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EXCLUSION

Manual Scavenging Still a Reality

(*The Hindu, July 09, 2015*)

The practice of manual scavenging, officially banned since decades in India, continues with impunity in several States. The latest Socio-Economic Caste Census data released on July 3 reveals that 1, 80, 657 households are engaged in this degrading work for a livelihood. Maharashtra, with 63,713, tops the list with the largest number of manual scavenger households, followed by Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Tripura and Karnataka, as per Census data.

Read more: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/manual-scavenging-still-a-reality-socioeconomic-caste-census/article7400578.ece>

Date Accessed: 09.07.2015

All Good, but Only on Paper

(*Susmita Guru, India Together, July 05, 2015*)

An apparently well-intended plan to help very poor tribes in Madhya Pradesh find sustainable livelihoods bears no relation to the reality of how it is actually implemented. Money is simply distributed and disappears, but things remain unchanged. neither the government nor the intended beneficiaries have paid adequate attention to the program. The program is being taken for granted by those for whom money flows in every year and is spent without oversight.

Read more: <http://indiatogether.org/conservation-cum-development-program-good-only-on-paper-poverty>

Date Accessed: 12.7.2015

EDUCATION

Mumbai has 18,625 Out-Of-School Children, Reports Statewide Survey

(*Report, Firstpost, July 7, 2015*)

Over 10,000 'out-of-school' children were detected in a one-day survey carried out in the city by school teachers, health workers and education department officials. Around 46,713 children across the state of Maharashtra were reported as out-of-school students but education department officials said that reports from some places in the state were yet to be compiled.

Read more: <http://www.firstpost.com/mumbai/mumbai-18625-school-children-reports-state-wide-survey-2330756.html>

Date Accessed: 07.07.2015

Governance and Development

A Sad Tale of Higher Education Reform in India

(Dipankar Basu and Debrashi Das, *The Wire*, July 6, 2015)

Early in April, this year, the University Grants Commission (UGC) the primary institution responsible for allocation of grants related to and maintenance of standards of higher education in India came up with a proposal to introduce a Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) in Indian universities that has generated intense controversy. Joint protests by students and teachers, and even fisticuffs between left and right wing student organizations have been reported from Delhi University in the national capital of the country.

Read more: <http://thewire.in/2015/07/06/a-sad-tale-of-higher-education-reform-in-india/>

Date Accessed: 07.07.2015

HEALTH

A Million TB Cases in India have Escaped Detection Says Leaked Report

(*Scroll*, July 09, 2015)

The latest assessment of India's National Tuberculosis policy has noted that nearly 10 lakh cases of people living with tuberculosis in India have either gone undiagnosed or unreported. More worrying is the fact that for nearly two years, the TB programme has suffered "unaccountable delays" in the procurement of medicines. The programme is also "not detecting as many cases" as expected, and many planned activities are not being implemented. The assessment report stops short of stating that the programme has entirely been derailed. The report has been prepared as part of the Joint Monitoring Mission of the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme. The Mission brings together national and international experts, the Ministry of Health and developmental agencies to "review the progress, challenges and plans for India's TB control efforts".

Read more: <http://scroll.in/article/739763/a-million-tuberculosis-cases-in-india-escape-detection-says-leaked-report>

Date Accessed: 09.07.2015

WHO Urges Govts to Raise Tobacco Taxes to Beat Smoking

(Kate Kellamnd, *Live Mint*, July 7, 2015)

In a report entitled "The Global Tobacco Epidemic 2015", the United Nations (UN) health agency said that few governments make full use of tobacco taxes to dissuade people from smoking or help them to cut down and quit. It recommends that at least 75% of the price of a pack of cigarettes should be tax.

Read more: <http://www.livemint.com/Consumer/rC3YZU7HgZ2mq98kyuCZoI/WHO-urges-governments-to-raise-tobacco-taxes-to-beat-smoking.html>

Date Accessed: 07.07.2015

Every Third Person in World is Obese, Says Study

(*Down to Earth*, July 6, 2015)

A study analyzed increases in food energy supply and obesity in 69 countries and concluded that around 37% of men and 38% of women are overweight. A person with a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 30 or more is considered obese. The report says that governments need to make food supply healthier to reduce obesity-related problems. Obesity is a risk factor for many health problems, including diabetes, heart diseases, stroke and some types of cancers.

Read more: <http://www.downtoearth.org.in/content/every-third-person-world-obese-says-study>

Date Accessed: 08.07.2015

Governance and Development

ENVIRONMENT

Most Western Ghats Villages Back Prohibition on Mining: Government

(Deepanwita Niyogi, *Daily News and Analysis*, July 8, 2015)

The high-level working group headed by K Kasturirangan had identified 60,000 sq km of area of the Ghats across 4,156 villages as ecologically sensitive and had recommended prohibition on commercial mining and highly polluting industries. Following the submission of the Kasturirangan committee report in April 2013, six states had been asked to carry out ground surveys that involved physical assessment of ecologically sensitive areas (ESA) boundaries, and consultation with villagers.

Read more: <http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-most-western-ghats-villages-back-prohibition-on-mining-government-2102670>

Date Accessed: 08.07.2015

AGRICULTURE

Why the NDA Government's Online Farm Market Won't Sell

(Charu Kartikeya, *Catch news.com*, July, 5, 2015)

A unified national market for farmers online which allows farmers to sell anywhere in the country. It Cuts out middle-men so farmers can negotiate better prices. However a vast majority of farmers can't access or use the internet. It doesn't address issues such as transportation, storage. Also states make good money from *mandis*, they won't agree easily.

Read more: <http://www.catchnews.com/india-news/why-the-modi-government-s-online-farm-market-won-t-sell-1436009656.html>

Date Accessed: 07.07.2015

Developing Countries Will Witness Increased Demand for Food in Future: Report

(Deepanwita Niyogi, *Down to Earth*, July 7, 2015)

Report by Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) says that due to population expansion, rising income level and urbanization there will be an increase in demand for food in developing countries. Experts note that such a trend in India can lead to a national and international food crises.

Read more: <http://www.downtoearth.org.in/content/developing-countries-will-witness-increased-demand-food-future-report>

Date Accessed: 08.07.2015

Society

HISTORY

Arunachal Heritage Bill Passed

(Arunachal News, Jul 11, 2015)

Arunachal Assembly today passed the Arunachal Pradesh Heritage Bill, 2015 by voice vote. It will provide protection and conservation of heritage sites including buildings, artifacts, structures, areas, streets, precincts of historic or cultural or environmental significance and sites of scenic beauty. It also provides for conservation and protection of the area of environmental sensitivity.

Read more: <http://www.arunachalnews.com/arunachal-heritage-bill-passed/>

Date Accessed: 09.07.2015

India and World

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

UN Health Agency Recommends Taxing Tobacco Products to Curb Deadly Global Epidemic

(United Nations News Centre, July 7, 2015)

As per the World Health Organization (WHO) report, only 1 in 10 person live in a countries where taxes of more than 75% is levied on a pack of cigarettes. This is despite the fact that raising taxes on tobacco products is one of the most cost-effective ways to reduce consumption of tobacco products, consumption of which kills one person every six seconds.

Read more: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=51352#.VZzye8aqqko>

Date Accessed: 08.07.2015

Global Education Targets at Risk Amid Surge in Out-of-School Numbers, Says UN Report

(United Nations News Centre, July 6, 2015)

A study by UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Education for All Global Monitoring Report (EFR GMR), shows that 124 million children and adolescents are now out of school. The latest numbers show that some 24 million children will never enter a classroom with girls remaining the most disadvantaged cohort. In South and West Asia alone, 80% of out-of-school girls are unlikely to start school compared to just 16% of their male counterparts. Despite this, international aid to education is still below 2010 levels. It will effect education targets aimed at achieving universal primary and secondary education.

Read more: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=51340#.VZ0DW8aqqkp>

Date Accessed: 08.07.2015

Opinions / Books

OPINIONS

Elusive Smartness

(*Economic and Political Weekly*, June 27, 2015)

With only about 30% of the country's population now living in cities, the living conditions are still dismal. Cities are badly polluted, clogged with vehicles, beset with glaring inequalities and with housing and infrastructure that is unable to provide sustainable living conditions. Thus, the government's plan to rejuvenate cities seems to be the first step in addressing the issue.

Read more: <http://www.epw.in/editorials/elusive-smartness.html>

Date Accessed: 08.07.2015

BOOKS

More on Law, Less on Justice

(T.K Rajlakshmi, *Frontline*, July 10, 2015)

The book is primarily about the evolution of the LARR Act, 2013, and the debates that led to the making of it, but on the land question it is limited in perspective and detail.

Read more: <http://www.frontline.in/books/more-on-law-less-on-justice/article7345662.ece>

Date Accessed:07.07.2015

Issue Coordinator: Mr. Jeet Singh

Connect with RGICS at: info@rgics.org; www.rgics.org



Disclaimer: The articles referenced in RGICS Policy Watch are summaries of the original articles and the headlines have been changed in certain cases. For the original articles please click on the link given below the article. Views presented here are not of the trustees of RGF. The document has been prepared by RGICS staff and not seen by the trustees.

To unsubscribe, please write to us at info@rgics.org