

QUALITY OF LIFE OF RURAL BEGGARS IN ALIGARH DISTRICT

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Received: 12 Dec 2023

Accepted: 20 Dec 2023

Published: 23 Dec 2023

ABSTRACT

In this paper, an attempt is made to examine the spatial patterns of social, economic, infrastructural, and development status of rural beggars in Aligarh district of Uttar Pradesh. This work is based on primary source of data, collected through the field survey in 2009. Total 496 households were surveyed from the 70 villages of the district. The regional analysis reveals that the majority of the central and eastern blocks of the district experienced the medium level of quality of life, rural beggars of the north-western part of the district observed the low level of quality of life, while, the peripheral blocks witnessed high level of quality of life. It is found that the quality of life of rural beggars of Aligarh is not satisfactory because they are not getting all the facilities needed to improve their quality of life and come into the main stream of the society.

KEYWORDS: *Social, Economic, Household Infrastructural Facilities, Socio-Economic Status, Beggar, Region, Aligarh*

INTRODUCTION

Quality of life is one of those popular phrases we see and hear with increasing frequency. It is used so often, and in so many different contexts for so many different purposes, that it is difficult to pin down an agreed meaning. (<http://books.google.co.in>). The term 'Quality of Life' has been described as a uniquely personal construct and is difficult to measure because the standards and criteria vary so widely from person to person that it is difficult to generalize it (Taylor and Bagdan, 1990). It may be understood as a unique personal experience that individuals will experience in the same circumstances differently. Unlike standard of living, quality of life is not a tangible concept. Quality of life consists of two components. The first is a physical aspect which includes such things as health, diet, and protection against pain and disease. The second component is psychological in nature; and includes such things as stress, worry, pleasure and other positive or negative emotional states. It is virtually impossible to predict the quality of life of a specific individual, since the combination of attributes that leads one individual to be content is rarely the same for another individual. However, one can assume with some confidence that the higher average level of diet, shelter, safety, as well as freedoms and rights a general population has, the better overall quality of life the said population experiences. Apart from socio-economic components, quality of life also includes extent of distributive justice in public services. (<http://www.gdrc.org>, Knox, 1975, Smith, 1973). This will promote peace, harmony and happiness in an individual and in turn in the society.

On the other hand, socio-economic condition is a wide concept which involves a complex combination of factors such as income, living costs, household size composition; purchasing capacity and expenditure patterns of individuals (<http://en.wikipedia.org/>). The more prosperous an economy, the better off the residents of that economy are in terms of opportunities to gain higher income, buy material possessions and access quality health care. In general, this leads to

greater social connectedness, educational advancement, and wider employment options and increased life expectancy. But the present study is concerned with the quality of life of beggars who live on the mercy of others.

Begging is practiced to obtain means of survival from others what one is unable to get by oneself. The Encyclopedia of Social Work in India (1968) viewed beggars as mobile charity seeker people who could easily be noticed by the way they live and earn money essential for survival; and most of who are homeless and live in the open or in the impoverished huts. While, Jelili, (2006) defined begging is a social ill whose implications for city economy and environment call for concern of urban planners. Adedibu (1989) also observes that begging also has implications for the economy of the nation as beggars depend on the already overstretched workforce. Thus various issues related to beggars fetch an attention of researchers for fulfil the goal of balanced regional development. In the present empirical study quality of life of beggars of Aligarh district is studied in the light of their socio-economic conditions and their household infrastructural facilities by conducting a comprehensive survey of beggars of Aligarh district.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study has the following specific objectives:

- To analyse the regional variations of social, economic and household infrastructural facilities of rural beggars in Aligarh district.
- To examine the spatial disparities in the quality of life of rural beggars in the study area.

STUDY AREA

Aligarh district, a medium sized district, is spreading over an area of 3700.4 square kilometers in the western part of Uttar Pradesh. It occupies the north-western part of the Uttar Pradesh which is fertile region of Ganga and Yamuna, known as *Doab*. In the map, the geographical location of this district is in North-Eastern Hemisphere and lying between the parallels of 27°29' and 28°11' north latitudes and meridians of 77°29' and 78°38' east longitudes. The district boundary touches the boundaries of five other districts (Bulandshahr, Badaun, Mathura, Hathras and Etah) of the Uttar Pradesh and one state (Haryana) of India. The district is divided into five tahsils namely, Kol, Khair, Gabhana, Atrauli and Iglas for the purpose of land record keeping, land revenue collection, judicial administration, etc. Further, these tahsils are sub-divided into 12 development blocks namely: Atrauli, Gangiri, Bijauli, Jawan, Chandus, Khair, Tappal, Dhanipur, Lodha, Akrabad, Iglas and Gonda.

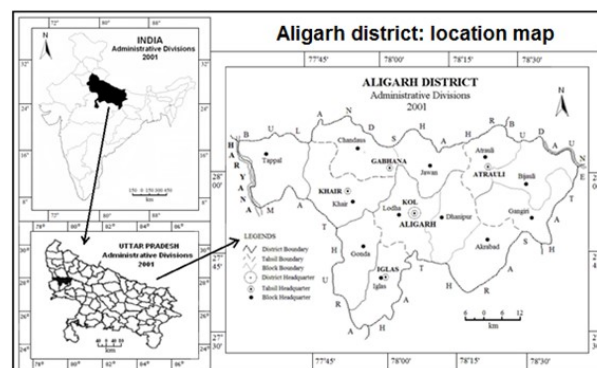


Figure 1

Source: Census of India and VikasBhavan, Aligarh, 2008

According to 2001 Census, the district accommodates 29, 92, 286 population of which 29 per cent live in urban and 71 per cent in rural areas of the district. The density of population in the district was 820 persons per sq. km. and it was 607 persons per sq. km. in the rural sector and 5,949 persons per sq. km. in the urban sector. The sex ratio was 862 in the district, whereas, the figures for the rural and urban areas were 856 and 876 respectively. The literacy rate in the district is 58.5 per cent and the male and female literacy rate remains 71.7 per cent and 43.0 per cent respectively, while, the percentage of literacy in rural and urban population was 56.5 and 63.2 respectively.

Database and Methodology

The study is based on primary source of data that has been collected through field survey in the Aligarh district, carried out during 2009. The villages have been selected on the basis of stratified random sampling technique. According to 2001 Census, the district had 1180 inhabited villages. The inhabited villages were stratified into three categories based on the size of population, so that, all types of population and villages may get reasonable representation in the samples randomly drawn for the survey.

Table: 1. List of the Selected Indicators of Socio-Economic Status of Rural Beggars in Aligarh District, 2009

Categories	Indicators	Definition
Social	X ₁	Percentage of male population to the total rural population
	X ₂	Percentage of female population to the total rural population
	X ₃	Sex-Ratio
	X ₄	Household Size
	X ₅	Total Literacy Rate
	X ₆	Male Literacy Rate
	X ₇	Female Literacy Rate
Economic	X ₈	Total Employment Rate
	X ₉	Male Employment Rate
	X ₁₀	Female Employment Rate
	X ₁₁	Per Capita Income
Household Facilities	X ₁₂	Percentage of households having own houses
	X ₁₃	Percentage of households living in pucca houses
	X ₁₄	Percentage of households having the drinking water facility within their premises
	X ₁₅	Percentage of households having bathroom facility within their premises
	X ₁₆	Percentage of households having latrine facility within their premises
	X ₁₇	Percentage of households having electricity facility within their premises

Keeping in view the constraints of time and cost, it was decided to collect data for this enquiry from 6 per cent villages of each category. Therefore, 6 per cent villages (i.e. 70) of the total inhabited villages (1,180) of the district have been selected for rural survey from the stratified random sampling technique. Further, the 25 per cent beggars' households were surveyed from the each selected village. Altogether, 496 households were selected for the present study. However, a block has been considered as the smallest unit of study.

In the present analysis, a set of seventeen indicators of socio-economic status have been taken into account to determine the levels of socio-economic status of beggars at one hand and demographic characteristics, literacy, employment, income, household infrastructural facilities of beggars on the other hand in the twelve blocks of the district. The indicators of socio-economic status fall into categories like population characteristics, literacy, employment, income and household infrastructural facilities. In the first step, the raw data for each variable which determines the areal variations of demographic characteristics, literacy, employment, income, household infrastructural facilities and their socio-economic status have been computed into standard score.

It is generally known as Z value or Z-score. The score quantify the departure of individual observations, expressed in a comparable form. This means it becomes a linear transformation of the original data (Smith, 1973: 85). It may be expressed as.

$$Z_{ij} = \frac{X_{ij} - \bar{X}_i}{\sigma_i}$$

- Where: Z_{ij} = Standardised value of the variable i in block j ,
- X_{ij} = Actual value of variable i in block j ,
- \bar{X}_i = Mean value of variable i in all blocks,
- σ_i = Standard deviation of variable i in all blocks.
- In the second step, the Z-scores of all variables have been added block wise and the average has taken out for these variables which may be called as composite score (CS) for each block and may be algebraically expressed as:

$$CS = \frac{\sum Z_{ij}}{N}$$

- Where: CS stands composite score,
- $\sum Z_{ij}$ indicates Z-scores of all variables i in district j ,
- N refers to the number of variables.

The positive values relating to the districts' Z-score explain high level, while, negative values indicate the low level of demographic characteristics, literacy, employment, income, household infrastructural facilities of beggars and their socio-economic status in the study area

Besides, advanced statistical techniques, GIS-Arc view programme (Version 3.2a) has been applied to show the spatial variations of demographic features, literacy rate, employment rate, per capita income, household facilities of beggars and their socio-economic status among the blocks of the Aligarh district through maps.

RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

Social Development

The data given in Table 3 shows the regional variations in the social development of beggars in the Aligarh district. It is the composite mean Z score of seven indicators as listed in Table 2. The scores varies from -0.47 score in Tappal and Jawan blocks to 0.69 score in Gonda block. This range of variations

Table 2: Block-Wise Distribution of Z-Score Values of the Selected Indicators of Quality of Life in Rural Parts of Aligarh, 2009

Ruralo	Social Developmento							Economic Developmento				Household Facilities Developmento					
	MPo	FPo	SRo	HSo	TLRo	MLRo	FLRo	TERo	MERo	FERo	PCIo	OHo	PHo	DWFo	BFo	LFo	EFo
Lodhao	1.54o	-1.54o	-1.45o	0.41o	-1.16o	0.58o	-0.41o	-0.36o	-0.20o	-0.68o	1.06o	-1.73o	1.51o	-0.53o	2.23o	-0.38o	-0.55o
Dhanipur	0.61o	-0.61o	-0.62o	-0.45o	0.63o	0.41o	1.30o	-0.23o	0.01o	-0.52o	0.62o	-0.87o	-0.52o	2.74o	-0.25o	-0.38o	-0.55o
Akrabad	-1.89o	1.89o	1.97o	-0.56o	0.24o	0.82o	1.61o	1.56o	1.31o	1.75o	-0.49o	-0.95o	-0.45o	-0.53o	-0.53o	2.95o	0.32o
Gonda	-0.17o	0.17o	0.13o	2.95o	-1.30o	1.33o	1.74o	1.62o	1.62o	1.42o	0.62o	-0.87o	-0.80o	-0.53o	-0.53o	-0.38o	0.49o
Iglas	-0.62o	0.62o	0.58o	-0.08o	2.44o	-1.38o	-0.78o	-1.38o	-1.08o	-1.39o	-0.89o	1.09o	-0.36o	1.02o	-0.53o	-0.38o	2.74o
Khair	0.63o	-0.63o	-0.64o	-0.33o	0.58o	-1.25o	-0.78o	-0.63o	-0.40o	-0.85o	-0.38o	1.09o	0.78o	-0.53o	-0.53o	-0.38o	-0.55o
Tappal	0.81o	-0.81o	-0.81o	-0.20o	0.05o	-1.55o	-0.78o	-1.51o	-2.11o	-0.76o	-1.25o	0.23o	-0.80o	-0.53o	-0.53o	-0.38o	-0.55o
Chandaus	-0.89o	0.89o	0.87o	-0.62o	-0.06o	0.24o	-0.43o	-0.38o	-0.31o	-0.29o	0.93o	0.78o	1.97o	0.16o	1.88o	0.80o	0.92o
Jawan	0.90o	-0.90o	-0.89o	-0.09o	-0.51o	-1.02o	-0.78o	0.24o	-0.26o	0.62o	0.52o	1.09o	-0.80o	-0.53o	-0.53o	-0.38o	-0.55o
Atrauli	-1.13o	1.13o	1.12o	-0.20o	-0.99o	0.77o	-0.01o	0.88o	0.70o	1.04o	-1.86o	0.55o	-0.80o	-0.53o	-0.53o	-0.38o	-0.55o
Bijauli	-0.25o	0.25o	0.21o	-0.16o	-0.10o	0.38o	-0.05o	-0.12o	0.34o	-0.53o	-0.20o	-0.90o	0.85o	0.32o	0.39o	-0.38o	-0.55o
Gangri	0.47o	-0.47o	-0.49o	-0.43o	0.18o	0.69o	-0.78o	0.31o	0.37o	0.14o	1.32o	0.51o	-0.55o	-0.53o	-0.53o	-0.38o	-0.55o

Source: Calculation is based on Sample Survey.

Note: ML=Male population to the total selected population, FP= Percentage of female population to the total selected population, SR= Sex-Ratio, HS= Household Size, TLR= Total Literacy Rate, MLR=Male Literacy Rate, FLR= Female Literacy Rate, TER= Total Employment Rate, MER= Male Employment Rate, FER= Female Employment Rate, PCI= Per Capita Income, OH= Percentage of households having own houses, PH= Percentage of households living in pucca houses, DWF= Percentage of households having the drinking water facility within their premises, BF= Percentage of households having bathroom facility within their premises, LF= Percentage of households having latrine facility within their premises and EF= Percentage of households having electricity facility within their premises.

Table 3: Block-Wise Distribution of Z-Score of Social, Economic, Household Infrastructural Facilities and Quality of Life Of Rural Beggar Population in Aligarh District, 2009

Aligarho	Social Developmento	Economic Developmento	Household Infrastructural Facilities Developmento	Quality of Lifeo
Lodhao	-0.29o	-0.05o	0.09o	-0.08o
Dhanipur	0.18o	-0.03o	0.03o	0.06o
Akrabad	0.58o	1.03o	0.13o	0.58o
Gonda	0.69o	1.32o	-0.44o	0.53o
Iglas	0.11o	-1.19o	0.60o	-0.16o
Khair	-0.35o	-0.56o	-0.02o	-0.31o
Tappal	-0.47o	-1.41o	-0.43o	-0.77o
Chandaus	0.00o	-0.01o	1.09o	0.36o
Jawan	-0.47o	0.28o	-0.28o	-0.16o
Atrauli	0.10o	0.19o	-0.37o	-0.03o
Bijauli	0.04o	-0.13o	-0.04o	-0.04o
Gangri	-0.12o	0.53o	-0.34o	0.03o

Source: Calculation is based on Sample Survey.

Table 4: Category-wise levels of selected variables in Aligarh district, 2009

Category	Z-Score	No. of Blocks	Name of the Blocks
Social Development			
High	Above 0.19	2	Akrabad and Gonda
Medium	0.19 to -0.19	6	Dhanipur, Iglas, Chandaus, Atrauli, Bijauli and Gangiri
Low	Below -0.19	4	Lodha, Khair, Tappal and Jawan
Economic Development			
High	Above 0.40	3	Akrabad, Gonda and Gangiri
Medium	0.40 to -0.40	6	Lodha, Dhanipur, Chandaus, Jawan, Atrauli and Bijauli
Low	Below -0.40	3	Iglas, Khair and Tappal
Household Infrastructural Facilities: Development			
High	Above 0.23	2	Iglas and Chandaus
Medium	0.23 to -0.23	5	Lodha, Dhanipur, Akrabad, Khair and Bijauli
Low	Below -0.23	5	Gonda, Tappal, Jawan, Atrauli and Gangiri
Quality of Life			
High	Above 0.18	3	Akrabad, Gonda and Chandaus
Medium	0.18 to -0.18	7	Lodha, Dhanipur, Iglas, Jawan, Atrauli, Bijauli and Gangiri
Low	Below -0.18	2	Khair and Tappal

Source: Based on Table 3.

May be grouped into three grades namely, high (above 0.19 score) medium (0.19 to -0.19 score) and low (below -0.19 score) (Table 3). It is clear from the Figure 2 that the high level (above 0.19 score) of social development of beggars is found in the southern blocks of the district namely, Gonda and Akrabad. One dominant region of the moderate level of social development has been identified in the eastern or north-eastern part of the district and two blocks (Chandaus and Iglas) of this category do not form any region. The low level of social development is recorded in the four blocks of the district namely, Lodha, Jawan, Khair and Tappal, and all make a remarkable region in the central and western part of the district (Figure 2). The analysis of the Figure 2 indicates that the central and western parts of the district have the low level of social development of beggars, the southern parts witnessed the high level of their social development, while, the medium level of social development of beggars is observed in the whole eastern and north-eastern part of the district.

Economic Development

In the present study economic development of beggars' is an outcome of four indicators as mentioned in table 2. The Table 3 depicts that the z-score values of economic development of beggars vary from the lowest -1.41 in Tappal block to the highest 1.32 in Gonda block. This range of variations may be grouped into three categories namely, high (above 0.40 score), medium (0.40 to -0.40 score) and low (below -0.40 score) as given in Table 3. It is clear from Table 4 that three blocks (Gonda, Gangiri and Akrabad) of the district have high level of economic development, among them, Gonda block lies in the south-western part and Akrabad block in the south-eastern part and Gangiri in the eastern part of the district.

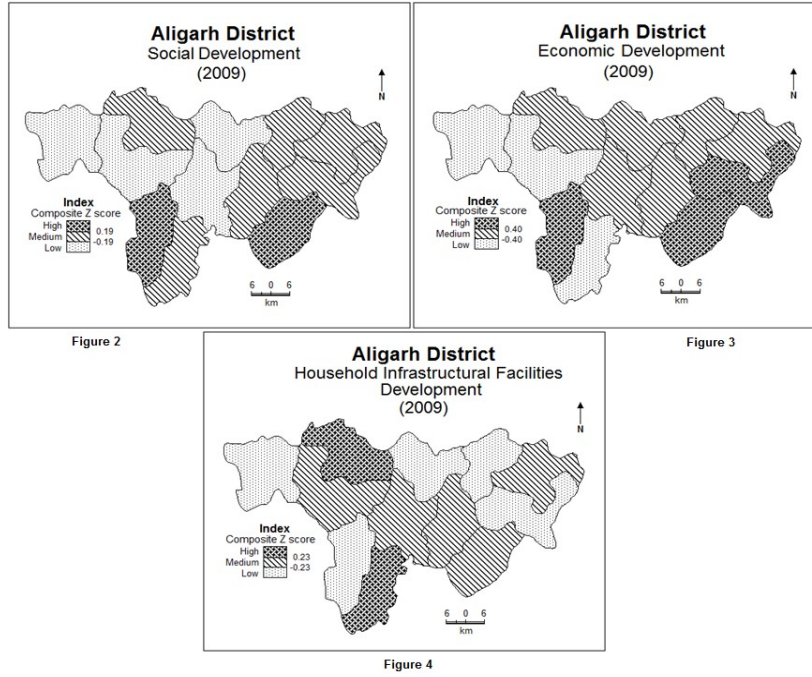


Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 2

Source: Census of India and Vikas Bhavan, Aligarh, 2008



Figure 3

Plate 1: Places of Residence of Beggars in Aligarh District

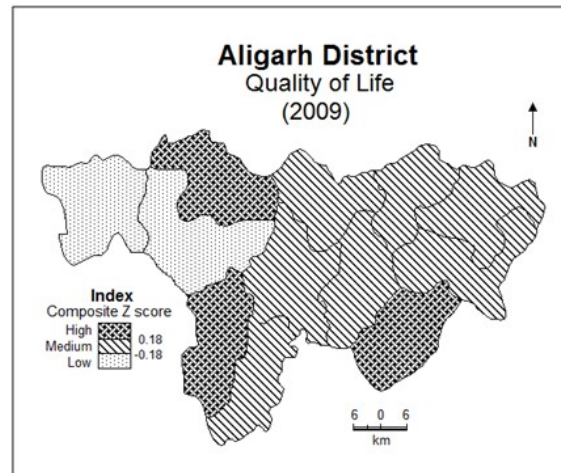


Figure 5

Figure 4

Plate 1: Places of Residence of Beggars in Aligarh District

North-eastern part to the southern part of district Rest of the two blocks in the district come under the low grade (below -0.18 score) of quality of life of rural beggars and both blocks viz., Tappal and Khair make an identifiable region in the north-western part of the district. The regional analysis of the Figure 5 reveals that the beggars of the central and eastern blocks of the district experienced the medium level of quality of life, north-western part observed the low level of quality of life, while, the peripheral blocks witnessed high level of quality of life of rural beggars.

CONCLUSIONS

The overall analysis of the study reveals that the central and western parts of the district have noticed the low level of social development of rural beggars, the north-eastern parts witnessed the medium level of their social development, while, the high level of social development of beggars is observed in the southern parts of the district. In case of spatial analysis of economic development of beggars, majority of the central blocks of the district record medium level of economic development of rural beggars and western parts of the district exhibit low level of their economic development, while, high level economic development of rural beggars is found in the southern peripheral parts of the district. The analysis of household infrastructural facilities of rural beggars reveals that the central part of the district fall under medium level of household infrastructural facilities and these facilities decreases with increasing distance in both east and west directions. The regional analysis of quality of life of rural beggars reveals that the beggars of the majority of central blocks of the district experienced medium level of quality of life, the north-western part observed the low level of quality of life of rural beggars, while, the peripheral blocks witnessed the high level of quality of life.

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