 DOI: *https://doij.org/10.10000/IJLMH.1111057*

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LAW MANAGEMENT & HUMANITIES

[ISSN 2581-5369]

Volume 8 | Issue 6

2025

Access to Economic and Socio-Legal Rights in Rural Tripura: Issues and Realities

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ABSTRACT

The social, legal and economic entitlement of human being are vital for a thriving society because they are interrelated and influence the crucial aspects of life, including economic empowerment , social well-being and legal protection leading to overall development and security. Since economic rights have a social basis, and social rights have an economic basis, both classifications are considered of equal importance and interdependent. Moreover social and legal aspects are also interrelated as social development is incomplete without proper protection of legal rights. Abundance of these life lines is very much needed for creating an equitable society. Thus the concept of Socio-legal and Economic justice consists of implementation of diverse principles essential for the development of every citizen as a whole.

Keywords: *Economic and Social Rights, economic justice, legal protection.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Economic and social rights are the cornerstones of a fair and equitable society because they guarantee to every person access to basic services like education, healthcare, housing, and livelihoods. The rights are contained in the Indian Constitution, especially under the Directive Principles of State Policy, and international legal agreements such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). They are meant to ensure that everyone can live with dignity and have opportunities (UN OHCHR, 2009). However, these rights are still not fully realized in India, especially in rural and remote areas like Northeast India. The North Eastern Region (NER) has had problems in the past because it is geographically isolated, has a lot of different ethnic groups, lacks infrastructure, and has not been given enough attention by the government (Baruah, 2005; Hussain, 2008). Because of these structural problems, public services are often less effective and people are less likely to take advantage of their legal rights to education, health care and livelihoods.

According to the NITI Aayog's North Eastern Region District SDG Index (2021), majority of districts in Tripura are below the national average in key Sustainable Development Goals

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(SDGs), predominantly in health, education, and infrastructure. The NFHS-5 (2019–21) data also suggest that rural Tripura continues to grapple with challenges like lack of access to improved sanitation (only 40 percent rural coverage), high dependence on solid biomass for cooking and poor access to formal finance and health institutions.

The intersection of economic thought and legal frameworks furnishes a fascinating context for the study of the allocation, application, and attainment of economic and social rights, particularly in underdeveloped and marginalized areas. In India, this entitlement, enshrined in the Constitution and reinforced by the nation's international human rights commitments, is not merely a moral obligation but a right essential for mitigating disparities and enhancing human well-being.

Household well-being is often measured by a multidimensional approach that encompasses both economic and social indicators, which together reflect the quality of life and the presence of inherent entitlements. In law and economics, these indicators are not only employed as indicators of poverty or deprivation but also as measures of the enjoyment of economic and social rights as understood in constitutional and international law standards. The literature on welfare economics and rights development consistently underscores the significance of educational attainment and school attendance among children as the paramount indicators of the right to education, which is intrinsically connected to long-term human capital accumulation and intergenerational mobility (Sen, 1999; Dreze & Sen, 2002). Access to electricity, sanitation facilities, drinking water, and housing is equally synonymous with theright to an adequate standard of living, a fundamental element of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), to which India is a signatory.

II. HOUSEHOLD WELL-BEING INDICATORS AS PROXIES FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RIGHTS

In the domain of law and economics, household-level indicators are important in informing us about how economic and social rights are brought to life in different populations. Such measures, often calculated from household surveys like the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) or the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC), are not just indicators of material welfare but also stand-ins for gauging legally defined entitlements realized. According to Sen (1999), the idea of "capabilities"—the real freedoms that individuals in fact possess to live lives that they have a reason to value—is at the heart of what rights really imply. In this context, the accessibility and availability of services like as education, housing, sanitation, and water transcend mere delivery outcomes; they represent the active fulfilment of economic and social

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rights.

The right to education, which is protected by Article 21A of the Indian Constitution and expanded upon in international agreements like the ICESCR, is mostly based on education-related metrics like years of education and Child attendance at school. Such indicators reflect the extent to which people have access to formal schools as well as to opportunities for long-term socio-economic progress (Dreze & Sen, 2013). Low education is consistently linked with intergenerational poverty and marginalization, particularly among rural and tribal populations.

The realization of the right to a decent living standard, as enshrined in Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), is realized when people have access to basic amenities like decent housing, electricity, sanitation, and clean water. The non-availability or intermittency of such infrastructure in rural Tripura reflects serious problems related to the provision of infrastructures, implementation of legislative protection, and allocation of public funds (Ministry of Rural Development, 2021). Access to clean cooking fuel is inescapably intertwined with health rights, gender equity, and environmental justice. These dimensions are more forcefully highlighted in modern views of social rights (UNDP, 2020).

Property rights, as evidenced by land ownership and livestock assets, are crucial for economic security, agricultural production, and access to formal credit markets (De Soto, 2000). Legal academics contend that secure property rights diminish transaction costs and stimulate productive investment in land and labour (Besley & Ghatak, 2010).Lack of land or insecure land ownership in rural areas often goes hand-in-hand with broader cases of social exclusion and legal uncertainty.

Bank account ownership, per capita consumption, and ownership of durable assets are significant measures of financial inclusion and economic agency. These are intimately related to the right to labour, social security, and the larger idea of economic fairness included in Articles 38 and 39 of the Indian Constitution's Directive Principles of State Policy.

Consequently, from a legal and economic perspective, each of these household-level indicators reflects not only socio-economic outcomes but also the efficacy—or deficiency—of legal and institutional frameworks intended to safeguard economic and social rights. Analysing these variables within the rural environment of Tripura yields a concrete comprehension of the manifestation (or denial) of rights in daily life, providing essential insights for policy reform and rights-based campaigning.

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A. Socio Legal Rights of Rural Class of Tripura

Rural inhabitantsof every state of India acquire a range of social and legal rights provided in both Indian constitutional provisions and specific state/central government policies and Statutes.

Economic and Social Rights are the concepts covering Fundamental Rights of Indian Constitution. These fundamental rights represent the basic values cherished by the Country since the Vedic periods and they are estimated to protect the dignity of the individual and create conditions where every people may get the chance to develop to the fullest. Such rights are there in the Constitution to protect the socio, legal and economic rights of people of the Country. Thus the Fundamental rights under ***Article14 & 21*** of Indian Constitution provides for a fair and equitable society, ensuring dignity, fair treatment and equality for all individual. Complementing this the Directive principles of the State Policy specially ***Article 39 Clause b & c, 42, 43A*** and***46*** play a critical role in confronting pervasive socio-economic inequalities.

The idea of Welfare State envisaged by our Constitution can only be achieved if the State endeavours to implement the Directive principles of the State Policy with a high sense of moral duty[3].

Not only the Indian judiciary interpreted the importance of Socio Economic entitlement but our International organisations also construed about the Socio-economic rights. Such rights provide protection for the dignity, freedom and well-being of individuals by guaranteeing state-supported entitlements to education, public health care, housing, a living wage, decent working conditions and other social goods.[4]

Likewise in Tripura to discuss the social, economic and legal rights we need to focus on the schemes, facilities and policies as provided by the State/Central Govt. The nature of these social, economic and legal rights are as follows:

1. Social Rights and Economic Entitlement status of Rural Tripura:

- **Employment and Livelihood:** Under the Scheme of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) adults of the rural household through unskilled manual labour is legally entitled to at least 100 days of guaranteed pay per fiscal year. Beneficiaries are also entitled to get an unemployment allowance under this scheme if work is not offered to them within 15 days.

[3]Pandey and Srivastava (2014, Chapter Directive Principles of State policy, 453)
[4]Social and economic rights. (n.d.). International IDEA. https://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/social-and-economic-rights

- **Housing:**Through the remarkable scheme Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-G), Tripura Rural family units are entitled to basic housing and homestead, which provides financial aid for constructing puccha houses to those who are houseless or living in dilapidated kutcha houses.
- **Social Assistance/Pension**: The government provides social and economic aid and several pension schemes for susceptible sections of society, including the elderly, widows, deserted women, and persons with disabilities, as well as unorganized workers, cancer patients, and others.
- **Education and Health:** Residents have rights to essential services such as healthcare facilities, anganwadi services for early childhood care, nutrition programs (like the Midday Meal Scheme and Mukhyamantri Matru Pushti Uphaar Yojana), and universal access to education, including scholarships for ST children.
- **Sanitation:** The Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) focuses on achieving universal sanitation coverage in rural areas.
- **Infrastructure:** Rural residents have the right to improved infrastructure, including all-weather road connectivity under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana and access to urban amenities through schemes like the Shyamaprasad Mukherjee Rurban Mission.

2. Legal Rights and Protections

- **Land and Property Rights:**

The Tripura Land Revenue and Land Reforms Rules, 1961, and other land reform measures aim to provide land to the landless rural poor and address boundary disputes.

For the indigenous communities within the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC), the Council has significant legal authority to regulate land use and transfer, protecting land rights and preventing transfer to non-Tiprasa people.

The Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006, recognizes the rights of forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers to the forest land and resources they have traditionally used, with the Gram Sabha playing a key role in its administration.

Women in rural areas are also increasingly being granted land rights, which provides significant economic security.

- **Self-Governance:** The Tripura Panchayats Act, 1993, as amended by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, ensures decentralized power at the village level through a

three-tier Panchayati Raj system. This includes reserved seats for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and women (currently 50% reservation for women representatives).

- **Indigenous Rights:** The TTAADC and related legal frameworks protect the distinct cultural heritage, customs, languages, and traditional self-governance systems of the Tiprasa people. They have judicial powers to establish traditional courts for resolving disputes according to customary laws.
- **Protection against Discrimination and Atrocities:** The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, provides a strong legal framework to prevent discrimination and violence against these communities.
- **Legal Aid and Justice:** The state provides legal frameworks and schemes such as the Victim Compensation Scheme for women and other crime victims, and guidelines for vulnerable witnesses, aiming to ensure access to justice.

These rights and provisions aim to facilitate the socio-economic development, empowerment, and protection of the rural population in Tripura.

III. Objective

Interdisciplinary research in development economics, legal theory, and human rights literature has focused on the link between household well-being and the protection of economic and social rights. From a law and economics point of view, institutional economists say that how easy it is to enforce and access legal rights has a big effect on how resources are distributed, how much it costs to do business, and what motivates people in homes and communities (North, 1990; Posner, 1998). Studies have also shown that families that have easy access to social services and legal safeguards are better equipped to handle economic shocks, are less likely to be in long-term poverty, and are more inclined to invest in human capital (Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler, 2004). On the other hand, denying or not properly implementing economic and social rights leads to ongoing deprivation, makes it harder for households to make decisions on their own—especially for women—and strengthens existing structural inequalities. Thus keeping in mind the importance of household well-being, this study triesto measure and compare the status of household wellbeing for the rural households in Tripura across the districts as well as across socio-economic classes.

IV. Data sources and methodologies

A. Data Source

The study is based on primary data is typically meant for addressing the rural issues. The

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determination of the primary sample size has been done by the formula given by Yamane (1967:886) at the 10 percent level of significance. Thus, the required and estimated sample size for the study is a minimum of 99.99 i.e., 100 rural households, where 320 sample households actually have been covered by the present study. A multistage stratified random sampling method has been followed to select the sample households from 8 C.D. blocks out of 40 C.D. blocks as per Census 2011 (i.e., at the rate of 20 percent of the total). In the first stage, all four districts in Tripura as per Census, 2011 have been selected. In the second stage,8 C. D. blocks have been selected consisting of 4 C.D. blocks out of 16 from West Tripura, 2 C.D. blocks out of 11 from South Tripura, 1 C.D. block out of 8 from North Tripura, and 1 C.D. block out of 5 from Dhalai.Again, 32 Census villages in total taking 4 villages from each of the select C.D. blocks have been covered. For the sample households, 10 households from each of the selected Census villages have been covered. Thus, the total sample size stands at(32X10) i.e., 320 rural households. The final unit of analysis i.e., households have been selected randomly.

B. Construction of the Household Wellbeing Index

The present estimation of the Household Wellbeing Index (HWBI), is based on the counting approach as developed by Alkire and Foster (2011) due to itsseveral advantages.

1. The Alkire-Foster Method

The approach is well suited to capture deprivation that goes beyond the simple income measures, encompassing different dimensions of human well-being. The first step of the Alkire-Foster (AF) approach involves the determination of a deprivation cut-off for each single indicator. A household will be considered deprived based on a specific indicator if its realization level is below the chosen cut-off. These cut-offs are nominated in terms of normative or policy-specified criteria and are in a deprivation matrix classifying households as deprived and non-deprived based on every indicator. The second step involves the determination of a poverty cut-off (k) to determine whether a household is multidimensionally poor. This cut-off is the minimum percentage of weighted indicators in which a household has to suffer from deprivation to be classified as poor. In the present study, a household will be classified as multidimensionally poor if it suffers from deprivation in at least one-third of the weighted total indicators. The deprivation score assigned to every household is the sum of weighted deprivations. Households with a deprivation score of equal to or greater than the cut-off (k) are considered multidimensionally poor.

Here, Educational Attainment, Household Amenities and Economic Status, all these three dimensions (*T*) are equally weighted as the total weight became unity. Similarly, equal

weightage has been assigned to each indicator following the weightage of the dimensions in such a way that the weight is connected to indicator j, with $j = (1,2,3,....,d)$ is $w_j = (1/T) \times (1/d)$ The deprivation threshold for each of the *twelve indicators*and associated weights are *defined in Table 1*. Now, a person is considered deprived, if the total deprivation score when weighted, above the specified threshold (or poverty cut-offs, k). However, value of k can be determined by either referencing prior research or by considering societal norms. Furthermore, it may be seen as an indication of a country's or state's particular policy objective. In the current scenario, an individual is classified as multidimensionally poor if the total deprivation score is more than or equal toone-third i.e.,$c_i \geq k(=1/3)$, $i=(1,2,3,\ldots,n)$ as the poverty cut-offs defined in international MPI (UNDP, 2010, 2015).

Table 1: Dimensions, Indicators, Insufficiency Cut-offs, and Weights for the HWBI

Dimensions	*Indicators*	*Insufficient if…*
Educational Attainment (1/3)	Years of Schooling (1/6)	At least one adult household member aged 15 years or above has not completed five years of schooling
	Child School Attendance (1/6)	At least one child in the school going age (6-14) in the household currently not enrolled in school in the survey year
Household Amenities (1/3)	Electricity (1/15)	The household has no electricity connection
	Sanitation (1/15)	The household sanitation facility is not improved (according to MDGs guidelines) or it is improved but shared with other households
	Drinking Water (1/15)	The household does not have access to improved/clean drinking water (according to MDGs guidelines) or safe drinking water is at least a 30 mins walk from home, round trip
	Housing (1/15)	The household has a dirt, sand or dung type of floor, or not having *pacca* floor
	Cooking Fuel (1/15)	The household cooks with dung, wood, charcoal, and not having improved cooking instruments like LPG, Induction Cooker, Micro Oven

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Economic Status (1/3)	Land Ownership (1/15)	The household does not have any agricultural land, or having an agricultural land area of less than 40 cent[#]
	Consumption* (1/15)	if the household falls below the consumption expenditure threshold limit (official poverty line)
	Asset Position (1/15)	The household owns any of the followingassets: television, radio, telephone, mobile,watch/clock, bicycle, cart driven by animal or othercart; and at the same time, does not own any of the following assets: refrigerator, motorbike, car,computer, washing machine, airconditioner, water pump, thresher, tractor
	Livestock Ownership (1/15)	The household does not have any Livestock Ownershipi.e., poultry, piggery, pisciculture etc. or any major household based marketable livestock
	Bank Account (1/15)	The household does not have any functional Bank Account in the name of any of the family members, either in public or private banks

Note: #40 cent makes a Kani in local terms. Less than a Kani of agricultural land can't even support the bare minimum food grains requirement of a family of 5 members for their subsistence.

**CPI_AL for the state of Tripura (base year 1986-87) Rs.871 for march 2020 & Rs 526 for march 2011 therefore Rs.345 increase during this period, following the same base year. hence the proverty line for rural Tripura has to increase from Rs. 935.52 per capita per month, 2011-12 to Rs. 1280.52 for 2020, as per Rangarajan Report 2014.*

Now, the multidimensional headcount ratio *H* (*incidence of poverty)* is defined as the ratio of total number of multidimensionally poor (q_k) to the total population (n), that is, H=q_k/n, also defined in this study as percentage of people who are narrowly satisfied and *(1-H)* = H^H defined as the percentage of people who are satisfied.The proportion of potential deprivations suffered by a i^{th}poor can be obtained by $c_i(k)$and the average proportion of deprivation experienced by the poor (*intensity of poverty)* obtained by *A,* defined as insufficiency between the narrowly

satisfied and $(1-A)=A^S$defined as sufficiency among the narrowly satisfied. Therefore, the Multidimensional Poverty Index (M_0) is defined as the multiplication of *incidence* and *intensity* of poverty. So, the value of Multidimensional Poverty Index ($\boldsymbol{M_0}$) of a society is obtained by $M_0 = H \times A$. And the Household Wellbeing Index (HWBI) is derived by HWBI = $(1-M_0)$.

2. Decomposition

The MPI can be disaggregated by population subgroups and indicators, facilitating a more detailed analysis:

According to Population Subgroups: The aggregate MPI can be articulated as the weighted summation of the MPI values for various demographic or regional subgroups. This enables the identification of each subgroup's contribution to total poverty.

The MPI can be disaggregated by indicators, utilizing censored headcount ratios that represent the proportion of households who are both impoverished and deprived in a certain category. This facilitates the identification of the individual deprivations that are generating multidimensional poverty.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section mainly covers the status of household well-being as well as the state and depth of their deprivation, the major contributors to the deprivation.

A. Household Wellbeing: Rural Tripura

The state of Tripura has more than 36.74 lakh population belonging to different social and religious groups as per Census, 2011. Around 73.83 percent of the total population live in the villages of rural areas.

According to the Social Progress Index (SPI) value, 2023, Tripura is in Lower Middle Social Progress, ranking at 27th among all the states with a SPI score 51.70. Moreover, Shah & Debnath (2021) conducted a primary survey and discovered that the lack of nutrition, high mortality rates, limited access to safe drinking water, inadequate sanitation facilities and cooking fuel, as well as insufficient housing and assets, are the crucial components of multidimensional poverty in rural Tripura. Thus, this particular segment of the research aims to investigatethe current state of rural household wellbeingof Tripura through the primary survey (2019-20)(***Table 2***).

Table 2: HWB Index and its Components		
Components		**Primary Survey (2019-20)**
		Rural

HWB Index = 1- (H*A)	***Range 0 to 1***	0.815
Headcount ratio: Population who are narrowly satisfied (H)	***% of Population***	41.91
Headcount ratio: Population who are satisfied (H^H= 1-H)	***% of Population***	58.09
Insufficiency among the narrowly satisfied (A)	***% of weighted deprivation***	44.23
Sufficiency among the narrowly satisfied (A^S= 1-A)	***% of weighted deprivation***	55.77
Source: Researcher's estimates from Primary Survey, 2019-20		

The value of HWB Index for rural Tripura is 81.5 per cent suggesting a moderately high aggregate wellbeing. Nevertheless, a detailed analysis of its foundational elements uncovers significant socio-economic vulnerability: around 41.91 per cent of the rural populace is categorized as narrowly satisfied, signifying they achieve minimal standards of wellbeing yet remain exceedingly prone to adverse shocks (e.g., health emergencies, income reduction, or inflation). The remaining 58.09 per cent of the populationsare content, indicating an improved condition, albeit not necessarily one of economic stability or wealth.

The intensity of insufficiency among the narrowly satisfied households is 44.23 per cent, underscoring the extent of deprivation even among people not often deemed poor. Conversely, sufficiency among the narrowly satisfied constitutes 55.77 per cent, signifying that over half of this vulnerable demographic is only slightly above the deprivation level.

Further, this study corroborates past research by Alkire and Foster (2011) that composite intensity and incidence indices are essential for the development of inclusive development policy. In the case of Tripura, even though the composite wellbeing index appears to be very promising, the distribution underlying it indicates that there is targeted action that is needed to address vulnerability and develop resilience.

B. Decomposition of Household Wellbeing Index

The structure of HWBIis an important tool for finding out the dimension and indicator specific relative contributions to the overall insufficiency (M_0=H*A) or how these metrics add up to overall shortcomings in Household Wellbeing which is given in Table 3.The Adjusted Head Count Ratio (M_0)from where HWBI is constructed, also decomposable by its indicators.Table 3 provides a detailed analysis of the relative contributions of ten selected indicators—categorized under Educational Status, Household Amenities, and Economic Status—to the total multidimensional deprivation in Tripura, derived from a primary household survey conducted

in 2019–20. The findings indicate not only developmental shortcomings but also profound deficiencies in the fulfilment of economic and social rights.

Table 3: Dimension/Indicator Specific Relative Contributions to Overall Insufficiency		
Dimensions	***Indicators***	***% Contribution***
	Years of Schooling	33.01
	Child School Attendance	1.18
Educational Status		***34.19***
	Electricity	0.37
	Sanitation	02.70
	Drinking Water	01.26
	Flooring	11.08
	Cooking Fuel	14.94
Household Amenities		***30.35***
	Bank Account	0.43
	Asset Position	13.64
	Livestock Ownership	0.44
	Land Ownership	10.65
	Consumption	10.30
Economic Status		***35.46***
Source: Researcher's estimates based on primary survey, 2019-20		

Among all the dimensions, Household Amenities is the lowest contributor to insufficiency (only 30.35 per cent) followed by Educational Status (34.19 per cent) and the highest contributor to insufficiency is Economic Status (35.46 per cent), with high contributions from Asset Position (13.64 per cent), Land Ownership (10.65 per cent), and Consumption (10.30 per cent). These indicators capture how well households may access productive assets and feel secure in their finances, both important parts of the right to livelihood, which Indian law has recognized as

part of Article 21 (e.g., Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation, 1985). The degree of deprivation in land and asset ownership shows how deep-seated economic inequality and exclusion are. Moreover, low levels of consumptionshow that people don't have enough access to food and nutrition security, which violates the principles of the National Food Security Act, 2013, and Article 47 of the Directive ideals of State Policy. This means that the government has to improve public health and nutrition.

Again, Indicator wise, Years of Schooling (33.01 per cent) is predominant. This means that a large share of the population has not reached even primary formal education, therefore barring the creation of human capital and long-term competencies.Notwithstanding the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, which implements Article 21A of the Indian Constitution, the data reveals a continual disparity between legal entitlements and actual educational outcomes. The dropout rates in North-Eastern India were also a matter for concern, according to research by Education for All in India, 2020. The dropout rate in primary schools was 17.1 percent, and it reached 25.5 percent in upper primary schools. Moreover, the comparatively low share of Child School Attendance (1.18 per cent) could be an indicator of gains from enrolment through interventions such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. However, the stark disparity with years of schooling highlights issues about retention, dropout rates, and learning quality, indicating a partial realization of the right to education.Indicators such as Cooking Fuel (14.94 per cent), Flooring (11.08 per cent), and Sanitation (2.70 per cent) serve as critical reflections of access to basic living conditions. These indicators constitute fundamental elements of the right to an adequate standard of living, as articulated in Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), to which India is a signatory. Article 21 of the Indian Constitution, which is about the right to life, also includes the right to health, housing, and a clean environment. The lack of cooking fuel and poor flooring are signs of both material hardship and vulnerability to risky and harmful living circumstances, especially for women and children. National programs like the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan have tried to help with these problems, but the data shows that they haven't reached everyone in rural Tripura.

Once more, the minimal contributor to insufficiency is Electricity, accounting for 0.37 percent. This specific contribution of electricity to rural insufficiency within the state indicates initiative under the Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (Saubhagya) through the Government.As perInsights from the India Residential Energy Survey(IRES) 2020, nearly 97 per cent of Indian households are electrified.

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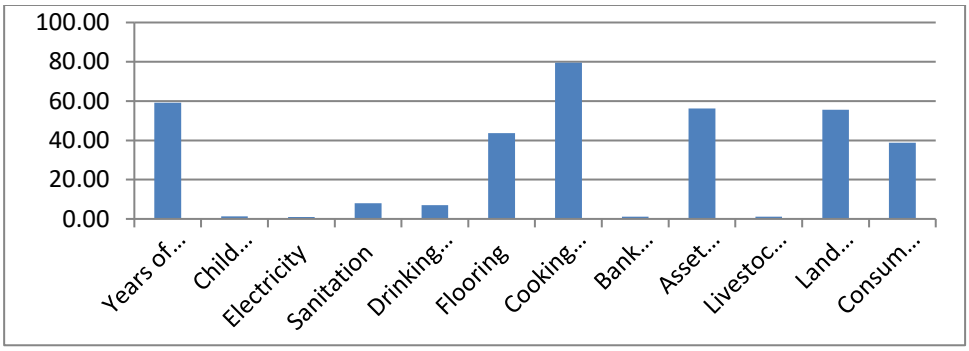
C. Percentage of Deprivation in each of the indicators

Deprivations in each of the indicators of non-monetary measurement reveal the people of rural area of Tripura are most deprived in cooking fuel, years of schooling, asset position, land ownership and consumption (Figure1). The least percentage of people deprived in electricity (1.03 per cent) followed by livestock ownership (1.20 per cent) and bank account (1.20 per cent), then child school attendance (1.32 per cent).

Figure 1: Percentage of people who are deprived in each of the Indicators



Source: Researcher's estimates based on primary survey, 2019-20

D. Performance across the Subgroups by Districts

Now, coming to the district level, this section compares the districts of Tripura using the primary survey data for levels of insufficiency (M_0), incidence (H), and intensity of deprivation (A).Table 4 presents a district-levelevaluation of multidimensional insufficiency in Tripura. The data illustrate the spatial variability of development outcomes throughout the state.

Table 4: Level of insufficiency across the Districts of Tripura

		Primary Survey: 2019-20	
District		**Value**	**Confidence Interval**
West Tripura	**M_0**	0.15(0.0176)	(.222,.291)
	H	0.356(0.032)	(.442,.569)
	A	0.421(0.012)	(.481, .532)
South Tripura	**M_0**	0.148(0.010)	(.127, .168)
	H	0.338(0.023)	(.292,.383)
	A	0.438(0.005)	(.426, .448)

Dhalai	**M_0**	0.191(0.014)	(.120, .179)
	H	0.446(0.034)	(.287, .424)
	A	0.427(0.006)	(.407, .434)
North Tripura	**M_0**	0.257(0.007)	(.176, .204)
	H	0.506(0.016)	(.413,.478)
	A	0.507(0.003)	(.420, .433)
Source: Researcher's estimates based on Primary Survey, 2019-20			
Notes: Values in parenthesis represents SE			

North Tripura exhibits the highest adjusted headcount ratio (M_0= 0.257), headcount ratio (H = 0.506), and intensity (A = 0.507), thereby establishing itself as the most impoverished district within the state. More than 50 per cent of the population experiences multidimensional deprivation, with each deprived household lacking access to over half of the weighted indicators. This is a picture of chronic deficiency and indicates long-term structural limitations, e.g., insufficient educational opportunities, poor healthcare facilities, and underdeveloped infrastructure. The narrow confidence interval (.176, .204 for M_0) underscores statistical robustness.In contrast, South Tripura exhibits the minimal level of deprivation, with M_0 = 0.148, H = 0.338, and A = 0.438.his district exhibits enhanced service delivery and improved household capabilities, as evidenced by the low standard errors.It may have done better because of better human development programs, easier access, and maybe being close to state administrative centers.West Tripura and Dhalai exhibit moderate yet clearly defined deprivation profiles. The M_0 value for West Tripura is low at 0.15; however, the intensity, measured at A = 0.421, indicates that individuals facing deprivation encounter significant insufficiency. Dhalai demonstrates a greater M_0 (0.191) and H (0.446), indicating both broader and more deep multidimensional deprivation compared to West Tripura. The figures for Dhalai show ongoing development deficits typical of remote and tribal-dominated areas.

Thus, there exist disparities in deprivation among the districts of Tripura as evident from primary data. One of the challenges to maintaining sustainable development in India, particularly in the north-eastern regions, is regional imbalance.

E. Performance across Social and Religious Sub-Groups

Besides area wise analysis, the real stimulation of M_0 (i.e., 1- HWBI) Index exemplifies how deprivationvaries between regions and groups in different indicators, having important policy bearing. The present sectionis an effort in that direction dividing the population intosocial, economic and religious sub-groups and also the insufficiency of household deprivation has been tried to arrest by social, economic and religious sub-groups from primary survey reported in Table 6, Table 7 and Table 8.

Among the Social categories, Scheduled Tribes (STs) have the greatest multidimensional poverty index ($M_0 = 0.220$) and the highest headcount ratio (H = 51.21 per cent), which means that more than half of ST households are multidimensionally poor. This is because of long-standing structural disadvantages, especially in tribal areas that are hard to reach, and it align with national data from NFHS-5 and the Social Progress Index, which always show that tribal populations in the Northeast have worse outcomes. The Scheduled Castes (SCs), on the other hand, are likewise quite poor ($M_0 = 0.177$), though lower than STs. In contrast, the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and General categories have lower levels of poverty ($M_0 = 0.140$ and 0.193, respectively), although the level of deprivation a$_{mo}$ng impoverished people is still substantial (A is greater than 40 per cent in both). This means that once poor, individualsacross all caste groups tend to have overlapping deprivations (such in health, education, and housing). However, structural exclusion renders STs and SCs more likely to be poor in the first place. Again, Religious affiliation significantly impacts poverty outcomes, with Muslim families being the poorest religious group, with the highest multidimensional poverty score ($M_0 = 0.271$). This highlights the lack of public services and development programs for Muslim communities. Christians and Hindus have lower poverty levels, but "Others" (minor indigenous or animist faiths) have the lowest total poverty ($M_0 = 0.089$), despite not receiving state welfare assistance. The high poverty rate among Muslims indicates a multifaceted issue.The types of ration cards (APL, BPL, Ad-hoc BPL, Antyodaya, and No Ration Card) serve as a surrogate for economic classification and entitlement-based targeting. The study reveals that Antyodaya cardholders are the most impoverished demographic, with a poverty rate of 91.11 per cent. Ad-hoc BPL individuals have significant poverty, indicating deficiencies in targeting systems. Individuals without a ration card experience significant deprivation. The analysis highlights the dangers of "exclusion errors" in welfare distribution, where impoverished households are excluded from state assistance, highlighting the deep-seated suffering within officially acknowledged impoverished homes(Table 6).

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Table 6: State of Insufficiency across Social, Religious and Economic Subgroups in rural Tripura			
Population Subgroups	**M_0**	**H**	**A**
Social Groups			
SCs	0.177	40.05	44.11
STs	0.22	51.21	43.02
OBCs	0.14	34.18	40.85
Generals	0.193	42.15	45.79
Religious Groups			
Hindu	0.158	36.56	43.23
Muslim	0.271	58.43	46.31
Christian	0.197	45.59	43.12
Others	0.089	21.88	40.48
Economic Status			
APL	0.052	12.87	40.03
BPL	0.236	54.73	43.29
Ad-hocBPL	0.312	71.96	43.4
Antodaya	0.422	91.11	46.37
No Ration Card	0.597	41.91	63.54
Source:Researcher's estimates based on primary survey, 2019-20			

The data reveals a trend of intersectional deprivation, with impoverished caste or religious groups experiencing more problems, highlighting the complex nature of poverty.These deprivations are against the law since they go against the rights to food, education, shelter, and not being discriminated against that are spelled forth in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (Articles 2, 11, and 13). These trends go

against the Constitution of India and make it harder to carry out the Directive Principles of State Policy (Articles 38, 39, and 46), which say that SCs, STs, and other marginalized groups should be raised up and disparities should be reduced.

Again, Table 7 shows the percentage of deprivation in important well-being characteristics for four major Social groups in rural Tripura: SCs, STs, OBCs, and General. In case of Years of Schooling, General (63.04 per cent) have the highest rates of deprivation, in case of Child School attendance: overall, deprivation is low, but it's a little higher for ST (2.09 per cent). This means that some native child may still have trouble getting to school or attending. For Electricity, although the majority of groups claim 0 per cent deprivation, the General caste exhibits 2.28 per cent, likely attributable to the impacts of remote location rather than exclusion based on identity. In case of Sanitation, Scheduled Castes (10.83 per cent) and General caste (9.49 per cent) exhibit more deprivation compared to Scheduled Tribes (3.83 per cent) and Other Backward Classes (4 per cent). This questions the presumption of universal access to sanitation initiatives such as Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. For drinking water facility, SC exhibit significant deprivation at 12.59 per cent, while ST record a mere 1.05 per cent. For the indicator Housing,significant deprivation is observed among Scheduled Tribes (70.03 per cent), followed by Other Backward Classes (52.73 per cent) and Scheduled Castes (39.04 per cent). General exhibit the lowest level of deprivation at 33.16 per cent. In case of Cooking Fuel, ST experience nearly complete impoverishment (98.26 per cent), underscoring persistent reliance on hazardous solid fuels. All other groups exhibit significant deprivation as well (greater than 70 per cent). In Asset Position, significant deprivation among OBCs (66.18 per cent) and ST (64.81 per cent).Again, in the Land Ownership indicators, ST (36.59 per cent) and OBCs (36.73 per cent) exhibit inadequate land security, but the General possesses significantly more land security (72.91 per cent).

In case of Livestock Ownership and Bank Account Access, minimal ownership and access among SCs and STs, underscoring obstacles to financial inclusion and agricultural livelihoods. In case of per capita Consumption expenditure, an immediate indicator of economic poverty, is most prevalent among STs (58.89 per cent), followed by SCs and the General category.

Table 7: Percentage of Deprivation in Various Indicators across Social Groups

Indicators	**Primary Survey**			
	SC	**ST**	**OBC**	**Gen**

Years of Schooling	56.42	57.14	53.82	63.04
Child School Attendance	0.5	2.09	1.09	1.52
Electricity	0	0	0	2.28
Sanitation	10.83	3.83	4	9.49
Drinking Water	12.59	1.05	5.09	7.22
Housing	39.04	70.03	52.73	33.16
Cooking Fuel	77.33	98.26	84.73	72.15
Asset Position	50.38	64.81	66.18	52.53
Land Ownership	48.11	36.59	36.73	72.91
Livestock Ownership	2.27	0	0	1.52
Bank Account	2.27	0	0	1.5
Consumption	36.78	58.89	20.73	38.61
Source: Researcher's estimates based on primary survey, 2019-20				

The Indian Constitution talks about several parts of life for diverse populations, such as housing, education, basic infrastructure, and economic security. The general caste does the best, whereas SCs and STs have the worst education deficit. Basic services and infrastructure are also under danger, and SCs and General caste have greater rates of deprivation than STs and OBCs. There is also a lot of deprivation in housing and fuel, with STs facing almost complete deprivation. This shows how much they depend on dangerous solid fuels. This lack of access goes against Article 11 of the ICESCR and the Directive Principles on living circumstances, which say that public health and nutrition must get better. The asset situation is also a problem, as OBCs and STs have a lot of deprivation. Along caste lines, land and livestock ownership is not evenly divided, which goes against SDG Goals 1 and 5. The largest levels of consumption deprivation are among STs and SCs, which shows that they are economically vulnerable and food insecure.

The Table 8 presents data on deprivation across twelve socio-economic indicators by religious affiliation, revealing deeper deprivation in rural Tripura. This data helps assess the realization of economic and social rights, particularly in terms of equality, non-discrimination, and socio-economic justice, in rural Tripura.

Table 8: Percentage of Deprivation in Various Indicators across Religious Groups

Indicators	Primary Survey, 2019-20			
	Hindu	**Muslim**	**Christian**	**Others**
Years of Schooling	54.4	74.58	60.29	34.38
Child School Attendance	1.22	1.9	0	0
Electricity	0	4.28	0	0
Sanitation	8.79	7.6	0	0
Drinking Water	7.25	8.31	0	0
Housing	44.06	38.48	58.82	62.5
Cooking Fuel	77.85	82.66	100	62.5
Asset Position	54.72	61.52	58.82	37.5
Land Ownership	50.24	81.24	20.59	0
Livestock Ownership	0.73	2.85	0	0
Bank Account	0.73	2.85	0	0
Consumption	29.48	62	50	62.5

Source: Researcher's estimates based on primary survey, 2019-20

In case of Years of Schooling, the most impoverished households are Muslim (74.58 per cent), followed by Christian (60.29 per cent). The "Others" category performs the best (34.38 per cent), while Hindus have a comparatively lower percentage (54.40 per cent).

While in case of Child school attendance the percentage of deprivation is almost uniform among all groups, Muslims continue to have the worst levels of deprivation (1.9 per cent). Following the result it can be said that The Indian Constitution's Article 21-A guarantees free and compulsory education, but it's underutilized in Muslim and Christian communities. The Right to Education Act of 2009, which requires universal access, is unevenly enforced, violating Article 15 and ICESCR. Again, Muslims have the highest rate of electricity deprivation (4.28

per cent), while Christians, Hindus, and others report complete access (0 per cent deprivation).According to value of sanitation indicator, Hindu households are more deprived (8.79 per cent) than Muslim(7.6 per cent).Muslims are once again the group most affected by drinking water deprivation (8.31 per cent).These differences violate Article 21 of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to live in dignity. This right has been interpreted by courts to include access to clean water (Narmada Bachao Andolan v. Union of India, 2000) and sanitation (Safai Karamchari Andolan v. Union of India, 2014). The state's failure to guarantee nondiscriminatory access to basic services is reflected in the observed deprivation, which violates SDG Goals 6 and 7 on universal access to clean energy and water as well as Article 14 (Right to Equality). Again, there is a severe dearth of safe housing, as seen by the startlingly high rates of housing deprivation among Christians (58.82 per cent) and Others (62.50 per cent).Deprivation of cooking fuel is prevalent among Muslims (82.66 per cent) and Christians (100 per cent).According to Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation (1985), the right to sufficient housing is a component of the right to life under Article 21. Systemic neglect in housing programs like as PMAY (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana) is shown by high deprivation among minority communities. In a similar vein, although not specifically guaranteed, the right to clean energy is becoming more widely recognized as a component of the right to sustainable development and health (as per UN SDG 7 and India's commitments under the Paris Agreement). Again, Muslims exhibit the highest levels of deprivation in terms of asset position and land ownership (61.52 per cent and 81.24 per cent respectively).All groups have slightly higher rates of bank account ownership and livestock ownership, while Muslims once again have the lowest rates."Others" had the highest rate of consumption deprivation (62.50 per cent), followed by Muslims (62 per cent).These findings highlights the economic marginalization of Muslim households, highlighting concerns about structural discrimination. Although property rights are not recognized post-44th Amendment, land and asset ownership are crucial for socio-economic rights. The lack of targeted redistribution and inclusive asset-building policies violates social justice and directive principles. Looking at the table 8, it can be said that successful inclusion through programs like Jan Dhan Yojana is suggested by the low deprivation in bank account ownership (the highest at only 2.85 per cent).This is encouraging and demonstrates the efficacy of identity-neutral, rights-based financial initiatives. It affirms how universal access policies can promote equality in ESRs.

VI. Conclusion and Policy Implication

The Household Well-being Index value of 0.815 indicates a significant deficit in household well-being in rural areas, with 41.91 per cent of the population still narrowly satisfied. This

results in 44.23 per cent experiencing insufficiency in meeting essential needs, undermining the overall quality of life for a large segment of the rural population. The findings raise concerns about the realization of economic and social rights guaranteed under the Indian Constitution, particularly Article 21, and the Directive Principles of State Policy. They also indicate a potential shortfall in India's commitments under international human rights instruments, such as Article 11 of the ICESCR. The Index calls into question the effectiveness of existing welfare policies and legal frameworks in ensuring distributive justice and equality in rural India.India needs to transition from a scheme-based approach to a rights-based governance framework to address the uneven well-being of rural India's 41.91 per cent population. This includes codifying a Rural Social Protection Floor, redesigning welfare schemes to prioritize the vulnerable, institutionalizing well-being monitoring via local governance, embedding statutory grievance redressal mechanisms within social protection programs, and integrating the HWB Index into development planning and budgeting. The HWB Index reveals that well-being in rural India is fragile and uneven, despite the proliferation of welfare schemes. To bridge this gap, India must transition from a scheme-based approach to a rights-based governance framework that upholds the constitutional promise of equality, dignity, and justice for all.

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 [ISSN 2581-5369]