ABSTRACT

This study entitled *A comparative study of Scheduled Caste welfare schemes in habitats and other places of their abode* is an endeavor to evaluate and compare the impact of the SC welfare schemes in habitats and other dwelling places. The study mainly focuses on three main factors which are crucial for shaping the future of SCs namely education, housing and employment. The Kottayam District of Kerala is taken as a sample for empirical study. Using the primary and secondary data the researcher measures the deprivation levels in both dwelling places. The deprivation index is an indicator of the human development of a class of people. It is based on four basic necessities for their well-being such as housing status, access to drinking water, good sanitation and electric lighting. It also serves as an adequate tool to assess disparity among SCs in habitats and non-habitats. An attempt is made to determine the major factors affecting deprivation. To compare the socio-economic status of SCs a new form of index of development, SEDI (Socio Economic Development Index) is developed and used. It is a composite index consisting of component indices like education, income, possession of basic facilities and social status. More over Statistical techniques are employed to find out the major factors affecting socio-economic development. The study establishes the facts that the SC people in Kerala are trailing far behind the general population in four important basic necessities such as pukka houses, access to drinking water, good sanitation and electric lighting.

In spite of the availability of various special welfare schemes provided, the educational progress and income level of SCs are less satisfactory in habitats when compared to those of non-habitats. Basic infrastructure is poor and social status is also deplorable in habitats. It is further identified that education, employment, welfare schemes and infrastructure are the principal components affecting the socio-economic development of the SC community other than income. The SEDI is higher in non-habitats when compared with habitats, which imply that colonization has failed to achieve the set goals and to a certain extent it adversely affected their overall development due to marginalisation and poor socio-cultural atmosphere. Overall, the empirical econometric results reveal that the various welfare schemes of SCs have been partially successful and they made no significant impacts in their lives against 100% expenditure of funds. The SC people in habitats are segregated and the socio-economic conditions in habitats are very pathetic when compared to non-habitats and needs urgent remedy. Safeguards and other legislative measures must be enunciated to bring these people at par with the other citizens of India.

**Keywords**: Habitats, non-habitats, welfare schemes, positive discrimination, reservation, education, housing, employment, deprivation, socio-economic development, Cultural capital.