

Chapter-3

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF SOCIAL WELL-BEING

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Chapter – 3

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF SOCIAL WELL-BEING

The study of social well-being in geography is the inevitable result of the relevance movement which started in ^{the} 1970s. It aimed at addressing those human problems which were afflicting the society at large. It was launched to groom geography as ^a socially relevant discipline. Hence, geography began to address the welfare issues which provided a new framework for micro-level enquiries. Micro-level spatial analysis has enhanced the role of geography in ~~the~~ developmental planning. Through ^{the} social relevance movement the emphasis of enquiry in geography shifted from the study of marginal land to ~~the~~ marginal social space.

3.1 Evolution of Well-being Concept

A rather late arrival of ^{the} welfare approach in social sciences in general and geography in particular, has several historical, political and psychological reasons, e.g. the Vietnam war, environmental degradation, crime explosion ~~etc.~~. The manifestation of social injustice through these crises in cities led a group of social scientists to promote the radical approach. Especially, with geography, the issue of distribution was taking new urgency (Smith, 1977)¹.

The breakthroughs in the studies of social well-being took place in the west. The intellectual yearning to solve social problems has to pass through many phases. Even geographically, it is not equally practiced. Thus developing countries, like India, are lagging far behind in addressing these problems through intellectual and academic pursuits. All efforts in this field are disproportionately revolving around ~~the~~ descriptive empirical studies. These studies are generally concentrated around two major aspects. Firstly, the selection of appropriate indicators reflecting the totality of social well-being, and secondly, the selection of appropriate geographical units for the purpose of generalization (Kulkarni, 1990)². The variables used in

1 Smith, D.M. (1977), *Human Geography : A Welfare Approach*, Arnold Heimann.

2 Kulkarni, K.M. (1990), *Geographical Patterns of Social Well-being*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi.

construction of the indicators are still not ^a direct measure of well-being but its surrogates, e.g. good access to health facilities is often used as ^{an} indicant of health, whereas the intensity or duration of illness experienced would be ^a more direct way of measuring health condition^s.

Ideally, data relating to ~~the~~ well-being should be in the form of flow data i.e. measures of satisfaction per unit of time because it would be more of a help to academics as well as policy makers. Secondly, data should be related to output, ^t though it is some times ambiguous because the output data in some cases may be intermediate data for other cases (Knox, 1975)³. The adoption of the geographical scale affects both the selection of indicators as well as pattern^s of social well-being in term^s of generalization. The smaller is the unit of the study of social well-being greater details and accuracy are produced and more immediate life conditions are exposed. Whereas at meso and macro levels micro differences are merged and hence a different level of generalization emerges. Hence, micro-level studies of social well-being are more realistic (Kulkarni, 1990)⁴.

In Indian society there is a history of social and spatial discrimination. The reasons may lie in the unequal resource endowment as well as ^{the} unjust social structure spawned around the dogmas of religion, culture and social hierarchy. The social injustice and economic disparity within a social system are intricately related with the expression of ^a socially unjust spatial structure. At broader national level, there are regions of relative deprivation. At regional level, ^a few urban centers which attract industries and services are better-off than most of the remaining centers. But a definitive picture of inequality emerges at the intra-urban and intra-rural levels. In the former case analyzing the spatial structure of city and distribution pattern of amenities and facilities provides ^{the} most realistic account of actual economic and socio-political processes taking place. The health and viability of the socio-spatial structure of the city can quite conclusively be judged through the extent of spatial inequality in the social well-being of the relevant social groups in a city.

3 Know, P.L. (1975), *Social Well-being : A Spatial Perspective*, Oxford University Press.

4 Kulkarni, (1990), op.cit.

The geographical perspective of social well-being studies is not well-developed theoretically. The basic concern which lies before is to identify an association of geography of well-being with a social theory of ^{the} urban social system. Till now, geography has mainly borrowed the theoretical framework for well-being studies from economics (Smith 1977)⁵. Harvey⁶ (1973) elaborates that

There is an urgent need to combine social imagination with geographical space. In true sense the social imagination confirms that man realizes the meaning of his existence only in the context of society he lives in. According to him geographical perspective “enables the individual to recognize the role of space and place in his own biography to relate to the space he has around him and to recognize how transactions between individuals and between organizations are affected by the space that separates them. It allows him to recognize the relationship which exists between him and his neighbourhood.”

The symbiosis of the two has produced the concept of social space i.e. mental schema of social group ^{with the} ~~about~~ the space. He talks of conceptual and methodological difficulties for understanding this relationship. Thus the major task before geographers studying ~~the~~ social well-being is to make geographical perspective ~~relevant~~ in social explanation.

The concept of social well-being is partially normative in nature. Its formulation is based on the premises of needs and wants. What is considered as need is positive as well as normative in nature. Moreover, ^{the} concept of social well-being has cultural and technological overtones. Many themes in the social sciences at ^a certain level of enquiry are normative in nature. Hence, unanimity at conceptual level is very difficult to attain. Accepting principles of equity and justice leading to ^{an} overall ‘balanced’ spatial distribution of well-being of different social groups at any given scale should be the starting point for such a geographical enquiry. But there is a note of caution here. The overdependence on theory to seek explanation of empirical phenomena may not always be socially relevant.

Social geography enquires ^{into} the quality of life and the quality of habitat to estimate ~~the~~ social well-being ^a in spatial perspective. These studies need to be policy oriented. Academics and NGOs need to work for ‘social planning’, a planning which

5 Smith, (1977), op.cit.

6 Harvey, D. (1973), *Social Justice and the City*, Edward Arnold.

sees people in space. As well-being of people in a capitalist society cannot be expected to be achievable collectively (Jones and Eyles, 1966)⁷, ~~Therefore~~^{Therefore}, needs of various sections of people on the basis of class, ethnicity, gender, age and caste (in ~~the~~^{the} case of India) should be addressed while undertaking ~~the~~ social planning, to eliminate injustice.

3.2 Objective and Subjective Assessment of Well-being

The objective and subjective well-being evaluation^{or} is well-marked in ~~the~~ recent social science studies. According to Knox and Cottam⁸ (1981) people's sense of satisfaction with various aspects of their life is ^avery important parameter of welfare. The traditional objective measures are unable to gauge this aspect of well-being. There is an increasing evidence of the fact that there is a wide gap between people's objective living condition^a and ^asubjective assessment of their life.

Mukherjee⁹ (1989, p.26) elaborates...

The economist and the planner tried to appraise the quality of life by means of quantitative, behavioural variables, exclusively, which they regard objective. The psychologists, on the other hand tend to be engrossed with the qualitative perceptual variables, which they acknowledge to be subjective. The dichotomies they supposed and maintained between quantity and quality, behaviour and perception, and objective and subjective may not be held rigidly by many scholars. However, the contemporary operation of the quality of life research is noticeably directed into two schemes of the so called objective, behavioural, quantitative variations or the so called subjective, perceptual qualitative variation, of the manifestation of life.

Mukherjee¹⁰ (1989), Jones and Eyles¹¹ (1966), Austin, Honey and Eyle¹² (1987) all have acknowledged that the objective indicators of social well-being are only one dimension of reality. Perception affects behaviour, and the amount of information about the objective condition of life affects our perceptual world. Kromrey¹³ (1987) also substantiates this difference between the subjective

7 Jones & Eyles (1966), *An Introduction to Social Geography*, Oxford University Press.

8 Knox, P.L. & Cottam, M.B. (1981), "A Welfare Approach to Rural Geography : Contrasting Perspective on the Quality of Highland Life", *TIBG*, No. 4, pp. 433-50.

9 Mukherjee, R. (1989), *The Quality of Life Valuation in Social Research*, Sage Publication.

10 Ibid.

11 Jones & Eyles, (1966), op.cit.

12 Austin, C.M. & et al. (1987), *Human Geography*, West Publishing Company.

13 Kromrey, H. (1987), "Evaluating the Quality of Residential Environment" in C.S. Yadav's (Ed.) *Urban Geography*, in *Cities and Housing*, Vol. II, Concept International Series.

perception and objective realities of people's well-being. The difference between perceived and objective well-being does carry the influence of the extraneous factors (Moum, 1983, p.161)¹⁴.

- People cannot judge in general the quality of amenities they require because in most of the cases varieties available in the market and money available is more responsible for their choice rather than their own desire or assessment.
- In today's urban life people desire more due to competitiveness, advertisement, propaganda than their needs or wants and creating a confused criteria of judging subjective well-being.
- Subjective assessment many a times depends on ^{the} temperament of a person and the availabilities of means, so it can vary without any regular reason.

One should not ignore the fact that it is the existing social, economic and political structure which contributes towards generating social 'goods' and 'bads'. The economic, political and social processes generate varieties of mental space and degrees of psychological well-being among different social groups or individuals. Though quality of life depends upon many factors which are internal to an individual, ~~but~~ an individual cannot be expected to survive outside the social structure and built-up environment in which he is living. Therefore, it cannot be denied that harmonious relations, meaningful life, job security, decent income, privacy of family life, good future prospect of children, satisfactory political grounding and high spiritual and moral condition of life and religious cohesion in most of the cases, are going to generate perceptual happiness for the individual.

3.3 Needs and Well-being

The quality of life is inherently associated with the degree of fulfilment of individual and collective needs and wants. Higher ^{the} is the degree of fulfilment of the needs and the wants, ^{the} greater is the quality of life. According to Knox "well-being is... the satisfaction of the needs and wants of the population". Except ^{for a} few basic needs which are scientifically established, most of the needs and wants are culturally and historically specific. As needs and wants are fulfilled in specific social, economic and political context^s they vary from one place to another.

14 Moum, T. (1983), *The Role of Values and Life Goals in Quality of Life : On Measuring and Predicting Subjective Well-being*, A Pilot Study in Quality of Life, Paris.

Many attempts were made to classify needs. One of the most important classifications is the hierarchical arrangement of needs presented by Maslow in 1954. He presented the argument that the higher needs emerge as lower ones are satisfied. He proposed five categories of needs: ~~relating with~~ survival, security, belongingness and love, esteem or need for recognition and finally ~~the~~ self-actualization. (i) The first and lowest level of need is survival, which involves the struggle to sustain life by acquiring food, drink, clothing, shelter etc. (ii) The second level of need is concerned with security, involving safety of the environment and protection from physical danger. (iii) The third level of need is for affection, fulfilling inter-personal relationships, conforming to group norms and so on. (iv) The fourth relates ~~with~~ ^{to} prestige, status and dominance. (v) Finally, at the highest level is desire for self-fulfilment i.e. living up to one's own potential and capability. This view is corroborated by many psychologists and sociologists. But in later years he revised his theory and put self-transcendence, meaning thereby ~~living~~ living for a purpose, higher than 'self' as the highest human experience¹⁵. According to this view the need of an individual or group varies according to space and time. It depends upon the stage of development of the society. The primitive society will be preoccupied with survival and security concerns. Whereas the developed society will be concerned about 'self actualization' or 'personal fulfillment.'

Smith (1994, p.128)¹⁶ refers ^{to} Griffin (1986, pp.41-42) to prove the point that some needs are basic.

They are needs we all have just by being human.... We usually speak of basic needs as if they were not only basic but absolute: humans need food and rest and health not for anything; they just do... they are what we need to survive, to be healthy, to avoid harm, to function properly ... well-being ... is the level to which basic needs are met.

There are various ways in which analysis of basic needs can be approached. Namely, ^{the} 'target setting' approach and ^{the} 'structural' approach. ~~The~~ ^A variant of the former is ^{the} 'income' approach.

Target setting approach: This type of analysis evaluates the efficiency and appropriateness of current policies and programmes, to meet the short-term target

15 Maslow, A., (1971), *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*, Penguin, New York.

16 Smith, D.M. (1994), *Geography and Social Justice*, Blackwell, Oxford.

and ultimately the long-term goals. The critics of this approach view it as paternalistic in essence and elitist in assessment. The argument in favour of the variant income approach is that people should receive sufficient income to meet their basic needs.

Structural approach : According to ^{this} ~~it~~ the needs are determined by the structural arrangement of the production and distribution. This approach argues that most of the socio-economic structure ^{is} ~~are~~ based on systematic deprivation of welfare of the people (Standing & Szal, 1979, pp. 5-6)¹⁷.

Coats ~~and~~ et al. (1977)¹⁸ identified a new approach to categorise the needs, as follows :

- Normative need: ^s ~~These~~ are the needs which are defined by administrators, experts, or professionals in a given situation for establishing housing standards ^s or ^{the} poverty line. These are also called absolute or basic needs.
- Comparative need: In this approach needs are identified in advance by making comparisons ^s between provision of best-off area and actual provision in a particular area or community. Thus a gap between these two areas is identified, which is called comparative need.
- Expressed need: If felt needs are translated into consumer behaviour and identified as market demand then these needs are called expressed needs.
- Relative deprivation: In this case needs can be equated with want or latent demand. Needs are relative deprivations because the goods, services or amenities desired by a particular defined group depends on the cultural norms and expectations of a particular society. ^{The} Concept of literacy may be functional as well as desirable in ~~the~~ modern civil society, but it is meaningless for the interior African tribes. Hence even most of the barest needs are culture-specific.

Zimbalist¹⁹ (1977, p.77) highlights the exasperation [?] of the 'need- research' in following terms. ^{exasperation?}

17 Standing & Szal, R. (1979), *Poverty and Basic Needs*, International Labour Office, Geneva.

18 Coates, B.E. & et al. (1977), *Geography and Inequality*, Oxford.

19 Zimbalsit, S.E. (1977), *Historical Themes and Land Marks in Social Welfare Research*, New York, Harper & Row Publication.

And this flexible nature of social need more transient than permanent, more relative than absolute, more 'subjective' than 'objective' can be seen with particular clarity in the study of the archetypal need of human beings for social survival in the form of a minimally adequate standard of living. As a research target it is ^apeculiarly frustrating one receding as one approaches.

3.4 Well-being: A Generic Concept

Social well-being is used as a generic term for ^athe family of overlapping concepts including level of living, the quality of life, social satisfaction, social welfare and standard of living ~~etc.~~ But there always remained ^sa problem to define these terms precisely.

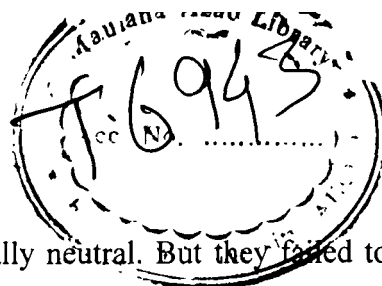
Standard of living is concerned with the circumstances aspired ^{to} by a group. There is a distinction between economic welfare and social welfare. Economic welfare refers to the satisfaction which people get from the consumption of goods and services procured by money or available as public provision. While social welfare includes things, which contribute towards ^{the} quality of human existence. The notion of quality of life suggests the cumulative distribution of important public and private goods such as health care, education and welfare services, protection against crime, the regulation of pollution per capita, resources availability etc. Lastly, social satisfaction is especially concerned with the collective psychological response to the objective conditions of reality. As there is no social theory even of ^aspeculative nature, hence components of social well-being are generally consensus based (Coates & et al., 1977)²⁰.

Quality of life implies a rather personalized concept. Knox considers the 'level of living' as the best concept to develop social indicators. Smith says ~~the~~ human well-being, whatever it connotes to, is not capable of being measured at present or in the future in a generally accepted way.

The spectrum of well-being is wider than that of welfare according to an economist's definition, incorporating judgement about the natural environment and ^{the} built-up environment (Lee, 1979, p. 53)²¹. Many models have been developed to

20 Coates et al. (1977), op.cit.

21 Lee, R. (1979), "The Economic Basis of Social Problems in the City" in Herbert and Smith's (Eds.) *Social Problems and City*, Oxford University Press.



conceptualize welfare, all of them being politically neutral. But they failed to take into account the factor of people's satisfaction (Meier 1986, pp.24-5).²²

Operationally, quality of life has been defined in a UNESCO report (1977) as "the satisfaction of an inclusive set of human need." Quality of life is an inclusive concept which covers all aspects of living including material satisfaction of vital needs as well as more transcendental aspects of life, such as personal development, self realization and a healthy eco-system (Dube, 1983)²³. The notion of the quality of life carries with it a clear connotation of evaluation, of the environment, of overcrowded central cities and suburbs of increasing (or decreasing) affluence on the quality of life and so on (Zehner 1977, p2)²⁴.

Environmental quality has been accepted as the undisputed component of the quality of life in the wake of continuously increasing immense pressure on the environment. Environment has emerged as the globally acclaimed factor of good living, especially, in the developed countries. However, in most of the studies leisure, economic security and family life have the highest importance for good living.

The concept of quality of life is understood as a social construct. It is not a set of material conditions. It is not the mere satisfaction experienced by an individual but rather, a dialectic between what is being observed by others and what is experienced by the self (Fadda, 1999)²⁵. There are people who are able to feel happy even in the worst environmental conditions, while others cannot live happily even in the best environmental conditions.

The concept of 'quality of life' represents more than the 'the private living standard' and refers to available and accessible social and public infrastructure as well as an environment without serious deterioration or pollution. Such conditions are not generally met in our cities since a large part of the inhabitants live in

22 Meir, R.L. (1986), "Qualities of urban Life and the Evaluation of World Cities" in Bruce Hutchinson & Others (Eds.) *Advances in Urban Modelling*, Science Publishers, B North Holland.

23 Dube, S.C. (1983), *Development Perspectives for the 1980s*, New Delhi.

24 Zehner, (1977), *Indicators of Quality of Life in new Communities*, Ballinger Publishing Company.

25 Fadda, G. & Jiron, P. . (1999), "Quality of Life and Gender : Methodology for Urban Research", *Environment and Urbanization*, Vol. 11, NO. 2, pp. 261-70.

dwelling and neighborhoods lacking basic facilities and services. The concept of quality of life is multifactorial in nature ranging from narrowly conceived personal well-being to ^{the} wider environmental and social setting. GDP may convey a fundamental message about well being but it is difficult to develop ^{an} adequate index because of hard-to-measure qualities, and perceptions are more important components of the quality of life (Smil, 1993)²⁶. An operational definition of the concept of social well-being, eventually relates to human happiness or the capacity of an individual to realize his/her perception of ^a good life (Smith, 1973, p.67).²⁷

According to Gilpin²⁸ (1976, p. 30) quality of life in current usage is a phrase, which appears to cover a miscellany of desirable things, not recognized or not adequately recognized in the market place. Some qualities of the life of a community, which cannot readily be valued or measured include such matters as civil liberties, compassion, justice, freedom and fair play. Secondly, there are such things as health and education, clean air and water, recreation, wild life, enjoyment of wilderness ^{and} desirable 'goods' which are partly or wholly outside the market economy.

The concept of ^{the} Human Progress Index mentioned by Gilpin is an effort to formulate the comprehensive term of social well-being at macro level.

Human Progress Index is a proposed index of gross national welfare, or total human progress as opposed to purely economic progress. The need for such an index had arisen from widespread discontent with the use of the concepts of the Gross Domestic Product as the measure of human progress. An integrated human progress index would reflect a set of social and environmental indices as well as economic indices. The index would be influenced by such factor as the depletion of non-renewable resources, trend in air and water pollution: in the effects of development, on noise level; hours of work and travel time; access to cultural and recreational activities; the depressing effects of heavy unemployment; and the range of educational opportunity open to the child.

Lohani (1984)²⁹ thinks, the objective of development is to improve quality of life (QOL) of the people which is visualized in terms of standard of living (SOL). He considers $SOL = \Sigma \text{ production} / \text{population}$.

26 Smil, V. (1993), *Global Ecology : Environmental Change and Social Flexibility*, Routledge.

27 Smith (1973), op.cit.

28 Gilpin, A. (1976), *Dictionary of Environmental Terms*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London and Henley.

29 Lohani, B.N. (1984), *Environmental Quality Management*, South Asian Publisher, New Delhi.

According to him in addition to this, environmental deterioration is a massive challenge afflicting the realization of SOL. So he proposed the change in the model of QOL which is as follows

$$QOL = \frac{\Sigma \text{ Production} - \Sigma \text{ Losses}}{\text{Population}} + \frac{\text{Service/Time}}{\text{Population}} + \frac{\text{Experience /Time}}{\text{Population}}$$

As it is clear that this model includes losses because material goods maintain limited usefulness, material comfort needed for good life depends upon the services. And as services become abundant experience becomes very important. It is not always that the increased services always mean experiences of enhanced well-being. Hence this model, to be more realistic, includes the element of experience.

At policy level social sector development implies the broad improvement in the quality of life of its people. The term social sector generally involves education, health and nutrition etc. Emphasis is on human development as against human resource development. The UNDP defines Human Development 'as the process of enlarging people's choices'. The concept includes within its ambit empowerment, co-operation, equity in basic capabilities and opportunities, sustainability and security. In this approach, people are in the central position and measures such as education, health and nutrition are meant for their intrinsic value and their role in enhancing the basic capabilities of the people. This approach emphasizes to acquire ^{सिक्कि-सि} education, health and nutrition, which is considered as basic human rights (Gupta, 2002)³⁰.

In fact, human development and sustainable development are ~~the~~ concepts implying the well-being of the people. Sustainable development has a component of quality of life as people's perception of their life situation is acknowledged ^{as} valid. Thus, according to Kopardekar (1986)³¹ what we understand by the term development is the transformation of economic and social conditions of the people (on ^acertain ideological basis).

30 Gupta, V.S. (2002), *The Employment News*, April 6-12.

31 Kopardekar, H.OP. (1986), *Social Aspects of Urban Development*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay.

In short, the social well-being of a group of people is a state of living condition based upon their share of social goods and bads. Due to an equitable and balanced social structure and its efficient functioning, the inhabitants experience peace, prosperity and progress in ^a spatial and temporal context. Social well-being is a function of the nature of economic, political and social structure of ~~the~~ society. The just and equitable society means ~~its~~ its economic, political, religious institutions etc. play their roles in such a way that no social group is exploited.

From ^a geographical perspective spatial justice is very pertinent. One can define 'socio-spatial justice' as a 'fair distribution of the benefits and burdens which arise from the human transformation of nature.... Justice must extend to the nature of distributive processes (i.e. ownership of means of production, socio-political mechanisms for allocation of social surplus) themselves to ensure the material, psychic and cultural well-being of all people' (Gleeson, 1996)³². Justice implies full participation of all social groups in national and community life and a geographical enquiry should aim at realizing a social space in which both material well-being and social participation is guaranteed for all.

Thus all the political processes should harness the means and measures in such a way that no social groups could be marginalized illegitimately (Thomas & Stirling, 1996)³³. And if there exist some marginalized groups then ^{the} process of their integration and assimilation should take place. This should be done not only in ^{an} economic sense because economic growth may bring material benefits to people, but development is much more than this. It is a process of enrichment in every aspect of life. The term development should have ^a connotation of social justice. The term social justice embraces both fairness and equity in the distribution of a wide range of attributes, which need not be confined to material attainments alone, ^{although} ^{the} primary focus is on those attributes which have an immediate bearing on people's well-being or the quality of their life and habitat (Smith, 1994, p. 26)³⁴.

32 Gleeson, B. (1996), "Justifying Justice", *Area*, Vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 229-34.

33 Thomas, H. & Stirling, T. (1996), "Locality Urban Governance and Contested Meaning of Place", *Area*, Vol. 28, No. 2, pp. 186-98.

34 Smith, (1994), op.cit.

The concept of distributive justice of well-being requires formulating parameters of an ideal equitable society which become^a reference for judging the existing social situation. In the existing inequitable social system a section of economically, politically and socially privileged people polarize the aggregate of well-being disproportionately in their own favour. To correct this situation, there is a need of welfare measure^s from the government to improve the situation. The equitable social system with sustainable social development ought to produce the desired state of well-being for those social groups which are left behind in the race of industrialization and are trapped in^a vicious cycle of mass poverty and unemployment.

3.5 Understanding Deprivation

If a social structure systematically denies to a certain social group the possibility of enjoying some or all of the basic goods of the society, then it needs to be improved upon. The deprivation faced by a certain group is closely related with the history of development of the society in terms of labour division and private property system etc. Well-being of a group is dependent upon the position which it occupies in the social ladder. It becomes skewed when these differentiation^s are closely related with specific caste, ethnicity, religion and of course gender.

In the study of social well-being, deprivation has always been^a very important theme. Two theories of deprivation derive their origin from the urban ecological perspective. The 'cycle of deprivation' emphasizes that children born into deprived households and into deprived neighborhoods (built-up environment) have fewer opportunities because of their limited access to alternative paths and possibilities. Therefore, a cycle of deprivations is perpetuated. In adulthood, like their parents, they find themselves failing to compete successfully in the labour and housing markets. 'The culture of poverty' theory suggests the existence of a general group attitude in which low-key aspirations and fatalistic assessment of achievements is typical.

The remaining two theories have^a broader interpretation. 'The institutional management approach' suggests that the allocative system of government and private institutions fails to channel goods and services in a way to reduce

deprivation. Thus, at ^{the} policy level, reform is needed in ^{the} allocative system. The 'structural class conflict' theory suggests that all the policies ^{attempting} ~~dealing with~~ to eradicate deprivation are palliative. The root cause of these problems lies in a particular social formation i.e. capitalism. It enhances inequality through artificial methods. Thus, ^a remedy lies in changing the social structure and attitude³⁵.

The structure of the society is responsible for a particular social formation creating a weaker section in society. Once this weaker section is created it maintains a marginalized position in economic, political and social systems, having lesser leverage in the society. This group is especially neglected by the government agencies which allocate most of the resources, in the capitalistic set up, to those groups which have ^a stronghold on the policies of government. This aggravates the problem of ^{an} already marginalized group. It is further accentuated by the cycle of deprivation as children born to these people have lesser opportunity to schools and reasonable homes and appropriate employment. This oft-repeated cycle of deprivation leads to ^a culture of poverty, which is marked by fatalism among the people of these groups. They develop a negative and less progressive attitude. This dampens their spirit and compels them to lead a life of misery.

Hence, it is possible to develop a link between social formation, allocation process, marginalization of social groups of their residential area and attitudinal lapse on the part of the people of ^{the} weaker section. This can help in explaining low level of well-being ascribed to certain social groups.

Class is ^{the} most important group in the economic structure. If the powerful class distributes resources in its own favour as expected, the spatial structure would reflect this distribution of power in society. Those in the mainstream political discourse generally refuse to acknowledge that marginalized groups are illegitimately excluded.

3.6 Spirituality and Well-being

Among all the discussion made about various aspects of well-being at conceptual level, one very important need of human beings is generally ignored. That

35 Walmsley & Lewis, (1995), *People and Environment : Behavioural Approach in Human Geography*, 2nd ed. New York, John, Wiley Pub.

is the spiritual and religious need of the people. The study of religion has been in the realm of sociology and anthropology, but in geography it is generally neglected. But according to Pacione (2000)³⁶ 'despite differences, Christian (and other) Churches (religion if one prefers) subscribe to certain shared basic principles or foundational beliefs including the ones which relate to inter-personal relations and social justice in terms of distribution of society's benefits and burdens'. Though the materialistic positivistic thoughts of ^{the} post-modern period have considerably moulded the aspirations of society, as well as labelled the position of ~~the~~ religion as a private domain of beliefs, superstitions and taboos.

It is spirituality which brings inner peace, which is extremely relevant in a society which is trapped in the modern day stressed, anxiety fretted life-style. Even at a larger societal level ^{the} importance of religion and spirituality for the well-being of society is aptly recognized by Einstein (1998)³⁷.

Spirituality defines ^a personal relationship between God / Supreme power and man or a coherent and meaningful relation with the Universe around him. It does not carry a cultural concept. Rather it is a personal concept. Spirituality is responsible for inner peace, because it gives answers to many questions, which has perpetually been afflicting man and lying outside the realm of positive science. At this level spirituality may be considered a very relevant aspect of ^{the} social well-being of people. Although reinforced by recent research ~~as~~, the greatest problem ~~lying before~~ is the measurement of spirituality to the effect of universal applicability.

Thus the task ahead ~~is~~ is to differentiate between religiosity and spirituality and to identify domains of spirituality to develop appropriate indicators. In the case of religions, however they may differ, their positive role in the society cannot be ignored. Religion is the source of ethics and moral codes defining the outline of spirituality and social conduct for most of the people. In fact ^{the} evolution of society has seen the corresponding evolution of ^a moral code and ethics, very closely associated with the teachings of a particular faith. Thus another task is to identify the broad outline of moral teachings of the major religions. It is required to develop indicators

36 Pacione, M. (2000), "Religion and Relevance in Human Geography : Some further Issues", *Scottish Geographical Journal*, 116 (1), pp. 67-70.

37 Einstein, A. (1998), *The Need for Ethical Culture* (1951, A Letter Read by Einstein) in 'Ideas and Opinions', Rupa Publications.

to assess the conformity or deviation from particular moral tenets. This may help to ~~the~~ ~~measurement~~ ~~of~~ spirituality because it is very much expected that spirituality must lead to observance of some moral code of conduct. It is our unfortunate state of social inquiry that we are still far away from measuring such an important aspect of human existence, which affects the inner-most life of people throughout the globe.

3.7 Measuring the Quality of Life

Measuring quality of life or social well-being lies in two separate domains i.e. objective and subjective measurements. These two carry different requirements with them. The measurement is a process through which a conceptual understanding is changed into ^{an} operationalized definition to generate data. This is done in the case of social scientific enquiry through a questionnaire. But measuring social well-being has always been a ~~great~~ ^{very} difficult exercise. Because the unanimity of the concept has still not been attained, even in the case of objective measurement of social well-being. Beyond the few basic necessities ^{is} of ~~measuring~~ ^{life}, the criteria become value-laden and subject to cultural interpretations. Further, needs are specific to ^a particular geographical scale. Certain needs like civic amenities are city specific which are irrelevant at ^a regional and national level.

An attempt must be made to quantify the standard level of a need to be fulfilled. The methodology to be applied is to follow people's preference, expert opinions or simply to attest ^{to} the demand of rationality and logic in specific cases. Even one aspect of a major domain of well-being has various dimensions. ~~For example~~ ^{For example}, housing condition involves occupancy characteristics, quality of housing and quality of building. Normally accepted indicators should be selected for each dimension and variables should be identified for each of them. And most importantly, they can be dealt ^{with} statistically undergoing the rigour of the analysis.

Social well-being has many qualitative aspects like aesthetic condition ^{of the} living place etc. To measure these aspects statistically becomes difficult as well as some times ridiculous. Gould³⁸ (1988, p.6) has convincingly said

38 Gould, R.P. (1988), "Expose Yourself to Geographical Research" in John Eyles (Ed.) *Research in Human Geography*, Basil Blackwell Ltd.

Sometimes these ways (statistical) of marshalling evidence are perfectly appropriate, and may be the only feasible possibility of bringing evidence to bear on a particular question. But this possibility should not force all research into it. We have to be very careful to distinguish between what is simply significant in a statistical sense and what is meaningful.

In elaborating the above mentioned observation Gould³⁹ (1988, p.6) says, 'the trouble is that significant does not mean meaningful, and "meaningful" means capable of being given persuasive interpretation at least for the historically contingent moment'.

The development of ^a geographical matrix for comparing ^{the} results of social well-being can be attempted keeping places in the columns and attributes of well-being in the rows. With its help bivariate and multivariate correlation analysis can be attempted. If there are two places of almost similar characteristics it would be easy to identify ^a regional association between them and if more than two areas are involved then it would be called multi-locational analysis (Alvi 1995, p.174)⁴⁰.

Mukherjee⁴¹ (1989, pp.98-9) logically explains the transition of qualitative nominal measurement of attributes of social well-being to the quantitative ordinal numeral distinction in operation with respect to culture. He believes that 'knowledge has accumulated to the extent of measuring the admixtures on a unit interval scale and producing objects on a mass scale for consumption by individuals'. According to Harvey⁴² (1973, p.105), the need of measurement of social conditions led to ^{the} beginning of ^{the} social indicator movement having a geographical dimension in the form of territorial social indicators which highlights the geographical inequalities of social well-being.

3.8 Indicators of Well-being and Aligarh City

Smith (1973) identifies a set of seven indicators.

- a) Income, wealth and employment.
- b) The living environment, including dwelling and neighborhood.
- c) Physical and mental health.

39 Ibid.

40 Alvi, Z. (1995), *Statistical Geography: Methods and Applications*, Rawat Publications.

41 Mukherjee, (1989), op.cit.

42 Harvey, (1973), op.cit.

- d) Education, including attainment and quality.
- e) Social order, involving personal and family problems as well as crime and public order.
- f) Social belonging, consisting of democratic participation and segregation.
- g) Recreation and leisure.

Having a close insight of the work done by Smith (1973), Knox (1975), Zehner (1977) and the observations made by Knox (1982), Coates et al. (1977), Kulkarni (1990) and UNDP's successive Human Development Reports and a host of other works, the researcher has developed several groups of indicators for the purpose of enquiring ^{into the} ground realities of ~~the~~ well-being in Aligarh city. It also facilitates the assessment of ^{the} macro and micro-level of well-being of different religio-social groups.

The present researcher has attempted a classification of the following groups of indicators :

- (1) Demographic structure and family type
- (2) Education and Employment
- (3) Income and Wealth
- (4) Housing and Health Conditions
- (5) Recreation and Leisure
- (6) Political leverage and women Empowerment,
- (7) Indicators of the built-up environment.

For the sake of lucid discussion these indicators are categorized into three groups. ^{The} First part comprises of indicators of ^{the} built-up environment, ^{the} second group of indicators deals with the sustainability and resource potential of the social structure of Aligarh city, including demographic and social, economic, ^{and} educational indicators. The last category of indicators directly deals with the measurement of performance of ~~the~~ Aligarh city as ^a manifestation of its sustainability potential. They deal with employment, income, housing, health, recreation, ^s political ~~and~~ and women's empowerment. In the coming chapters the researcher is going to discuss these three sets of indicators separately. Finally, the state of social justice in Aligarh city is ~~discussed~~ discussed in Chapter VII.