



## Role of poverty in coping and life satisfaction among male villagers of Haryana

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### Abstract

The present investigation was carried out to find out the role of poverty in coping and life satisfaction among Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Above Poverty Line (APL) male persons living in rural areas of Haryana. Total sample consists of 200 rural male persons in which 100 male persons from Below Poverty Line (BPL) families and 100 male from Above Poverty Line (APL) families. The measures used were life satisfaction scale by Alam & Srivastava (1996) and Proactive coping inventory (Hindi Adaptation) by Bhushan *et al.* (2010). Analysis was done with the help of Pearson product moment correlation method and t-test. The different mean value for APL (38.46) and BPL (35.71) person claims that life satisfaction is highly associated with financial condition and increased income level develop high life satisfaction in rural male persons. Many researches support that economic condition is directly related to satisfaction in all domains of one's life. However, results in the study shows that life satisfaction shall be increased as Below Poverty Line (BPL) male inclined towards using proactive, avoidance and instrumental support seeking coping methods. Poverty has significant effect on Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Above Poverty Line (APL) person's strategy planning. It has been observed that economic condition has no significant effect on emotional support seeking in Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Above Poverty Line (APL).

**Keywords:** poverty, coping, life satisfaction, BPL, APL

### Introduction

India is a developing country of the modern world. In the world, India holds second position with 99.87 million peoples constituting the 8.3 percent of total population. It has been announced an independent country around 70 years ago. During this time, the country has been engaged in actions to achieve improvement and development in different fields. The life sustaining activities has increased in India. Many diseases are under control as a result of new invention in the areas of science and bio medical technology. In many fields, Indian people are experiencing many social and psychological problems. Many problems are related to our colonial past while others are related to socio cultural changes, political conditions. Not surprisingly, Poverty is one of the steaming issues of research for scholars working in the field of psychology, economics, and sociology.

Poverty is known as a biggest barrier in the development of any society or country. Poverty is a lack of basic needs of life encountered by many peoples. Its main feature is inadequacy of food, shelter and proper clothes. Thus, poverty refers to the state of absence of least resources for living. Deprived people often belong to depressed and deprived categories of people. They also experience deprivation of proper healthy diet. Their situation has not sufficiently enhanced even after 70 years of our independence. Our population is increasing continuously but the availability of resources is inadequate. This unavailability of resources is directly responsible for an increase in the level of poverty. The difference between the

wealthy and poor has been growing in modern time. There is a need to change the social system. Poverty is high in rural areas as compared to urban cities of India. Rural people are more prone to live in unhygienic conditions facing various health issues. They have to deal with the adversity caused by poverty. The major problem in poverty stricken areas is of unemployment. The agricultural bases of our country do not provide enough opportunities to the rural people for development. People are involved in hard mechanical work which exhausts them at an early age. Faulty educational facilities and lack of technical knowledge and proper guidance keeps them gripped in the vicious circle of poverty. In the absence of employment people from rural areas often turn toward faulty lifestyle. They may be seen as falling prey to gambling, alcohol and substance abuse and domestic violence. Poverty is closely associated with material and social deprivation (Commins, 2004) <sup>[13]</sup>. Material deprivation can be explain in term of starvation, lack of financial assets, insecure living conditions and inadequate education (Haynes & Gale, 2000) <sup>[27]</sup> but previous studies do not focus on such kind of approaches for their concern mainly with limited monetary or material assets (Toscano, Weersink, Phimister, 2001) <sup>[50]</sup>. The social insufficiency is most essential part of the lived experience of poverty and originated from the social exclusion (Raphael, 2007) <sup>[39]</sup>. Social deprivation makes people less active to take part in decision-making activities that affect people quality of life. Researches explain that there are three prominent definitions regarding levels of poverty: absolute

poverty, relative poverty and subjective poverty. Townsend (1979) <sup>[48, 49]</sup> proposed that people, families and groups can be labeled in poverty when they experience lack of the financial assets to gain good healthy diet and fails to enroll in the social programmes. Relative poverty exists when a society or an individual compare himself with others in the context of materialistic things. On the other hand, Subjective Poverty is an individual's own perception that they are deprived of sufficient financial assets to conform their own personal requirements (Bradshaw, Ceulemans, & Stettler, 2000) <sup>[9]</sup>. On the basis of above definitions, this can be concluded that being poor means shortage of financial assets for solving personal problems, forcing the family to choose among hard life alternatives (Orthner, Sanpei, & Williamson, 2004) <sup>[35]</sup>. The most prominent explanations on this issue, poverty can be described as a lack of financial resources that have negative social outcome (Townsend, 1979; Sen, 1983; UN, 1995) <sup>[48, 49, 45]</sup>. Individuals or families who are experiencing deprivation not being able to contribute in equal terms in society, and therefore in the long run being excluded by people or withdrawing from social recreational activities. (Sen, 1983) <sup>[45]</sup>. Poverty produces different effects for both males and females. It creates more harmful effect on women than men (Goldberg, 1990) <sup>[23]</sup>. The difference between the male and female poverty has been growing increasingly with 16.3 % and 13.6 in females and males respectively, living in poverty in 2012.

### **Coping**

Coping is a dynamic situation-specific response to protect oneself from psychological damage. In other words, coping can be described as regularly changing cognitive and behavioral activities to handle specific outside and inner requirements (Hamilton, 2012) <sup>[26]</sup>. Two prominent functions of coping are first, to control traumatic emotional events, described as emotion focused coping while second is to modifying the sources of traumatic events (Hamilton, 2012; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) <sup>[26, 31]</sup>. There are five emotions focused coping techniques recognized by Lazarus and Folkman namely disclaiming, avoidance, accepting responsibility, using self-control and re-evaluation.

### **Coping and Poverty**

The concept of coping is mostly applied in the field of psychology. This is not a easy task to make a difference between coping with troubles and coping with emotions. Coping with emotions consists of all those efforts individuals used to reduce mental stress created by traumatic events or situations. However, individuals are not always able to handle their life difficulties. The main problem is that poor people always cannot afford to buy all the basic necessities of life. The poor people reported that they collect money years by years and one day they go out and spend all money on purchasing their needs, they are dreaming about (Nistelrooij, 1998; Snel, Hoek, & Chessa, 2001) <sup>[35, 46]</sup>.

In a study, Lever (2008) reported that individuals with low socio economic status experience highest number of stressful events. Poor people most likely to used emotion focused coping while non poor used problem focused coping. Another important difference regarding the coping techniques of poor

households is proposed by Robert (1991, 1994). In a study, Patnaik and Narayanam (2010) <sup>[37]</sup> found that poor households mainly used two kinds of coping strategies namely ex-ante and ex- post. Ex- ante strategies include income diversification and insurance while ex-post consists of borrowing and sale of assets.

Poverty generally results in a negative way. It consists of inequity, alienation, low self-esteem, sense of powerlessness, and worst mental and physical health (Chakravarti, 2006) <sup>[11]</sup>. There is an discrepancy between the direct coping techniques of families and their purpose of changing their conditions in the long run. Households with limited financial resources may decide that the children should earn for their needs or to enable them to complete education, so that they have probability of having a better future. It has been seen unemployed people earn money informally by side working. In the long run, it creates negative impact on their living standard. No matter we living in a developing or a developed country poor households are perceived as to reveal many kind of typical patterns of behavior like less engagement and integration in activities of society, the sense of living outside society and strong direction towards the family They constitute culture of poverty which make people strongly focused on living for the present and do not spend much time for the future. According to Lewis (1970), this is the main reason these families cannot lift from their poor conditions and pass it from one generation to other generation. (Murray, 1984; Mead, 1986) <sup>[33, 34]</sup>.

### **Life Satisfaction**

Life satisfaction defined as a cognitive process by which people evaluate the quality of their life. It is a reflective appraisal and a judgment of how well things are going (Argyle, 2001) <sup>[28, 34]</sup>. Bradley & Corwyn (2004) <sup>[8]</sup> explain that life satisfaction reflects the extent to which basic needs are fulfilled. It has been concluded that if an individual succeed in accomplishing goals, satisfaction with life will also increase. In a study, Diener & Biswas-Diener (2002) <sup>[15]</sup> concluded that mild correlation between income and different forms of subjective well-being such as happiness, life satisfaction. Respectively, Biswas, Diener and Diener (2001) <sup>[6, 7]</sup> also found a strong correlation between income and satisfaction with life in poor community of Calcutta. According to Beutell (2006) <sup>[4]</sup> life satisfaction is strongly associated with better physical and mental health. It has been observed that people who are happy in there life are more likely to be good in mental health as compared to other people. In addition, Chow (2009) <sup>[12]</sup> suggested that high levels of life satisfaction produce good health in the future.

### **Life Satisfaction and Poverty**

Life satisfaction refers to as the perceived gap between what one wants and what one has (Frisch, 2006) <sup>[21]</sup>. If there is no gap between one's aspirations and achievements, the level of life satisfaction will be high (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003; Frey, & Stutzer, 2001) <sup>[18, 20]</sup>. One's aspirations, or goals, are based on what life domains are considered necessary for the people. Researches have strongly proved that people with better financial conditions will be happier than people who are experiencing shortage of fundamental needs. Further there are

sixteen potential valued domains of life related to overall life satisfaction: health, self-esteem, goals and spiritual life, good financial condition, work, play, learning, creativity, love, friends, children, relatives, home, neighborhood, and community (Frisch, 2006) <sup>[21]</sup>. The areas that are most closely related to one's personal goals are usually considered the most important (Diener, Tamir, Kim-Prieto, & Scollon, 2003) <sup>[16]</sup>. There are theories that explain how these domains determine an individual's life satisfaction.

The most prevalent theories on life satisfaction research consist of bottom-up theories and top-down theories (Diener, 1984). Bottom-up theories explained that judgment of life satisfaction is depends on evaluation of satisfaction in a small number of life domains (Andrews & Withey, 1976; Brief, Butcher, George, & Link, 1993; Schimmack, Diener, & Oishi, 2002). This theory proposed that life satisfaction is dependent upon the sum of many positive experiences in one's life, and implies that individuals create their life satisfaction judgments by summing up a variety of external circumstances (Diener, 1984) <sup>[15]</sup>. For illustration, one can base his global life satisfaction on his satisfaction within the areas of finances, loving relationships, and health (Frisch, 2006) <sup>[21]</sup>. According to bottom up perspective, for improving life satisfaction an individual should focus on changing his environment and experiences (Compton, 2005) <sup>[14]</sup>. Many cross-national studies support the bottom-up theories and shows that those living in deprived nations report lower levels of subjective well-being (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002) <sup>[15]</sup>.

On the other hand, the top-down theories of life satisfaction believe that general life satisfaction causes satisfaction in specific life domains (Frisch, 2006) <sup>[21]</sup>. For example, one can experience high global life satisfaction, which leads him to experience higher satisfaction within the areas of finances, loving relationships, and health. In addition, top-down theories proposed that domain satisfaction is influenced by domain specific factors; the work domain consists of four different specific factors such as location, duties, co-workers and income. If even one of these factors is highly successful, this might influence the entire domain satisfaction. These theories also proposed that general life satisfaction has stronger effects on satisfaction in domains that an individual considers important (Frisch, 2006) <sup>[21]</sup>.

### Criteria for Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Above Poverty Line (APL)

Poverty is a prominent problem in India. Poverty is a condition in which people is deprived from basic thing like food, water and shelter. The government of India has been keen interested in knowing the current position of poor families and dealing with this problem through various welfare programmes. The government has been adopted various criteria for measurement of poverty in rural and urban areas. After conducting a number of studies on general population, citizens is characterized into two categories namely Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Above Poverty Line (APL). The criteria laid down by government of India in 2011, we have followed the same criteria in this study. The household who had the annual income below 27000 falls below the poverty line. Same as, people who earns 27 rupees per day in rural areas and 33 in urban areas shall be deemed as

Below Poverty Line (BPL) families by government of India. Government of India has decided to rectify the criteria for determining the poverty line replaced the 2011 formula. The present study was conducted on Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Above Poverty Line (APL). Our criterion for selection of Below Poverty Line (BPL) was based on yellow ration card issued by government to rural and urban families. Below Poverty Line (BPL) families are those who are having very low income and subject to live in adverse life experiences. On the other hand, Above Poverty Line (APL) families are those who have been issued green ration card, generally considered middle or high class families. It has been estimated that nearly 193.2 million in rural and 67.1 in urban areas listed as BPL in India (Anonymous, 2013) <sup>[11]</sup>.

### Objectives

1. To study the relationship between poverty, life satisfaction and coping among BPL rural male persons in Haryana.
2. To study the relationship between poverty, life satisfaction and coping among and APL rural male persons in Haryana.

### Hypothesis

1. There shall be no significant relationship between life satisfaction and coping among Below Poverty Line male persons in Haryana.
2. There shall be no significant relationship between life satisfaction and coping among Above Poverty Line male persons in Haryana.

### Methodology

#### Design of the Study

The present study was conducted on rural BPL and APL persons and the design of the study is correlational as well as comparative in nature.

### Participants

This study consists of total 200 Below Poverty Line and Above Poverty Line rural male persons in which 100 Below Poverty Line and 100 Above Poverty Line male were taken from various rural areas of Haryana.

Table 1

Category	Number Of Rural Males
Below Poverty Line (BPL)	100
Above Poverty Line (APL)	100

### Psychological Measures

#### Life satisfaction scale

This study consists of life satisfaction scale developed by Alam and Srivastava (1996), consisting of total 60 item related to six different areas named health, personal, economic, marital, social and job. The response will be given as yes/no. Every yes response by subject will be assigned one marks then the sum of marks is obtained for the complete scale. The total number of yes responses indicates the satisfaction in one's life. The test- retests reliability of the scale. 84.

**Proactive coping inventory**

The proactive coping inventory was developed by Braj Bhushan *et al.* (2010) [5], Consists of 55 items measuring 7 dimensions namely proactive, reflective, preventive, avoidance, instrumental support seeking, emotional support seeking and strategic planning. The response will be given on four point scale. High score on any particular dimension indicated that the individual is more inclined towards that particular coping style.

**Procedure**

Before the administration of the psychological measure rapport building was done with the subjects. After taking permission from subjects, they were fully insured that the test would not harm them in any way. The entire questionnaire were administered to male persons separately in each family and filled by the test taker because the data were taken from the rural BPL and APL families and most of the persons are illiterate. After the completion of the test, data was analyzed with the help of appropriate statistical techniques and then results were discussed.

**Statistical Analysis**

Descriptive statistics as well as correlation and t- test is used in present investigation.

**Results and Discussion**

Table 2 presents the mean, SD of both BPL and APL male group and t-value of the observed variables. The results rejected the hypothesis in the study. A perusal of the table shows that the mean of BPL and APL is on variable Life satisfaction is 35.71 and 38.46 respectively. The SD for this variable is 5.87 and 5.97 for BPL and APL male respectively. The t value of -3.3 is significant at 0.01 levels. It was found that relationship between life satisfaction and economic condition is higher among developing nations than in developed nations (Howell & Howell, 2008). According to Berg, *et al.* (2006) [3] socio-economic condition has been correlated to life satisfaction, but only in elderly men. In another study, Yamaoka (2008) found that people who have lower social class have poor life satisfaction in life. In previous studies, it has been concluded that people with high socio economic status will be more satisfied with their life as

compared to their counterparts. Generally, rich people have most of the economic resource helps them to deal with stressful situations and handle difficulties easily.

**Table 2:** Difference between the Mean Score of the Two Groups for Different variables

Variable	BPL N=(100) Mean± SD	APL N=(100) Mean± SD	Df	t
Life Satisfaction	35.71±5.87	38.46±5.97	198	-3.3**
Proactive Coping	39.40±4.45	37.85±3.81	198	2.6**
Coping Reflective	30.47±5.16	29.60±3.86	198	1.35
Coping preventive	10.89±2.33	10.97±3.45	198	-.19
Coping Avoidance	28.54±4.46	27.88±4.04	198	1.09
Coping Instrumental Support Seeking	22.70±3.45	22.69±2.79	198	.02
Coping Emotional Support Seeking	13.82±2.42	14.00±2.27	198	-.54
Coping Strategy Planning	8.27±1.69	9.06±1.44	198	-3.54**

\*\*p<.01, \*<.05

Coping is also considered as an important variable among BPL and APL rural male persons. The variable Proactive Coping has shows significant economic condition differences. The BPL group has a mean of 39.40 as compared to 37.85 for APL rural group whereas the SD is 4.45 as compared to 3.81. In a study by Greenglass, Fiksenbaum and Eaton (2006) [24] suggest the reason that individual with high SES tends to be more capable at proactive coping is that they have more resources. These resources allow them to expand their network that provides social and emotional support. In another study, it was revealed that people with low SES spend more time and energy on immediate problems they encountered. The previous studies results were contradictory with current study results. The t value is 2.6 which are significant at 0.01 levels. Further mean value for strategy planning is 8.27 for BPL and 9.06 for APL male persons. The SD for BPL is 1.69 and 1.44 for an APL rural person shows a significant difference in both groups. It means that APL male persons used more strategy planning as compared to BPL male persons. On the other hand, mean and SD value for reflective coping, avoidance coping, instrumental support seeking and emotional support seeking has been found non significant.

**Table 3:** Intercorrelation Matrix for Below Poverty Line male

	Life Satisfaction	Proactive Coping	Reflective coping	Preventive Coping	Avoidance Coping	Instrumental Support Seeking	Emotional Support Seeking	Strategy Planning
Life Satisfaction	1							
Proactive Coping	.236*	1						
Reflective Coping	.083	.460**	1					
Preventive Coping	.181	.319**	.542**	1				
Avoidance Coping	.268**	.510**	.566**	.477**	1			
Instrumental Support	.216*	.470**	.520**	.532**	.493**	1		
Emotional Seeking	.013	.280**	.378**	.252*	.463**	.348**	1	
Strategy Planning	.153	.078 **	.302	.260**	.482**	.350**	.368**	1

Table no 3 showed that there is significant positive correlation between life satisfaction ( $r = .24, p < .05$ ) and proactive coping among BPL male persons. Correlation between life satisfaction and avoidance coping ( $r = .27, p < .01$ ) for BPL male. Further life satisfaction is significant positively correlated with instrumental support seeking ( $r = .22, p < .05$ )

for BPL male. Results concluded that life satisfaction increases with proactive, avoidance and instrumental support seeking coping style among male villagers of Haryana. Gautam, Poonia and Yadav (2017) [22] in their study on non-NCR respondents found that proactive coping skills have strong positive correlation with life satisfaction.

**Table 4:** Intercorrelation matrix for Above Poverty Line male

	Life Satisfaction	Proactive Coping	Reflective Coping	Preventive Coping	Avoidance Coping	Instrument Support Seeking	Emotional Support Seeking	Strategy Planning
Life Satisfaction	1							
Proactive Coping	.061	1						
Reflective Coping	.012	.451**	1					
Preventive Coping	-.078	.195	.296**	1				
Avoidance Coping	.093	.430**	.525**	.085	1			
Instrumental Support Seeking	.129	.203*	.198*	-.170	.334**	1		
Emotional Support Seeking	.062	.151	.356**	.029	.276**	.108	1	
Strategy Planning	-.105	.037	-.012	.035	-.092	-.010	-.129	1

Table no 4 reveals that life satisfaction is not significantly correlated with any measures of coping namely proactive coping, reflective coping, Preventive coping, avoidance coping, instrumental support seeking and emotional support seeking for Above Poverty Line male persons in Haryana. It means life satisfaction has no significant effect on coping strategy among Above Poverty Line male persons in Haryana. In a study, it has been suggested that adaptive coping skills more likely to reduce levels of distress and caregiver burden resulting higher levels life satisfaction (Haley, *et al.*, 2003) [25].

### Discussion

The purpose of this study is to find out role of poverty in life satisfaction and coping. In this research, a significant difference was observed on the level of life satisfaction of BPL and APL male persons in Haryana. The mean value for life satisfaction in Below Poverty Line (BPL) male group is 35.71 and mean for Above Poverty Line (APL) is 38.46. These findings shows that APL male persons are more satisfied with their lives resulting from approach to better education, quality food and good financial conditions. Results were supported by Easterlin (1974) [19] in their study showed a positive relationship between income and happiness. In another study, Kumar, *et al.* (2005) [30] found that life satisfaction and wellbeing were positively related with socio economic conditions among Indian elderly. Further, a significant association was found between life satisfaction and proactive coping, avoidance coping, instrumental support seeking in BPL male persons in Haryana. It has been observed that BPL male persons engage themselves in earning activities for improving their family conditions betterment Findings of Jain and Sharma (2004) also indicated that active engagement in various activities contributes to enhance psychological and emotional well being and in turn a better quality of life among Indian elderly. In addition, findings also conclude that APL male persons are more relies on strategy planning as compared to BPL persons.

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