



Socio-economic profile of the selected beggars

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Abstract

This study focuses on Socio Economic status of Beggars. It gives us the impression that religion, caste, gender and age were not a bar for this practice. In all the major caste-categories, we find beggars belonging to Karnataka and outside Karnataka state. Among them beggars belonging to Karnataka, their presence is very much pronounced in the most and more disadvantaged groups—SCs, STs and OBCs. One of main reason for begging is the mining-induced hyper economic activity might have attracted to Hospet taluk from other taluks in the Ballari district and other districts in the state.

Keywords: caste, gender, education, marital status

Introduction

As the Socio Economic profile of the study, an attempt is made to give a succinct integrated of the study the beggars' survey sponsored by the Central Relief Committee, Government of Karnataka, is probably the first of its kind in the State. I have done this work under the able guidance of Sri Veerasivashankara Reddy, Retired Chief Planning Officer, Zilla Panchayat, Bellary, and Dr. B. Seshadri, Retired Professor of Economics, Department of Development Studies, Kannada University, Hampi. Being a maiden attempt in this area, I do not claim either exhaustiveness for the study or finality for the views expressed.

The study was undertaken in three select places in Hospet taluk of Bellary district, namely, Hospet city, Kamalapur town panchayat and Hampi Grama Panchayat. All those beggars who were available on the days of survey in all the three places were considered for a detailed study. The total

number of beggars covered by the survey is 296 –and out of this, 237 in Hospet, 37 in Hampi, and 22 in Kamalapur.

Beggars covered in the survey give us the impression that religion, caste, gender, or age were not a bar for this practice. We found that beggars belonging to various castes, religion, age, gender, language, etc. We have captured the diverse dimensions of beggars in tables. As already stated in this report, the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) has been used.

In this part, an attempt is made to capture and present the details in respect of the socio-economic status, including their caste, religion, gender, age, mother-tongue, educational achievements etc., of the selected respondents.

Caste-wise and place-wise classification of beggars

She caste-wise and place-wise details of the selected beggars, collected through field-work are presented in table-1 below:

Table 1: Caste-wise particulars of beggars

S. No.	Particulars	Places Surveyed			Total
		Hospet	Kamalapur	Hampi	
1	2	3	4	5	6
01	Scheduled Caste	84 (28.4)	11 (3.7)	11 (3.7)	106 (35.8)
02	Scheduled Tribe	48 (16.2)	3 (1.0)	8 (2.7)	59 (19.9)
03	OBC	82 (27.7)	7 (2.4)	16 (5.4)	105 (35.5)
04	General	21 (7.1)	1 (0.3)	1 (0.3)	23 (7.8)
05	*Others	2 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.3)	3 (1.0)
06	Total	237 (80.1)	22 (7.4)	37 (12.5)	296 (100.0)

Note: 1. Others refer to the beggars who are dumb

2. The figures put in brackets are percentages of the related absolute numbers

A careful examination of the data presented in Table-1 and we come to know:-

- Of the three places covered by the study, the presence of beggars is highly pronounced in Hospet city; it claims 80.1 per cent of the total beggars (296).

The second and third positions go to Hampi (12.5 per cent) and Kamalapur town panchayat (7.4 per cent).

- The beggars are classified into four categories, namely, Scheduled Castes (SCs) Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs), General and Others. In terms of numbers, SCs account for 106 members, i.e. 35.8 per cent of the total beggars (296). OBCs come next with 105 members (35.5 per cent) and the third place goes to STS who constitute 19.9 per cent of the selected beggars. The

fourth and the fifth places go to general category and others. From these data we may infer that beggary is more pronounced among the most deprived classes (SCs and STs); together they account for 55.7 (35.8+19.9) per cent of the total

beggars.

Caste-wise and gender-wise classification of beggars

The particulars regarding the gender of the selected beggars (296) are presented in Table -2 below:

Table 2: Caste-wise and Gender-wise classification of Beggars

Sl. No	Particulars	Gender			Total
		Male	Female	Bisexual	
1	2	3	4	5	6
01	Scheduled Caste	49 (16.6)	55 (18.6)	2 (0.7)	106 (35.8)
02	Scheduled Tribe	32 (10.8)	27 (9.1)	0 (0.0)	59 (19.9)
03	OBC	61 (20.6)	44 (14.9)	0 (0.0)	105 (35.5)
04	General	12 (4.1)	11 (3.7)	0 (0.0)	23 (7.8)
05	*Others	2 (0.7)	1 (0.3)	0 (0.0)	3 (1.0)
06	Total	156 (52.7)	138 (46.6)	2 (0.7)	296 (100.0)

Note: 1) Others refer to the beggars who are dumb
2) The figures put in brackets are percentages of the related absolute numbers

From the table we come to know that:

- Male beggars excel female beggars. Males constitute 52.7 per cent and females 46.6 per cent, and bisexuals account for only 0.7 per cent of the total beggars.
- Cast-wise, men excel women, except in the case of SCs, where women (18.6 per cent) excel men (16.6 per cent)
- Even though women lag behind men, their number is close

to that of men's

Classification of beggars by their caste and education

The information about the literacy/educational levels of the beggars by their caste-category is given below in Table-3 below:

Table 3: Particulars of the Educational levels of the Selected Beggars

S. No.	Particulars	Particulars of literacy and Education						Total
		1-4 Std	5-7 Std	8-10 Std	PUC	Illiterate	Not res ponded	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
01	Scheduled Caste	7 (2.4)	2 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	97 (32.8)	0 (0.0)	106 (35.8)
02	Scheduled Tribe	0 (0.0)	1 (0.3)	2 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	56 (18.9)	0 (0.0)	59 (19.9)
03	OBC	3 (1.0)	2 (0.7)	5 (1.7)	2 (0.7)	93 (31.4)	0 (0.0)	105 (35.5)
04	General	2 (0.7)	1 (0.3)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.3)	19 (6.4)	0 (0.0)	23 (7.8)
05	*Others	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.3)	2 (0.7)	3 (1.0)
06	Total	12 (4.1)	6 (2.0)	7 (2.4)	3 (1.0)	266 (89.9)	2 (0.7)	296 (100.0)

Note: 1) Others refer to the beggars who are dumb
2) The figures put in brackets are percentages of the related absolute numbers

From the data presented in the rows and columns of the above table, we may draw the following inferences:-

- Majority of the beggars are illiterate (89.9%) (266 out of 296).
- Of the literates, 12(4.1%) come under the category of those who have studied from 1st to 4th standard, 6(2%) from 5th to 7th standard, 7(2.4%) from 8th to 10th standard, and only 3(1.0%) come under the category of those who have studied up to PUC.
- As expected, it is disheartening to note that illiteracy is highest among SCs (32.8%) and next come OBCs (31.4%). But SCs and SCs together account for 51.7% of

the illiterates. Of course, illiterates are found in all the categories considered, but it is highly pronounced in marginalized reactions of the society, namely, SCs and STs

- In sum, it is to be pointed out that illiterates and persons with very low education levels have engaged themselves in begging.

Classification of beggars by their religion

The data in respect of the religion of the beggars covered in the present study are presented in Table-4 below:

Table 4: Particulars of the Religion of the Selected Beggars

S. No.	Particulars	Religion				Total
		Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Not responded	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
01	Scheduled Caste	106 (35.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	106 (35.8)
02	Scheduled Tribe	59 (19.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	59 (19.9)
03	OBC	74 (25.0)	30 (10.1)	1 (0.3)	0 (0.0)	105 (35.5)

04	General	23 (7.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	23 (7.8)
05	*Others	1 (0.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (0.7)	3 (1.0)
06	Total	263 (88.9)	30 (10.1)	1 (0.3)	2 (0.7)	296 (100.0)

Note: 1) Others refer to the beggars who are dumb
 2) The figures put in brackets are percentages of the related absolute numbers

The data, inter alia, show that religion does not seem to be a bar for taking up beggary. From the data we may draw the following inferences:-

- Of the three religions, beggary is highly pronounced among Hindus and least among Christian, and in between we have Muslims. Of the 296 beggars, 263(88.9%) are Hindus, 30(10.1%) are Muslims and only one (0.3%) is a Christian.

- Category-wise, of the 263 Hindus, 106 belong to the category of SCs, 59 to STs, and 74 to OBCs. And Muslims numbering 30 are found in the OBC category.

Age-wise classification of beggars

The study shows that age is no bar for resorting to beggary. The age-wise details of beggars are presented in Table-5 below:

Table 5: Age-wise Particulars of Beggars

Sl. No.	Particulars	Particulars Age								Total
		0-14 Years	15-18 Years	19-25 Years	26-35 Years	36-45 Years	46-60 Years	61-75 Years	75 and above	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
01	Scheduled Caste	17 (5.7)	1 (0.3)	5 (1.7)	8 (2.7)	13 (4.4)	26 (8.8)	26 (8.8)	10 (3.4)	106 (35.8)
02	Scheduled Tribe	1 (0.3)	1 (0.3)	2 (0.7)	2 (0.7)	10 (3.4)	24 (8.1)	16 (5.4)	3 (1.0)	59 (19.9)
03	OBC	10 (3.4)	0 (0.0)	5 (1.7)	11 (3.7)	23 (7.8)	21 (7.1)	28 (9.5)	7 (2.4)	105 (35.5)
04	General	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.3)	5 (1.7)	9 (3.0)	5 (1.7)	3 (1.0)	23 (7.8)
05	*Others	1 (0.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (1.0)
06	Total	29 (9.8)	2 (0.7)	12 (4.1)	22 (7.4)	53 (17.9)	80 (27.0)	75 (25.3)	23 (7.8)	296 (100.0)

Note: 1) Others refer to the beggars who are dumb
 2) The figures put in brackets are percentages of the related absolute numbers

The data presented in Table-5 reveal the following facts:-

- Beggary is found in all age-groups –from 0-14 Years to 75 Years and above.
- Majority of the beggars are found in the age-group 46-60 (27%) and 61-75(25.3%). And next in the order comes the age group 36-45 (17.9%)
- The most distressing fact is that the children in the age-group 0-14, who were expected to be in schools are outside the schools, begging for their livelihood. Out of 29 such children, 17 are in the category of SCs.

- Persons in the productive age group (15-45 years) account for 30.1% of the total beggars in the study area. It indicates loss of productivity to those individual beggars and also to the nation.
- SCs and STs together constitute more than 50% in the age-groups of 40-60, 61-75 and above 75 years.

Classification of beggars by their mother-tongue

The Particulars pertaining to the mother-tongue of the beggars covered in the present study are presented in Table-6 below:

Table 6: Classification of beggars by their Mother-tongue

Sl. No.	Particulars	Mother tongue							Total
		Kannada	Telugu	Urdu	Hindi	Tamil	Marathi	Not responded	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
01	Scheduled Caste	67 (22.6)	37 (12.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	106 (35.8)
02	Scheduled Tribe	38 (12.8)	21 (7.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	59 (19.9)
03	OBC	60 (20.3)	10 (3.4)	20 (6.8)	9 (3.0)	4 (1.4)	2 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	105 (35.5)
04	General	18 (6.1)	5 (1.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	23 (7.8)
05	*Others	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.3)	0 (0.0)	2 (0.7)	3 (1.0)
06	Total	183 (61.8)	73 (24.7)	20 (6.8)	9 (3.0)	5 (1.7)	4 (1.4)	2 (0.7)	296 (100.0)

Note: 1) Others refer to the beggars who are dumb
 2) The figures put in brackets are percentages of the related absolute numbers

From the data presented in Table-6 and in the, we may draw the following inferences:-

- Mother-tongue-wise, the number of beggars varies from a low of 4 (Marathi mother-tongue) to a high of 183 (Kannada mother-tongue). That means that beggars whose mother tongue is Kannada constitute the majority among the selected beggars.
- Bellary district, being a bilingual area has beggars whose

mother-tongue is Telugu along with those whose mother-tongue is Kannada. Together they account for 86% (61.8 + 24.7) of the total beggars (296).

- The third, fourth, fifth and sixth positions respectively go to beggars whose mother-tongue is Urdu (6.8%), Hindi (3%), Tamil (1.7%) and Marathi (1.4%).
- Among the caste-categories, beggars whose mother-tongues are Urdu, Hindu, and Tamil, as expected, are not

- found in the SC and ST categories.
- OBC category has beggars belonging to all the 6 mother-tongues considered in the study.
- As far as Kannada and Telugu (Mother-tongue) are concerned, SCs and STs together account for 105 (67 + 38) and 58 (37+21) respectively. The next position goes to OBC category with 60 (Kannada) and 10 (Telugu).
- All the 20 beggars whose mother-tongue is Urdu are

found in OBC category. It is also the case with beggars whose mother-tongue is Hindu.

Classification of Beggars by their Marital Status

Among the respondents, we find married as well as unmarried beggars, besides widows/widowers. The related details are given in Table-7 below:

Table 7: Classification of beggars by their Marital Status

Sl.No.	Particulars	Marital Status					Total
		Married	Unmarried	Widow/Widower	Child	Not responded	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
01	Scheduled Caste	62 (20.9)	32 (10.8)	9 (3.0)	3 (1.0)	0 (0.0)	106 (35.8)
02	Scheduled Tribe	33 (11.1)	21 (7.1)	4 (1.4)	1 (0.3)	0 (0.0)	59 (19.9)
03	OBC	61 (20.6)	36 (12.2)	6 (2.0)	2 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	105 (35.5)
04	General	16 (5.4)	5 (1.7)	2 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	23 (7.8)
05	*Others	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.3)	2 (0.7)	3 (1.0)
06	Total	172 (58.1)	94 (31.8)	21 (7.1)	7 (2.4)	2 (0.7)	296 (100.0)

Note: 1) Others refer to the beggars who are dumb
 2) The figures put in brackets are percentages of the related absolute numbers

- The data in Table-7 clearly show that married beggars excel unmarried ones. Of the 296, 172(58.1%) are married, 94(31.8%) unmarried, and 21 (7.1%) are widows/widowers.
- Over 50% of the widows/widowers are found in the two deprived sections, namely SCs and STs and a little over 25% are found in OBCs.
- A similar situation is noticed in the case of married as well unmarried beggars. The SCs and STs together

account for more than 50% in respect of married and unmarried beggars. And OBCs account for over one-third of married and unmarried beggars.

Classification of beggars by their nativity

All the 296 beggar-respondents begging in Hospet are not natives of Hospet taluk. And not all of them belong to Bellary district and Karnataka state; some have migrated from other states. The related details are presented in Table-8 below:

Table 8: Particulars of the nativity of selected beggars

Sl. No.	Particulars	Nativity of Beggars					Total
		Within taluk	Within district but outside taluk	Within state but outside the district	Outside the state	Not Responded	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
01	Scheduled Caste	44 (14.9)	21 (7.1)	37 (12.5)	4 (1.4)	0 (0.0)	106 (35.8)
02	Scheduled Tribe	22 (7.4)	14 (4.7)	17 (5.7)	6 (2.0)	0 (0.0)	59 (19.9)
03	OBC	43 (14.5)	16 (5.4)	35 (11.8)	10 (3.4)	1 (0.3)	105 (35.5)
04	General	3 (1.0)	5 (1.7)	13 (4.4)	2 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	23 (7.8)
05	*Others	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.3)	2 (0.7)	3 (1.0)
06	Total	112 (37.8)	56 (18.9)	102 (34.5)	23 (7.8)	3 (1.0)	296 (100.0)

Note: 1) Others refer to the beggars who are dumb
 2) The figures put in brackets are percentages of the related absolute numbers

The data presented in Table-8 inter alia, show that:-

- Even though all the respondent-beggars do not belong to Hospet taluk, but over 37.8% (112 out 296) of them belong to Hospet.
- Of the total 296 beggars, 23(7.8%) are outsiders—those who have migrated from other states, and the remaining belong to Karnataka, apart from 3 persons who could not talk (dumb persons).
- Among the beggars of Karnataka nativity, a substantial proportion of them (34.5%) are found to have migrated from other districts and 18.9% of them belong to other taluk in Bellary district.
- In all the major caste-categories, we find beggars

belonging to Karnataka and outside Karnataka. Among the beggars belonging to Karnataka, their presence is very much pronounced in the most and more disadvantaged groups—SCs, STs and OBCs.

- Probably, the mining-induced hyper economic activity, might have attracted beggars to Hospet taluk from other taluks in the district and other districts in the state.

Reasons for leaving their homes and taking up beggary

All the respondent-beggars do not have the same reason to leave their homes and become beggars. The reasons given by our respondents are given in Table-9 below:

Table 9: Reasons for leaving their Homes and Taking up Beggary

Sl. No.	Particulars	Caste Category					Total
		SC	ST	OBC	General	Others	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
01	Not respond	8 (2.7)	2 (0.7)	9 (3.0)	2 (0.7)	3 (1.0)	24 (8.1)
02	Interest to beggary	11 (3.7)	4 (1.4)	8 (2.7)	2 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	25 (8.4)
03	Domestic problems	36 (12.2)	20 (6.8)	33 (11.1)	5 (1.7)	0 (0.0)	94 (31.8)
04	Disabled	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.3)
05	Death of parents	0 (0.0)	1 (0.3)	5 (1.7)	1 (0.3)	0 (0.0)	7 (2.4)
06	No Caretakers	28 (9.5)	20 (6.8)	28 (9.5)	6 (2.0)	0 (0.0)	82 (27.7)
07	Basic Profession	1 (0.3)	1 (0.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (0.7)
08	Leprosy	1 (0.3)	0 (0.0)	2 (0.7)	1 (0.3)	0 (0.0)	4 (1.4)
09	Unemployment	5 (1.7)	1 (0.3)	7 (2.4)	1 (0.3)	0(0.0)	14 (4.7)
10	Being Jogathi	3 (1.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (1.0)	1 (0.3)	0 (0.0)	7 (2.4)
11	Economic Problems	2 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (1.0)
12	Part time beggars	2 (0.7)	2 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (1.4)
13	No property	9 (3.0)	8 (2.7)	8 (2.7)	4 (1.4)	0 (0.0)	29 (9.8)
14	Total	106 (35.8)	59 (19.9)	105 (35.5)	23 (7.8)	3 (1.0)	296 (100.0)

Note: 1) Others refer to the beggars who are dumb

2) The figures put in brackets are percentages of the related absolute numbers

The following facts emerge from the data presented in Table-9:-

- Of the 296 beggars, 24 have not responded to our question.
- The two predominant causes for leaving their homes and resort to beggary are, problems at home(94), and absence of caretakers at home (82). Two other important reasons are, having no property/ assets (29), and willingness to take up beggary as a means of earning their livelihood (25).
- The other reasons given by beggars include such reasons as: having no work to do; death of their parents; being jog this; and leprosy.

Principal Findings

Some of the principal findings that have emerged from the discussion on the different dimensions of beggary in the study area are given below:-

1. By and large, beggary is found in urban areas—cities and towns.
2. Beggary is more pronounced among the most deprived and disadvantaged sections of the society such as SCs, STs and BCs.
3. Gender-wise, male beggars excel female beggars in number, but the difference is very significant; the number of female beggars is sufficiently large, which indicates female disadvantage.
4. Illiterate beggars excel literate beggars.
5. The literacy / education levels of SCs and STs are very low.
6. Religion-wise, beggars belonging to Hindu religion excel the beggars belonging to all other religions. The next position is occupied by beggars belonging to Islam religion.
7. The most distressing discovery is that children who should have been in schools have taken up beggary. It is equally disheartening to note that persons in their productive age, who should have contributed to well-being, not only of their families, but also to the well-being of the society of which they are an integral part.

8. As far as the marital status of the beggars is concerned, married as well as unmarried beggars are there, the former excel the latter.
9. As expected, mother-tongue-wise, beggars whose mother-tongue is Kannada dominate the beggars' community in the study area. Being a bilingual area, beggars whose mother-tongue is Telugu, occupy the second position.
10. Hospet taluk has attracted beggars not only from within the taluk, within the district, from other districts of Karnataka, but also from other states. The local beggars are more than those who have migrated from other places. Those who have migrated from outside the state constitute only 7.8% of the total beggars covered by the present study.
11. Majority of the beggars have left their homes mainly because of domestic problems, and absence of caretakers at home, than because of mental / physical disabilities and incurable diseases.

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