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Access to Common Property Resources and Livelihood Dependence among the Dalits of Dindigul District, Tamil Nadu, India

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Abstract **- Common Property Resources (CPRs) accessible to collectively owned/held/managed by an identifiable community and on which no individual has exclusive property rights are called common property resources. This results that co-users of the resources are a well-defined group of persons. The proponents of this approach hold that "a resource becomes common property only when the group of people who have the right to its collective use is well defined, and the rules that govern their use of it are set out clearly and followed universally". In general those people who are depending on Farming or doing Labour are more likely to dependent on Common Property Resources as CPR constitute major income source and generated livelihoods in the forms of fuel wood, medicinal plant, use of common grazing land for cattle and pets, getting access to fallow or barren land. Self-employed, business and Govt. employee class of people in general do not depend on CPR for their day to day livelihoods as their economy is largely not depends on it. Occupation of respondents is directly related with CPR use and access. CPR owned or held by an individual or a family or an organization like a company or corporation or co-operative institution is not being considered as CPRs. This study was carried out in 5 blocks namely Oddanchatram, Reddiyarchatrm, Dindigul, Sanarpatti and Vadamadurai. These blocks were identified based on the high level of CPR present over there. From each of the above mentioned identified block 5 village Panchayats have been selected. The required data was collected from 1000 rural Dalits households with the help of a pre-tested interview schedule prepared exclusively for this purpose. To understand the nature of the data, firstly, frequency tables were prepared, and subsequently the analysis and tabulation have been carried out using research techniques based on the requirement.**
Keywords: **Common Property Resources, Community, access**

I. INTRODUCTION

The Common Property Resources (CPRs) refers to the resources that are accessible to the community and to which no individual has exclusive property rights. These resources are collectively used by the group of people and they form the main thrust of the rural economies and the absence of these resources could mean the difference between life and death to members of the rural communities. The CPRs contribute a lot to the village economies and the rural poor survive on these resources to a greater extent (Olubukola, 1996). The Common Property Resources are also helpful in achieving the subsidiary activities like supplying the inputs to land cultivation and household consumption as well as accumulating total land holdings by encroaching adjacent pramboke land (Government Land) to patta lands of the households.

CPRs accessible to collectively owned/held/managed by an identifiable community and on which no individual has exclusive property rights are called common property resources. This results that co-users of the resources are a well-defined group of persons. The element that is common to most of the definitions attributes primary importance to the nature of access in identification of CPRs. There is an approach treating all that is not private property as common property. The approach at the other extreme adopts a much more stringent view to distinguish between common property and "free rider" or "free or open access" resources. The latter category is characterized by the absence of any rules for management of the resources. The proponents of this approach hold that "a resource becomes common property only when the group of people who have the right to its collective use is well defined, and the rules that govern their use of it are set out clearly and followed universally".

Accessibility to a resource is determined either by legal status or by convention. If the community has a legal right of ownership or possession on the resource, it is clearly accessible to the community. Besides such legal rights, resources for which customarily accepted user rights exist are also treated as "accessible" to the community. CPR owned or held by an individual or a family or an organization like a company or corporation or co-operative institution is not being considered as CPRs.

The CPRs are either held by the village community as a whole or a caste/religion/occupation-based community or a community based on traditional social order or community of persons of a geographical location. There are also sources of water which are either constructed by or lie within jurisdiction of a government department. All these sources, whether or not controlled by a community or a local body, which are not held by individual households, have been treated as common water resources. Natural capital or natural assets are often considered one of the five forms of capital, the others being financial capital, physical capital, social capital, and human capital (Carney, 1998). Rural poor people who lack access to natural capital and other forms of capital are challenged on many fronts: obtaining food,

accumulating assets and responding to shocks and misfortune (Baumann, 2002). Access is determined by formal and informal rules and institutions that govern who can use natural assets, when, where, how and for what purposes. Private ownership, while important, may not be necessary in order to assure the rights to access and control natural resources.

Natural resources vary widely in the rules that govern access to them. Access to some resources is primarily held by individuals, while access to other resources may be shared across larger groups, including the state, and some resources are effectively not held by anyone. Such open access resources, including many forests and fisheries, are among those facing the greatest current pressures due to growing populations, accompanying resource demands, and the common lack of effective institutions that govern access. Because access entails rights, it is also fundamentally affected by social and political processes reflecting the distribution of power in communities and societies (including dimensions such as gender and conflict), by market forces reflecting the distribution of wealth, and by environmental forces which are often influenced by human activity. Vulnerability is closely linked to access to resources (capital assets) because these are a principal means by which people reduce their vulnerability. It is the access to resources, assets and entitlements that together give people the capabilities to pursue livelihood strategies that may have direct material as well as more individually subjective. New empirical evidence on the nature of poverty-environment linkages, as described above, has contributed towards changing perspectives on poverty, vulnerability and livelihoods. Previously accepted starting points in the poverty-environment discourse are now being dismissed as 'environmental myths' and viewpoints that have dominated the discourse have been labeled 'environmental wisdoms' (Leach et al.,1998) and 'development narratives' (Roe,1991).

Pari Baumann[1] (2002) revealed in his articles that International development policy has come to a consensus that environment-poverty linkages are critical in determining development outcomes. Poor people in developing countries are particularly dependent on natural resources and ecosystem services for their livelihoods. Much of the extensive debate over poverty in the last decade has in fact turned around the question of how poverty, vulnerability, livelihoods and access to resources are linked[1].

Amartya Sen (1981) famously distinguished the production-based availability of food from household access to food. So too, is it critical to distinguish between the physical availability of natural resources and the access that people, poor people in particular, may, or may not, enjoy. Importantly, it is access to resources, not the supply of resources or their overall availability, that determines whether poor men and women will be able to make the most of the opportunities they have to enhance their livelihoods.

Another benefit of the emphasis on access and assets is that it explicitly focuses our attention on the rights to assure access. Resources without the rights to access the benefits potentially accruing to resource ownership and control are not assets (Boyce and Pastor, 2001). Hence, the proposed study will address as to how Dalits, especially those who are excluded from the development process, look at the CPR with access right and awareness.

A. Objectives of the Study

1. Demographic, social and economic profile of the dalits rural households.
2. Variations in dependency on Common Property Resource with socio and demographic parameters in the surveyed area.
3. The personal-economic characteristics of the respondents and their corresponding levels of empowerment (low, medium and high) among davits in the rural households.
4. Identify the factors responsible for the determination of dalits empowerment in the rural households.

II.MEHTODOLOGY AND DATA

The Dindigul District in Tamilnadu consisted of 14 blocks. This study was carried out in 5 blocks namely Oddanchatram, Reddiyarchatrm, Dindigul, Sanarpatti and Vadamadurai. These blocks were identified based on the high level of CPR present over there and partially in terms of CPR Index as available. From each of the above mentioned identified block 5 village panchayats have been selected. Further, 40 *dalit households* have been identified from each village panchayat and total number of samples selected for the present study was 1000 as mentioned below. The data collection for this study will be handled by the trained research staff. The required data will be collected from 1000 rural Dalits households with the help of a pre-tested interview schedule prepared exclusively for this purpose. The data will be consisting of items of information such as socio-demographic characteristics (age, religion, caste, marital status, competed year of education), housing conditions and amenities, economic condition (wealth details, personal income, family income, savings and borrowing). The items of information would be collected through personal interview for their better survival. The survey data, after evaluation and coding, have been entered into spread sheets of Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS). To understand the nature of the data, firstly, frequency tables were prepared, and subsequently the analysis and tabulation have been carried out using research techniques based on the requirement

III. ANALYSIS

TABLE I SEX-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

S. NO.	BLOCK	SEX		TOTAL
		MALE	FEMALE	
1	Oddanchatram	136 (13.82)	64 (6.18)	200
2	Reddiyarchatram	125 (11.77)	75 (8.49)	200
3	Dindigul	138 (14.23)	62(5.80)	200
4	Sanarpatti	142 (15.07)	58 (5.08)	200
5	Vadamadurai	128(12.24)	72 (7.83)	200
	Total	669(67.13)	331(33.38)	1000

Source: Primary data

Table I as shown above gives the sex distribution of sample respondents in the study areas. Sex distribution is an important factor in socio-economic status of the study area, as women also takes parts in the economic development of family which is directly related with access to basic facilities such as education, health, shelter etc. It is clearly evident from the above table that 67 percent of sample respondents are Male and rest 33 percent constitutes of women respondents. It is clear that the ratio of Men is higher in comparison to women is due to various reasons. In two blocks women have comparatively higher in their participation in this survey. Above table clearly shows that women respondents constituted below 9 percent in almost all the five blocks. Whereas among men respondents from Oddanchatram, Dindigul & Sanarpatti Men's participation percentage is around 15 percentages and this indicates that respondents of these three Blocks are highly accessing the CPR items which not only generating their livelihoods but also in day to day uses.

TABLE II AGE-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

S. NO.	BLOCK	AGE (IN YEARS)				TOTAL
		23-32	33-42	43-52	53+	
1	Oddanchatram	61 (6.41)	117(11.31)	12(1.14)	10(1.56)	200
2	Reddiyarchatram	53(4.85)	124(12.60)	14(1.55)	9(1.40)	200
3	Dindigul	58(5.70)	127(13.32)	11(1.04)	4(0.25)	200
4	Sanarpatti	64(6.94)	114(10.65)	16(2.03)	6(0.56)	200
5	Vadamadurai	59(6)	128(13.42)	10(0.79)	3(0.56)	200
	Total	295(29.5)	610(61.0)	63(6.3)	32(3.2)	1000

Source: Primary data

Table II reflects that respondents who are above 50 years of age only constitutes 3 percent, young adults respondent's between the age groups of 33-42 are highest in number with 61 percentage. Below them is youth in the age group of 23-32 with 30 percent. This age wise percentage of respondents from study area reflects the nation's trend of high rate of youths. Although youths are engaged in some form of CPR use, but they are hardly in a position to understand the historical nature and value and importance of CPR in comparison to their older counterparts.

TABLE III EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

S. NO.	BLOCK	EDUCATION				TOTAL
		ILLITERATE	PRIMARY	SECONDARY	HSc+	
1	Oddanchatram	33 (3.3)	48(5.33)	90(9.95)	29(2.10)	200
2	Reddiyarchatram	37(4.13)	35(2.91)	80(7.86)	48(5.56)	200
3	Dindigul	31(2.91)	49(5.67)	72(6.36)	48(5.56)	200
4	Sanarpatti	34(3.4)	44(4.48)	90(9.95)	32(2.47)	200
5	Vadamadurai	35(3.70)	40(3.70)	75(6.36)	50(6.03)	200
	Total	170(17.0)	216(21.6)	407(40.7)	207(20.7)	1000

Source: Primary data

It is clearly evident from the above table that 41 percent of sample respondents have studied up to secondary level and 20 percent of them reported to have studied beyond higher secondary level. In the case of respondents who have studied only up to primary level constituted 24 percent. The table also clearly indicates that 15 percent of them are illiterate across the sample villages. Further, it is observed from the table that inter block variations in the levels of education as attained by the sample respondents is not significant in terms of percentage barring Vadamadurai Block where the percentage of illiterate population constituted 4.11 percent to the total number of illiterate population estimated in this study. On the whole, it is noted that a vast majority of sample respondents (85 percent) have obtained education at different levels namely Primary (24 percent), Secondary (41 percent) and above higher secondary (20 0percent) . The level of educational attainment as noted in the sample block presents huge potentials for mobilizing community participation for effective management of CPR.

TABLE IV RELIGIONS FOLLOWED BY SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS

S. NO.	BLOCK	RELIGION		TOTAL
		HINDU	CHRISTIANS	
1	Oddanchatram	176 (18.61)	24(1.71)	200
2	Reddiyarchatram	167(16.86)	33(3.33)	200
3	Dindigul	153(14.15)	47(6.71)	200
4	Sanarpatti	152(13.88)	48(6.85)	200
5	Vadamadurai	184(20.34)	16(0.76)	200
	Total	832(83.2)	168(16.8)	1000(100.0)

Source: Primary data

It is clearly observed from the above table that among the selected respondents majority belongs to Hindu community with 83 percentages and second community is Christians with 17 percentages. Among the Hindu community highest respondents are from Vadamadurai with 20 percentages followed by Oddanchatram and Reddiyarchatram with 19 and 17 percentage respectively. Among Christian community highest percentage of respondent is 7 percentages in Sanarpati block followed by Dindigul and Reddiyarchatram with 7 and 4 percentages respectively.

From the above table-V, it is revealed that among the surveyed respondents with 48 percentage farmers constituted highest, followed by labour in which coolie and mason workers are 32 percentages next is Govt. Employee with 11 percentage and self-employed and Business class constituted 9 percentages. Among block wise distribution of farmers from Oddanchantram constituted 12 percentage, Vadamadurai 10 percentage, Sanarpatti 95 percentage and Dindigul and Reddiyarchatram accounted for 93 and 88 percentages respectively. Labour constitutes at an average of 7 percentages from all surveyed blocks self-employed, Business and Govt employed respondents constituted at an average of 3 percentage.

TABLE V DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO THEIR OCCUPATIONS

S. NO.	BLOCK	OCCUPATION				TOTAL
		FARMER	LABOUR(COOLIE, MASON)	SELF EMPLOYED, BUSINESS	GOVT. EMPLOYED	
1	Oddanchatram	106 (11.70)	60(5.62)	12(0.80)	22(2.18)	200
2	Reddiyarchatram	88(8.06)	77(9.38)	7(0.31)	28(3.53)	200
3	Dindigul	93(9.10)	62(6.00)	22(2.71)	23(2.48)	200
4	Sanarpatti	95(9.5)	59(5.53)	22(2.71)	24(2.59)	200
5	Vadamadurai	98(10.00)	62(6.00)	26(3.79)	14(0.88)	200
	Total	480(48.0)	320(32.0)	89(8.9)	111(11.1)	1000

Source: Primary data

Table V as shown above gives the occupation-wise distribution of sample respondents. Occupation of respondents is directly related with CPR use and access. In general those people who are depending on Farming or doing Labour are more likely to dependent on Common Property Resources as CPR constitute major income source and generated livelihoods in the forms of fuel wood, medicinal plant, use of common grazing land for cattle and pets, getting access to fallow or barren land. Self-employed, business and Govt. employee class of people in general do not depend on CPR for their day to day livelihoods as their economy is largely not depends on it . However in rural villages still people use CPR as it supports family economy.

TABLE VI MARITAL STATUS OF SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

S. NO.	BLOCK	MARITAL STATUS		TOTAL
		MARRIED	SINGLE/ SEPERATE	
1	Oddanchatram	182 (19.14)	18(1.2)	200
2	Reddiyarchatram	167(16.21)	33(4.15)	200
3	Dindigul	172(17.10)	28(0.10)	200
4	Sanarpatti	173(17.4)	27(2.8)	200
5	Vadamadurai	171(17.00)	29(3.22)	200
	Total	865(86.5)	135(13.5)	1000

Source: Primary data

Table VI shows the distribution of respondents as per Marital Status. Marital status also plays a significant role as married people directly participate in socio-economic activities as they shoulder the burden the whole of family. From the point of view of CPR use and access the probability of engagement of married respondent is very high, as they have more number of family members as consumer and user of CPR item. In comparison to Married respondents Single or those who are living separately are less likely to use or have less dependency over CPR. The percentage of married respondents is at an average equally distributed in all the blocks.

TABLE VII DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO THEIR EARNING OF AVERAGE INCOME PER MONTH

S. NO.	BLOCK	INCOME PER MONTH			TOTAL
		Rs. Less than 5000	Rs.5001-10000	Rs.10000 +	
1	Oddanchatram	35 (2.18)	19(1.29)	146(18.86)	200
2	Reddiyarchatram	73(9.37)	30(3.06)	97(7.89)	200
3	Dindigul	88(13.44)	46(7.19)	66(3.85)	200
4	Sanarpatti	63(7)	32(3.48)	105(9.84)	200
5	Vadamadurai	29(1.51)	20(1.36)	151(20.31)	200
	Total	288(28.8)	147(14.7)	565(56.5)	1000

Source: Primary data

Table VII shows annual income-wise distribution of respondents. It is noted that the variation in income reflects that livelihood diversification among the respondents in the selected blocks of study area. Livelihood diversification includes various source of income such as income from farming, labour work of various kind in which those respondents who do not have own land constituted majority as they work in others land or take up other professional work. As per table 4.7 majority respondents also depends upon business and few have government jobs. Among the sampled respondents those earning is Rs. 10,000 and above is highest as it constitutes 57 percentage, 29 percentage of respondents have less than Rs. 5000 income, 15 parentage of respondents earned between Rs. 50001-10,000.

TABLE VIII DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILIES ACCORDING TO THEIR FAMILY TYPE

S. NO.	BLOCK	TYPE OF FAMILY		TOTAL
		NUCLEAR	JOINT	
1	Oddanchatram	115(10.21)	85(10.53)	200
2	Reddiyarchatram	138(14.58)	62(5.53)	200
3	Dindigul	144(15.87)	56(4.51)	200
4	Sanarpatti	117(10.57)	83(10.04)	200
5	Vadamadurai	139(14.90)	61(5.44)	200
	Total	653(65.3)	347(34.7)	1000

Source: Primary data

Table VIII, it revealed that Nuclear family structure is high in the study area 65 percentage. This indicates that due to change in economic structure and other related issues people preferred more to stay in a nuclear family with minimum of two to four members. Only 35 percentage respondents are living in joint family as per this study. Among joint family highest is in Oddanchantram and Sanarpatti with 11 percentage at an average. Dindigul district is having highest nuclear family followed by Reddiyarchatram and Vadamadurai with 15 percentages respectively.

TABLE IX DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS ACCORDING TO THEIR ACCESS TO CPR

S. NO.	BLOCK	HAVING ACCESS RIGHTS TO CPR		TOTAL
		NO	YES	
1	Oddanchatram	101(9.98)	99(10.22)	200
2	Reddiyarchatram	99(9.59)	101(10.64)	200
3	Dindigul	110(11.72)	90(8.36)	200
4	Sanarpatti	113(12.48)	87(7.90)	200
5	Vadamadurai	93(8.47)	107(11.93)	200
	Total	516 (51.6)	484 (48.4)	1000

Source: Primary data

Access to common property resources has become a very complex matter due to various land reform act and forest protection policies. Many forest which were the basis of livelihoods for the local inhabitants now has became fully protected area due to illegal activities which started to smuggle forest goods and illegal hunting of animals. From the above table it is found that 51.6 percent of sample respondents stated that they have no access to common resources and 48.4 percent of them reported that they had access to common resources in the study areas. The access to these resources are on the basis of mutual understanding on the ground that minor forest products collectors from forest will not take any endanger species as per Government rules and regulation. It appears that they will have limited collection daily basis and during seasons.

Table X represents that the predictors of access to CPRs in the study areas were analyzed with binary logistic regression. It shows that among all the independent variable such as sex, occupation, marital status and blocks playing a major role and it becomes significant at one percent level. Female respondents were comparatively lower access to CPRs 38 percent lesser. Illiterate respondents have lower access to CPR to other categories. Farmers have 50 to 70 percent of access to CPR than those who engaged in self employed, laborers. Vadamadurai respondents have 10 percent higher than CPRs access to other blocks. The other variables were not associated with the CPR access. -2 Loglikely hood value was Log likehood 11039.765a **,** which also prove the analysis were statistically proved what revealed in tables.

TABLE X FITTED MODEL OF LOGISTIC REGRESSION FOR PREDICTORS OF ACCESS TO CPR

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARECTERISITICS	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Sex* **						
Male®						
Female (1)	-.491	.155	10.024	1	.002	.612
Religion®						
Hindus®						
Chrisitians (1)	.149	.194	.590	1	.442	1.161
Education						
Illitrate®			9.028	3	.029	
Primary (1)	.384	.243	2.509	1	.113	1.469
Secondary (2)	.041	.220	.035	1	.851	1.042
HSc+ (3)	.614	.279	4.839	1	.028	1.848
Occupation* **						
Farmer®			97.364	3	.000	
Labours(1)	-1.504	.183	67.205	1	.000	.222
Self employed (2)	-.664	.257	6.669	1	.010	.515
Govt. Employ (3)	.711	.230	9.526	1	.002	2.036
Marital Status* **						
Married®						
Single/Separate(1)	.603	.216	7.792	1	.005	1.827
Family Type						
Nuclear®						

Joint (1)	.157	.151	1.085	1	.298	1.170
Duration stay						
< 5 years®						
5 + years (1)	.248	.161	2.354	1	.125	1.281
Income						
Rs.< 5000®			1.317	2	.518	
Rs.5001-10000 (1)	-.167	.244	.466	1	.495	.846
Rs.100101+ (2)	-.220	.198	1.230	1	.267	.803
Number of dependents						
No dependent®			1.877	3	.598	
1-2 91)	.221	.316	.489	1	.484	1.248
3-4 (2)	.136	.315	.187	1	.665	1.146
5+ (3)	-.072	.348	.042	1	.837	.931
Family size						
1-2®			.999	2	.607	
3-4 (1)	.161	.180	.796	1	.372	1.175
5+ (2)	.178	.201	.787	1	.375	1.195
Block* **						
Oddanchatram®			45.640	4	.000	
Reddiyarchatram(1)	-1.299	.244	28.255	1	.000	.273
Dindigul (2)	-.965	.247	15.309	1	.000	.381
Sanarapatti 3)	-.595	.227	6.855	1	.009	.552
Vadamadurai(4)	.103	.221	.218	1	.640	1.109
Constant	-.007	.430	.000	1	.987	.993

-2 Log likehood 11039.765[a] ***, ** and * denotes accepted significance at 1%, 5% and 10% level, Source: Primary data

IV. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The independent variable such as sex, occupation, marital status and blocks playing a major role and it becomes significant at one percent level. Female respondents were comparatively lower access to CPRs 38 percent lesser. Illiterate respondents have lower access to CPR to other categories. Farmers have 50 to 70 percent of access to CPR than those who engaged in self employed, laborers. Vadamadurai respondents have 10 percent higher than CPRs access to other blocks. The other variables were not associated with the CPR access. -2 Loglikelyhood value was 11039.765a, which also prove the analysis were statistically proved what revealed in tables.

It is clearly evident from the above table that 67 percent of sample respondents are Male and rest 33 percent constitutes of women respondents. who are above 50 years of age only constitutes 3 percent, young adults respondent's between the age groups of 33-42 are highest in number with 61 percentage. Below them is youth in the age group of 23-32 with 30 percent. 41 percent of sample respondents have studied up to secondary level and 20 percent of them reported to have studied beyond higher secondary level. In the case of respondents who have studied only up to primary level constituted 24 percent. The table also clearly indicates that 15 percent of them are illiterate across the sample villages. surveyed respondents with 48 percentage farmers constituted highest, followed by labour in which coolie and mason workers are 32 percentages next is Govt. Employee with 11 percentage and self-employed and Business class constituted 9 percentages. Among block wise distribution of farmers from Oddanchantram constituted 12 percentage, Vadamadurai 10 percentage, Sanarpatti 95 percentage and Dindigul and Reddiyarchatram accounted for 93 and 88 percentages respectively. the occupation-wise distribution of sample respondents.

CPRs accessible to collectively owned/held/managed by an identifiable community and on which no individual has exclusive property rights are called common property resources. This study was carried out in 5 blocks namely Oddanchatram, Reddiyarchatrm, Dindigul, Sanarpatti and Vadamadurai. These blocks were identified based on the high level of CPR present over there and partially in terms of CPR Index as available. From each of the above mentioned identified block 5 village panchayats have been selected. the sex distribution of sample respondents in the study areas. Sex distribution is an important factor in socio-economic status of the study area, as women also takes parts in the economic development of family which is directly related with access to basic facilities such as education, health, shelter etc.

Occupation of respondents is directly related with CPR use and access. In general those people who are depending on Farming or doing Labour are more likely to dependent on Common Property Resources as CPR constitute major income source and generated livelihoods in the forms of fuel wood, medicinal plant, use of common grazing land for cattle and pets, getting access to fallow or barren land. Self-employed, business and Govt. employee class of people in general do not depend on CPR for their day to day livelihoods as their economy is largely not depends on it.

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