



Rural Poverty & Poverty Alliviation Programmes in India

KEYWORDS

Bacteria, phosphate solubilisers, pigmented bacteria, bacteriophages, rocky shore

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MEANING:

Poverty means scarcity or few. From social and economic point of view, it refers to that state or condition which fails to provide minimum necessities of life. Thus, poverty leads to extreme lower standard of living, denying even the basic requirements of life to a vast majority of population. Poverty is a state in which a section of society is unable to get the basic necessities of life. When a substantial segment of population is deprived of minimum standard of living that society is said to be plagued with mass poverty.

Poverty is a relative concept. No individual or country is absolutely poor or rich. A man is poor or rich in comparison to the others. As Adam Smith says "Man is poor or rich according to the degree in which he can afford to enjoy the necessaries conveniences and amusements of life". The form of these minimum necessities however changes, with variation in place and time. There is no uniform standard to define poverty throughout the world. Therefore it can be said that poverty is the condition of the absence of fulfillment of the minimum necessities of life according to the prevailing standard of the society.

The number of poor people in India, according to the country's Eleventh National Development Plan, amounts to more than 300 million. The country has been successful in reducing the proportion of poor people from about 55 per cent in 1973 to about 27 per cent in 2004. But almost one third of the country's population of more than 1.1 billion continues to live below the poverty line, and a large proportion of poor people live in rural areas. Poverty remains a chronic condition for almost 30 per cent of India's rural population

Poverty is deepest among members of scheduled castes and tribes in the country's rural areas. In 2005 these groups accounted for 80 per cent of poor rural people, although their share in the total rural population is much smaller. On the map of poverty in India, the poorest areas are in parts of northern 8 states. Large numbers of India's poorest people live in the country's semi-arid tropical region. In this area shortages of water and recurrent droughts impede the transformation of agriculture that the Green Revolution has achieved elsewhere. There is also a high incidence of poverty in flood-prone areas such as those extending from eastern Uttar Pradesh to Assam plains, and especially in northern Bihar.

Poverty affects tribal people in forest areas, where loss of entitlement to resources has made them even poorer. In coastal fishing community's people's living conditions are deteriorating because of environmental degradation, stock depletion and vulnerability to natural disasters .A major

cause of poverty among India's rural people, both individuals and communities, is lack of access to productive assets and financial resources. Microenterprise development, which could generate income and enable poor people to improve their living conditions, has only recently become a focus of the government. Despite all the causes, India currently adds more millions people to its middle class every year than any other country same as china. Poverty decline in India is fastest just after china & country will be poverty free by 2020.

According to the release from the Planning Commission, 25.7% of people in rural areas were below the so-called poverty line and 13.7% in urban areas. This is comparable with 33.8% and 20.9%, respectively, in 2009-10, and 42% and 25.5%, respectively, in 2004-05. The poverty numbers are estimated on the basis of consumption expenditure captured in the five- year surveys undertaken by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO). The decline in poverty numbers was first reported by The Hindu on 16 July. The press release sought to show that the number of poor has declined faster in the period during which the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance was in power and that, in the same period, the monthly expenditure per person had increased more equitably, especially in rural areas. Nearly 20 million people were pulled out of poverty every year, the data showed

According to Gillian and Gillian, "poverty is that condition in which a person either because of inadequate income or unwise expenditure does not maintain a scale of living high enough to provide for his physical and mental efficiency and to enable him and his natural dependents to function usually according to the standards of the society of which he is a member

From these facts it can be said that poverty is the condition of extremely lower standards of living and the man in poverty is unable to gather the means to keep himself and his family members in good physical as well as psychological state.

Main Causes of Poverty:

Poverty is regarded as a vicious circle with different causes. Some of the thinkers have attributed it to a single cause but as poverty is a multi dimensional problem, multiple factors are responsible for it. According to henery George, the main cause of poverty is the personal ownership and monopoly of individual on the land. He writes "in great cities where land is so valuable that it is measured by foot you will find extreme of poverty and of luxury."

1) **Personal factors:** It play important role in economic sta-

tus of a person. In this modern scientific area, one may not believe in the fate but no one can deny the importance of personal capacity and efforts in his life style and life pattern. If the important poverty is as follows.

i) Sickness: Due to sickness a person is unable to work or his income decreases. Hunter has pointed that "Poverty and sickness form a vicious partnership each helping the other to add to the miseries of most unfortunate of mankind."

ii) Mental diseases: It also increases poverty. Owing to this, a man loses the balance of his mind by which he is incapable of doing anything. So his family becomes poor

iii) Accident: Accident of any kind may make a person incapable of working, as a result of which he becomes a parasite on society or his income decreases. When income decreases poverty increases.

iv) Idleness and extravagance: India is a rich country inhabited by poor. Idle and lazy persons do not work although they are able to work. There are also extravagant persons who can waste any amount of money in no time. So the cause of poverty is not the lower income but excess of expenditure over income. Such persons also spent a vastly during festive occasions like marriage ceremony etc,

v) Demoralization: Due to lower moral some person are addicted to drinking, prostitution, gambling and other social evils. Such persons spent high proportion of their income on these evil habits and finally become pauper.

2) Biological factors:

Rapid growth of population is one of the most important causes of poverty. Malthus has pointed out that the geometric progress of population is the root cause of poverty. Due to the development of medical science, reduction of famine, control of epidemics and natural calamities death rate has decreased. At the same time birth rate has not been effectively controlled. If a man has too many children his standard of living is definitely lowered and he becomes relatively poor."

3) Geographical factors: It also creates conditions for increasing poverty. If they are follows

i) Unfavorable climate and weather: It hinders the work and production. This increases poverty.

ii) Absence of natural resources: Natural resources are the wealth of the country. A country cannot progress in the absence of natural resources. It includes fertile land, minerals, natural products etc, and without these a country will remain poor.

iii) Natural calamities: It like flood, earthquake, volcanic eruption, typhoons, tornado, and cyclone etc, cause serious damages to humanity. During cultivating season, due to absence of rain, drought occurs which causes heavy loss to agriculture this increases poverty.

4) Economical factors:

i) Backwardness of agriculture: Indian Agriculture is carried on with primitive techniques. Due to the absence of modern machines, tools, implements, improved seeds, manures, inadequate irrigation facilities, constant fragmentation of land and exploitation by the landlords. Agricultural

production hampers to a great extent. Besides these our agricultural system is not sufficient to provide adequate number of jobs or better price for agricultural products.

ii) Slow and defective industrialization: In India industrialization is taking place at a snail's pace, due to inadequate finance, paucity of skilled and technically trained personnel, irregular supply of power and raw materials. Therefore it is not possible in India to provide employment in large scale to persons who are willing to work.

iii) Unequal distribution: Distribution of wealth is unequal in India. Wealth is mostly concentrated in the hands of a few. These people after an optimum of investment keep the wealth in iron chests. On the other hand, the people who would have invested it for productive purpose do not get it.

iv) Unwise economic policy: Indian is rich in respect of natural resources, but poor in making proper utilization of it. Till now we are not able to make optimum utilisation of resources as a result of which it remains unutilized or misused.

5) Social factors: Indian social life is till dominated by religious and idealistic philosophers. Material achievements are not being given high value. As a result the entire social system with its institution and practices are not conducive for materials advance. The parents continue to feed their off spring, even during their youth as in case of joint family. At times, they also manage the family of their children. On the other hand before he is able to earn, often his bound by marriage relations which is considered as a socio religious necessity. If ads fuel to the burning fire of poverty.

6) Political factors: Before independence, the economy of India was exploited by the British rulers, after independence our political leaders to some extent are responsible for the ruin of our country. Now-a-days Indian Administration is full of corruption and inefficiency. Many political leaders do not hesitate to enrich themselves at the cost of country's interest .Nobody is taking the genuine interest for the economic developments of the country many laws are passed by actions do not seem to be encouraging. Political elites are giving various popular slogans like 'anti poverty programme, 'removal of unemployment' or 'Bekari Hatao', 'Garibi Hatao' etc but these slogans have not been translated into action. Due to inefficiency and dishonesty of some of the political leaders, no real socio economic development has taken place and Indian Society till sinks in the ocean of poverty and misery.

POVERTY ALLIVATION PROGRAMMES IN INDIA

(A) PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA (PMGSY)

Launched in December 2000 as a 100 per cent CSS, PMGSY aims to provide all-weather connectivity to all the eligible unconnected rural habitations. Bharat Nirman, envisages connectivity by 2009 to all the habitations with a population of 1000 or more in the plains, and of 500 or more in the hilly, desert and tribal areas. The systematic up gradation of the existing rural road network also is an integral component of the scheme, funded mainly from the accruals of diesel cess in the Central Road Fund, with support of the multilateral funding agencies and the domestic financial institutions. Up to December 2005, with an expenditure of Rs.12,049 crore, a total length of 82,718 km. of road works had been completed. .

(B) INDIRA AWAAS YOJANA (IAY)

IAY aims to provide dwelling units, free of cost, to the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and freed bonded laborers', and the non-SC/ST BPL families in rural areas. It is funded on a cost-sharing basis in the rates of 75.25 between the Centre and the States. Under IAY, the ceiling on construction assistance is Rs.25, 000/- per unit in the plains and Rs.27, 500/- for hilly/difficult areas; and Rs. 12,500/- on up gradation of unserviceable kutcha house to pucca/semi pucca house for all areas. Up to January 30, 2006, about 138 lakh houses had been constructed/up-graded with an expenditure of Rs.25, 208 crore.

(C) SWARNJAYANTI GRAM SWAROZGAR YOJANA (SGSY)

It launched in April, 1999 after restructuring Integrated Rural Development Programme and allied schemes, is the only self-employment programme for the rural poor. The objective is to bring the self-employed above the poverty line by providing them income-generating assets through bank credit and Government subsidy. Up to November 2005, the Centre and States, sharing the costs on 75:25 basis, had allocated Rs.8, 067 crore, of which Rs. 6,980 crore had been utilized to assist 62.75 lakh self-employed.

(D) SAMPOORNA GRAMEEN ROZGAR YOJANA (SGRY)

SGRY, launched on September 25, 2001 to provide additional wage employment in the rural areas, has a cash and food grains component, and the Centre bears 75 per cent and 100 per cent of the cost of the two with the balance borne by the States/UTs. In 2004-05, 82.23 crore person days were generated with the Centre releasing Rs. 4,496 crore as cash component and about 50 lakh tonnes of food grains to the States/UTs. Besides, under the special component of the SGRY, with the States/UTs meeting the cash components, Centre released 26 lakh tonnes of food grains to the 13 calamity affected States. In 2005-06 up to november,2005, the number of person days generated under SGRY was 48.75 crore, while the Centre's contributions in terms of the cash and food grains components up to January, 2006 were Rs. 4651 crore and 35 lakh tonnes, respectively. Under the special component, about 11.65 lakh tonnes of food grains have been released to the 11 calamity-hit States in the current year.

(E) NATIONAL FOOD FOR WORK PROGRAMME (NFFWP)

The NFFWP was launched as a CSS in November 2004 in the 150 most backward districts to generate additional supplementary wage employment with food security. States receive food grains under NFFWP free of cost. Focus of the programme is on works relating to water conservation, drought proofing (including afforestation /tree plantation), land development, flood-control/protection (including drainage in waterlogged areas), and rural connectivity in terms of all-weather roads. In 2004-05, allocation of Rs2, 020 Crore and 20 lakh tonnes of food grains generated 7.85 crore person days of employment. In 2005-06, of the allocation of Rs 4,500 crore and 15 lakh tonnes of food grains (Revised), Rs.2, 219 crore and 11.58 lakh metric tonnes of food grains had been released up to January 27, 2006. About 17.03 lakh person days were generated up to December 2005.(f) DPAP, DDP and IWDP Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) was launched in 1973-74 to tackle the special problems faced by those areas constantly affected by severe drought conditions.

CONCLUSION:

Most of the schemes for the amelioration of the poor get destroyed during the process of implementation. Either they are abandoned or soft -pedaled. Therefore essential that programmers of rural development are not put under the charge of panchayats. The present nexus between the bureaucrat, the landlord-capitalist and the politician can be broken only by the creation of people's development councils.