

Poverty in India - Its Alleviation and Employment Generation Programmes by Government

Roshni Verma¹ and Hemprakash Verma²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Agricultural Economics, Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidyalaya, Raipur

²Research Scholar, Department of Agricultural Extension, Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidyalaya, Raipur

ARTICLE ID: 039

What is Poverty

Poverty is a condition wherein an individual lacks the financial resources & essential conditions for meeting the minimum standard of living. It refers to the condition wherein the economic condition of a person is so low that even the most basic needs are not met.

Introduction

Poverty is a curse for humanity; it is a condition in which people do not have the basic comforts of life such as food, clothes, shelter, etc. The United Nations defines poverty as the denial of options and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means a lack of basic skills to participate effectively in a society.

Different types of poverty

1. Absolute poverty:

When a person does not even obtain the minimum income necessary to sustain their life, they are said to be living in absolute poverty. Maintaining life is measured in terms of minimum nutritional requirements.

2. Relative poverty:

3. When a part of the population is relatively poor, compared to another more affluent part of the population, it is said to be relatively poor.

Poverty in India

According to Rangarajan Committee Report, a person earning Rs.32 per day in a rural area and Rs. 47 per day in an urban area is considered to be below the poverty line. Earlier it was Rs.27 per day for rural area and Rs. 33 per day for the urban area, according to the



Tendulkar committee. After the recommendations of the Rangarajan committee, India's poor increased by 100 million.

The identification of Below Poverty Line (BPL) families is done by the State government. These families are the beneficiaries of government-aided programmes for the poor.

Rural and Urban Disparity

There is a disparity between rural and urban areas, as urban areas have more employment opportunities than rural areas due to the availability of jobs in manufacturing, services, etc. Informal employment is also concentrated in urban areas. Most of the rural people are in the agricultural sector, which is not very profitable due to poor harvests, lack of rain, etc. Because of these problems, people migrate to urban areas for better jobs and livelihoods.

Governmental Initiatives for Poverty Alleviation & Employment Generation in India

For foster economic growth in a country, the government of India has, since independence, taken various measures in the form of initiatives and schemes to alleviate poverty and to generate employment. Some of these initiatives are given below.

Initiatives for Poverty Alleviation

- Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)
- Jawahar Rozgar Yojana/Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana
- Rural Housing – Indira Awaas Yojana
- Food for Work Programme
- National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS)
- Annapurna Scheme
- Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana (SGRY)
- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) 2005
- National Rural Livelihood Mission: Aajeevika (2011)
- National Urban Livelihood Mission
- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana
- Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana

Government Initiatives for Employment Generation in India

The initiatives undertaken by the government of India since independence for employment generation are:

- Nehru Rozgar Yojana
- National Food for Work Programme
- Training of Rural Youth for Self-employment
- National Rural Employment Programme
- Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme
- Jawahar Rozgar Yojana
- Rural Employment Generation Programme
- Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana For Educated Unemployed Youth
- Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana
- Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana
- Sampurna Grameen Rozgar Yojana
- National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
- Employment Assurance Scheme
- Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana
- Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM)
- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)

Governmental schemes in Past Seven years

At recent Since the NDA government came to power, the Government has launched many pro-poor schemes in the past 7 years for the upliftment of the poor. That are-

- **Ayushman Bharat:** World's largest free healthcare scheme Ayushman Bharat is a flagship scheme of the Government of India, which was launched to achieve the vision of Universal Health Coverage (UHC). This initiative has been designed to meet Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its commitment, which is to "leave no one behind." It provides a cover of up to Rs 5 lakhs per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization. Over 10.74 crore poor and vulnerable families (about 53 crore beneficiaries) are eligible for these benefits. The scheme provides cashless and paperless access to services for the beneficiaries at the point of service.
- **Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana Gramin** - Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Gramin was launched to address the housing gaps existing in the rural areas. The houses built



under the PMAYG scheme are low-cost and disaster-resilient. The Government also provides financial assistance to those who are homeless or living in kaccha houses. So far, 1.26 crore houses have already been built across the country under the scheme.

- **Ujjwala scheme and Saubhagya scheme** - Ujjwala scheme aims to benefit 5 crore families especially the women living below the poverty line. By providing free gas connections and electricity connections under the Saubhagya scheme, to crores of poor, now their dependence on wood has greatly reduced. Apart from reducing pollution, it has also helped a lot in improving health and strengthening environmental protection. Under Ujjwala, cash assistance of Rs.1,600 is given to each beneficiary to get a deposit-free new connection. Till now, 80 million poor families have been benefitted by availing free cooking gas connections.
- **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan** : Swachh Bharat Abhiyan or Clean India Mission is a country-wide campaign initiated by the Government of India in 2014 to eliminate open defecation and improve solid waste management. The problem of open defecation and contamination of drinking and bathing water in India prompted the government to take measures to deal with the problem and improve the health conditions of the poor people. Since October 2014, over 9.5 crore toilets have been built all over the country and 564,658 villages have been declared Open Defecation Free (ODF).
- **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana** : Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana was launched in 2014 to ensure comprehensive financial inclusion of all the households in the country by providing universal access to banking facilities with at least one basic bank account to every household for financial literacy, access to credit, insurance, and pension facility. Under this, a person not having a savings account can open an account without the requirement of any minimum balance. 41.94 crore accounts have been opened under Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana.
- **Jal Jeevan Mission** : To improve the lives of people Jal Jeevan Mission has been implemented with speed so that every household has the provision of assured tap water supply by 2024. In this period, in the whole country, about 4.25 Crore households have been provided tap water connections, thus increasing coverage by 22% to presently 7.50 Crore i.e. 39% of the total rural households in the country. This



has also created new employment opportunities in villages boosting the rural economy.

COVID- AID Last year the central government announced a Rs 1.7 lakh crore economic package that aims to provide relief to 80 crore poor, migrant workers, and other Indians who have been economically hurt by the lockdown due to the coronavirus outbreak. These 80 crore people, including farmers, migrant laborers, construction workers, women, the specially-abled, and the old, are covered under various existing schemes of the central government. Though Programmes of the previous government like MGNREGA represent a quiet revolution in India's poverty alleviation strategy. But, there is no denying the fact that removal of poverty is the biggest challenge in India and these social protection programmes in India have helped reduce poverty significantly in these past 7 years.

Analysis

- After analysing the poverty alleviation programmes, we see that these have not benefitted the poor in terms of increase in income.
- Public Distribution System is plagued with seepage, corruption, high administrative cost and targeting errors.
- Wage employment programme is caught in red-tapism and administrative delays leading to poor utilization of the allocated funds.
- Compared to the magnitude of poverty, the amount of resources allocated for these programmes is not sufficient.
- These programmes are mainly implemented by government and bank officials. Since such officials are inadequately trained, corrupt and vulnerable to the pressure of the local elite, the resources are inefficiently used and wasted. There is also non-participation of local institutions in implementing these programmes.
- Government policies have also failed to recognize a vast majority of vulnerable people living on or just above the poverty line.
- Successful implementation of any programme is not possible without the active participation of the poor.

Present Scenario

People living in extreme poverty are the most affected by the pandemic, which is exacerbating their already limited access to food, clean water, steady income, public services



and reducing their ability to practice social distancing. Before COVID-19, the poor already faced a range of issues inhibiting their economic advancement.

According to recent World Bank estimates, the pandemic is causing a major economic shock that could unravel decades of progress on poverty alleviation and push more than 80 million into extreme poverty. It is difficult to implement many poverty alleviation programmes during the pandemic. For example, Mid-day meal scheme cannot be implemented due to lockdown. Many poor households depended on this scheme to feed their children.

Conclusion

Poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon which goes beyond the realms of lack of adequate income. It is viewed as a state of social, economic and political deprivation of people that excludes them to participate as equals in the development process. Poverty alleviation programmes have helped many poor in our country. For those, who are able to move out of poverty, progress is often temporary. Economic shocks, food insecurity and climate change threaten their gains and may force them back into poverty. Programmes should be modified time-to-time to meet the requirements of the situation. With government and individual efforts, poverty can be reduced on a large scale.

References:

- H. W. Bullamore, “Three types of poverty in metropolitan Indianapolis,” *Geographical Review*, vol. 64, Indiabudget 2020-21
- <https://newsonair.com/2021/06/07/know-various-poverty-alleviation-schemes-launched-by-the-government-of-india/>
- <https://www.careerlauncher.com/poverty-alleviation-employment-generation/>
- <https://www.legalbites.in/poverty-alleviation-programmes>