

Do you think that present methodology of poverty estimation is appropriate?

Ans: The present methodology of poverty estimation does not look appropriate. It takes one economic factor only. According to this methodology, a person is considered poor if his or her income or consumption level falls below a given minimum level necessary to fulfil basic needs. Poverty has many dimensions. A few persons may have been able to feed themselves but if they are without education, without shelter, without health-care, without job security, without self-confidence, without social equality, they are considered poor. So estimation of poverty using poverty line is not appropriate.

Describe poverty trends in India since 1973?

Ans: There has been a substantial decline in the poverty ratios in India from about 55 per cent in 1973 to 36 per cent in 1993 and further came down to about 26 percent in 2000. Although the number of poor remained stable around 320 million for a fairly long period. However, as per the latest estimates, the number of poor has shown a significant decline to about 260 million.

Rural and urban poor: The poverty trends also indicate that the problem of poverty is a much bigger in the rural areas than it is in the urban areas. As the greater part of the Indian population resides in the villages, the greater number of the poor also resides in the villages.

Vulnerable groups: Among the various social and economic groups, the scheduled tribes, the scheduled castes, the rural agricultural labourers and the urban casual labourers turn out to be the groups most vulnerable to poverty.

Poor states: There has been a decline in poverty in every state but, the success rate of reducing poverty has varied from state to state. In 20 states and union territories, the poverty ratio is less than the national average of 26. Among these, Orrisa and Bihar continued to be the two poorest states. On the other hand, states like Kerala, Gujarat and Punjab have shown a significant decline in poverty.

Discuss the major reasons for poverty in India.

Ans: The major reasons for poverty in India are-

- I. **Colonial Rule:** under the British colonial administration India went through a long phase of low economic development. The policies of the colonial government ruined traditional handicrafts and discouraged development of industries like textiles.

- II. **High growth of Population:** The rapid growth of population, particularly among the poor, is considered one of the major causes behind Indian poverty. Poor people are illiterate they are either ignorant of birth control measures or not convinced of the need of birth control. Moreover, they consider male child as an asset, that is, as a source of income and a source of security during old age.
- III. **Low Rate of Economic Development:** The actual rate of growth in India has always been below the required level. This has resulted in less job opportunities. This was accompanied by a high growth rate of population.
- IV. **Unemployment:** Another important factor that is responsible for the incidence of high poverty in India is the high rate of unemployment. The job seekers are increasing at a higher rate than the increase in the employment opportunities.
- V. **Unequal Distribution of Wealth:** Although national income of India has been increasing, it was not properly distributed among different sections of the society. A large proportion of increased income has been pocketed by a few rich.
- VI. **Socio-cultural factors:** Various socio-cultural factors like caste and gender discrimination and social exclusion have contributed to the wider the poverty.

Identify the social and economic groups which are most vulnerable to poverty in India.

Ans: The proportion of people below poverty line is not the same for all social groups and economic categories in India. The social and economic groups which are most vulnerable to poverty are shown below-

Social Groups Vulnerable to Poverty-

- Scheduled caste households.
- Scheduled tribe households.

Economic Groups Vulnerable to Poverty-

- Rural agricultural labour households.
- Urban casual labour households.

The poverty ratios for each of these groups are higher than the average Indian poverty ratio.

Give an account of interstate disparities of poverty in India.

Ans. The proportion of poor is not the same in every state. Though there has been a decline in poverty in every state from the early 1970's, the success rate of reducing poverty has varied from state to state. In 20 states and union territories, the poverty ratio is less than the national

average of 26. In others, the poverty ratios are higher than the national average. Among these, Orrisa and Bihar continue to be the two poorest states with poverty ratios of 47 and 43 per cent respectively. Both rural and urban poverty are quite high in these states. On the other hand, states like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Kerala, Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir and West Bengal have shown a significant decline in poverty. Public distribution of food grains, focus on human resource development, high agricultural development and land reform measures are some of the factors responsible for the decline in poverty in these states.

Describe global poverty trends.

Ans. There has been substantial decline in global poverty. However, it is marked with great regional differences. Poverty has declined more in China and South-East Asian countries. Due to the rapid economic growth and massive investment in human resource development.

The proportion of people in developing countries living on less than \$1.90 per day has fallen from 35 per cent in 1990 to 10 per cent in 2013. There has been a substantial reduction in global poverty since the 1980's. On the other hand, in South Asian countries (India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan), the decline has been rapid from 54 to 15 percent. In Latin America, the ratio of poverty has also declined from 16 % in 1990 to 5.4 % in 2013.

Describe current government strategy of poverty alleviation?

Ans. The current anti-poverty strategy of the government has a two-lined approach.

1. Promotion of economic growth. Economic growth widens opportunities and provides resources needed to invest in human development. Also, so that the poor can take advantage of this economic growth, the government has formulated several anti-poverty schemes to affect poverty directly or indirectly.

2. Targeted anti-poverty programmes. Some of the anti-poverty programmes undertaken by government at present are- Prime Minister Rozgar Yojana, Rural Employment Generation Programme, Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana, Antyodaya Anna Yojana, National Food for Work Programme, National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, and proposals for establishing National and State Employment Guarantee Funds.

However, despite the good intentions of these schemes, the benefits have not fully reached the deserving poor. Hence, the major emphasis in recent years has been on proper monitoring of all the poverty alleviation programmes.

What do you understand by human poverty?

Ans. Human poverty is a concept that goes beyond the limited view of poverty as lack of income. It refers to the denial of political, social and economic opportunities to an individual to maintain a “reasonable” standard of living. Illiteracy, lack of job opportunities, lack of access to proper healthcare and sanitation, caste and gender discrimination, etc., are all components of human poverty.

Who are the poorest of the poor?

Ans. Women, female infants and elderly people are the poorest of the poor. Within a poor family, such individuals suffer more than the others. They are systematically denied equal access to the resources available to the family.

What are the main features of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005?

Ans. Main features of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005:

- a) The Act assures 100 days employment every year to every household to ensure livelihood security in rural areas.
- b) Initially covering 200 districts, the Act is extended on to cover 685 districts.
- c) One-third of the jobs are reserved for women.