

Ethics and Values Digital Assignment 2

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POVERTY

POVERTY IN INDIA

Poverty is a widespread condition in India. Since Independence, poverty is a prevalent concern. It is the twenty-first century and poverty still is a persistent menace in the country. More than 29.8% of the population of 1.35 billion still lives below the poverty line. It is though interesting to note that the poverty levels have dropped over the past decade but efforts need to be followed vigorously in order to completely blur the lines between the haves and have-nots. The health of a nation is also determined by the standards of living that are enjoyed by its people apart from the national income and the Gross Domestic Product. Poverty thus becomes a huge blot on the development of any nation.

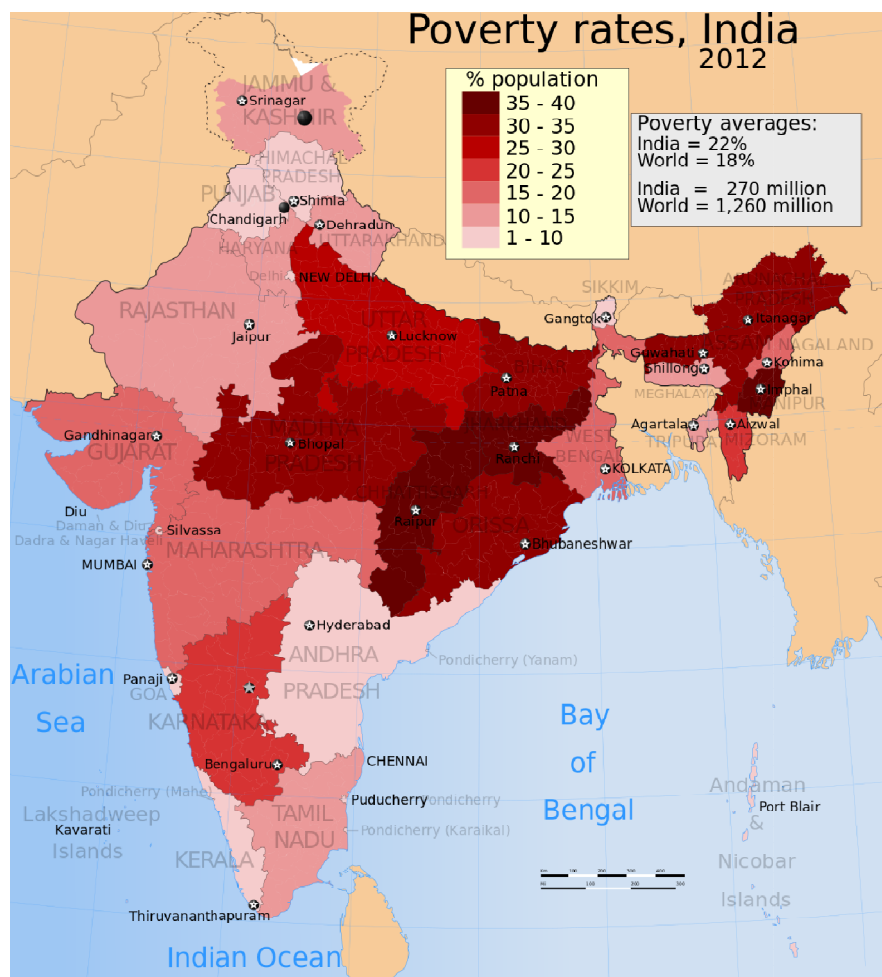


Fig: The poverty distribution in India.

WHAT IS POVERTY

Poverty can be defined as a condition wherein a person is unable to fulfill the basic necessities for the sustenance of life. These basic necessities include- food, clothing and shelter. Poverty is a condition which drives out the essence of a decent standard of living for the people? Poverty becomes a vicious trap which gradually ends up entailing all the members of a family. Extreme poverty eventually leads to death. Poverty in India is defined keeping in mind all the dimensions of economy, semi-economy and the definitions which are devised according to international conventions. India judges poverty levels on the basis of both consumption and income. Consumption is measured on account of the money that is spent by a household on essential goods and income is calculated according to the income earned by a particular household. Another important concept that needs to be mentioned here is the concept of the poverty line. This poverty line acts as a benchmark for the measurement of poverty in India vis- a-vis other nations. A poverty line can be defined as the estimated minimum level of income that a family needs to be able to secure the basic necessities of life. As of 2014, the poverty line is set at Rs 32 per day in rural areas and Rs 47 in towns and cities.



Fig: The mother is sitting with her starving children and the other image shows a crying boy whose eyes are tired of crying.

CAUSES OF POVERTY IN INDIA

According to the international economist Ragnar Nurske, “a country is poor because it is poor” pointing towards the unfortunate reality that poverty is a vicious trap. This trap consists of the low level of savings which reduce the scope of investments which then leads to a low level of income.

A major reason of the existing poverty in India is the weather condition of the country. The non-conducive climate reduces the capacities of people to work in the farms. Floods, famines, earthquake and cyclones disrupt the production. Population is another factor which contributes to the menace. Population growth reduces the per capita income.

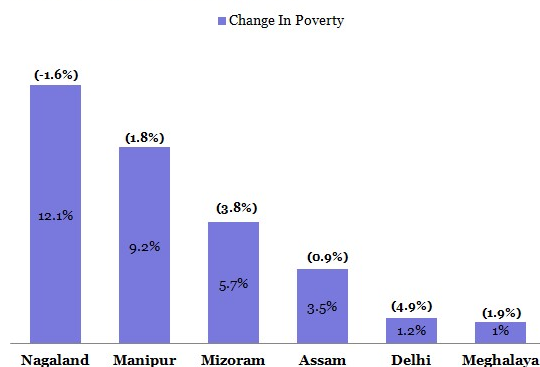
Further, larger the size of a family, lower is the per capita income. Unequal distribution of land and assets is another problem which deters the concentration of lands in the hands of the farmers equally. The figures show the causes of poverty :-



IMPACT OF POVERTY

It needs to be taken into account that although the economy has shown some visible signs of progress in the last two decades, this progress been uneven across various sectors or areas. The growth rates are higher in Gujarat and Delhi as compared to Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Nearly half of the population doesn't have proper shelter, access to a decent sanitation system, villages do not have a nearby water source, and villages also do not have a secondary school and lack of proper roads. Some sections of the society like the Dalits are not even included in the poverty list maintained by the concerned authorities assigned by the government. They're groups that are marginalized in the society. Figures are showing the impacts:-

States With Increase In Poverty & GDP Growth Rates: 2004-05 To 2009-10



(%) Figures Are GDP Figures
Source: Planning Commission, CSO, Orbis Economics Estimates



GOVERNMENT SCHEMES TO ERADICATE POVERTY

Government efforts to alleviate poverty in India cannot be overlooked while discussing poverty. It needs to be brought to the forefront that whatever marginal drops that has been observed in the poverty ratios have taken place due to the government initiatives aimed at uplifting people from poverty. Though, a lot still needs to be done as far as the corruption levels are concerned.

PDS— the PDS distributes subsidized food and non-food items to the poor. Major commodities distributed include staple food grains, such as wheat, rice, sugar, and kerosene, through a network of public distribution shops established in several states across the country. But, the grains provided by the PDS are not enough to satisfy the consumption needs of a family. Under PDS scheme, each family below the poverty line is eligible for 35 kg of rice or wheat every month, while a household above the poverty line is entitled to 15 kg of food grain on a monthly basis. Being the most important system, the system is not without its flaws. Leakages and diversions of grains from the PDS are high. Only 41% of the grains released by the government reach the poor. The alternative against the PDS that has been suggested is that of a cash transfer along with food support, but this will not fulfill the need of the buffer food stocks.



Fig: The symbol and distribution of food to poor.

MNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act)–

This aim guarantees the right to work and ensure livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Employment generation under this act has been higher as compared to other schemes.



RSBY (Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana)- This is a health insurance for the poor. It provides for cashless insurance for hospitalization in public as well as private hospitals. Every below poverty line family holding a yellow ration card pays 30 rupees registration fee to get a biometric-enabled smart card containing their fingerprints and photographs.



CONCLUSION

Most of the schemes are clouded with implementation challenges. Programs are plagued by leakages on subsidies that limit its impact on the poor. These programs need to be centralized under one organization so that leakages can be prevented at multiple levels.

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THANK YOU