

L–15: Development and Poverty Alleviation



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Lesson – 15

Development and Poverty Alleviation

Learning outcomes: At the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- LO 1. Explain the concept of 'development' and related terms in the national context.
- LO 2. Describe the role of technical teachers with regard to 'development'
- LO 3. Distinguish the terms poverty and related terms.
- LO 4. Describe the roles of technical teachers in poverty alleviation.

Contents

1.0	INTRODUCTION	4
2.0	UNDERSTANDING THE TERM 'DEVELOPMENT'	4
2.1	Economic Indicators (Change in Real GDP)	5
2.2	National Income as an Index of Development	6
2.3	Per Capita Income as an Index of Development	6
2.4	Human Development Index (HDI)	6
3.0	UNDERSTANDING POVERTY	7
3.1	Poverty Concept	7
3.2	Poverty Definitions	7
3.3	Poverty Measurement	8
3.4	Human Poverty Index (HPI)	9
3.6	Poverty Line	10
3.7	Absolute Poverty	10
3.8	Relative Poverty	10
3.9	Rural Poverty	11
3.10	Urban Poverty	11
4.0	NEED OF (SUSTAINABLE) DEVELOPMENT FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION	12
4.1	From MDGs to SDGs	12
5.0	SUMMARY	14
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	14

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

During the industrialization process, the phenomenon of poverty in developing countries and its relationship to the development process has been the subject matter of intense study. Two decades ago, in the year 2001, 189 countries unanimously approved the Millennium Declaration, culminated in eight *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs). Till 2015, these MDGs were endorsed by United Nations as the international framework for planning and monitoring progress on poverty alleviation. These have been primary objectives of international development efforts and have been adopted in the policy statements and declarations of many developing countries. This lesson intends to build a basic understanding of the *development* and *poverty alleviation* relationship for MDGs and *sustainable development goals* (SDGs) allowing students to develop a deeper understanding. Comparing the measurement techniques of poverty and development would enable the technical teachers to discuss and address the issues and implications at institute, state and national levels. This lesson will help you to understand various aspects of 'development' and poverty alleviation.

2.0 UNDERSTANDING THE TERM 'DEVELOPMENT'

Development means 'improvement in country's economic and social conditions'. The term development has multitude of meanings and is complex, at times contested, or have different meanings and to some an elusive concept. Development is a process in which economic growth, progress in environmental conditions and positive changes in social and demographic components takes place. In other words, development can be defined as bringing about social change that allows people to achieve their human potential. It is to create wealth and improve quality of life of the population in a manner to create or expand avenues for local income and employment opportunities without damaging the natural resources.

Conventionally, development has been classified into first, second, third world countries and at different development status, various countries occupy different positions in this 'development continuum'. The countries have been grouped as global north/south and also grouped at different stages of development like BRICS, The Americas and so on. Through the years, 'development' has been looked from different lenses and researchers have come out with a number of definitions and emphases for the term.

Amartya Sen, the Nobel Laureate, looked development from 'capability approach' and defines it as a tool enabling people to reach the highest level of their ability, through granting freedom of action in terms of economic, social and other factors. Using this approach, development is measured by the HDI (Human Development Index). This was developed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in 90s and development was defined as a process of economic

and social advancement in terms of quality of human life. UN has standardized its measurement in terms of culture, wealth, education, healthcare, opportunities and termed it as HDI- human development index. It measures based on 3 factors viz. life expectancy, literacy/education, and standard of living. To measure the standard of living, per capita gross domestic product (GDP) is used. GDP is value of goods and services divided by the number of people in the country.

The 'development' continuum involves natural environment and is considered as conversion of natural resources into cultural resources. As it is known, the basic function of economy is to use and convert natural resource into goods and services useful to humans. In this conversion process some waste is also generated. This results in various forms of pollution into the environment as the process is not totally efficient. Hence, in economic activity, environment functions as a source as well as a sink. With growth of economic activities more and more goods and services are produced. It is generally assumed that these goods and services provide humans with higher standard of living. This approach of development aims to increase the size of the economy by way of increasing the output of goods and services produced, which inevitably would require rawer material and energy and will generate more waste impacting the environment. To assess the extent to which a country has developed may be assessed by considering a range of narrow and broad indicators, including per capita income, life expectancy, education, and the extent of poverty.

2.1 Economic Indicators (Change in Real GDP)

The economic development is measured by Gross National Product (GNP) per capita. There are many possible measures of development of a country viz.: income per head, the percentage of resources unexploited, capital per head, saving per head and amount of social capital. However, increase in national income, per capita real incomes are commonly used criteria of economic development along with comparative concept, standard of living and economic welfare of the society.

The national income is commonly measured as Gross domestic product (GDP). It is the value of expenditures on final goods and services at market prices produced by domestic factors of production (labor, capital, materials) during a year. The 'Gross' implies that no deduction for the reduction in the stock of plant and equipment due to wear and tear has been applied to the measurements and survey-based estimates.

'Domestic' broadly means that the GDP includes only production by factors located within a country. GDP also includes the production and income of foreigners and foreign-owned property in the home country and excludes the production and incomes of the non-residents and their property located abroad.

'Product' refers to the measurement of output at final prices or of the market value of factors (inclusive of taxes less subsidies) used in their production and only newly produced goods are counted in GDP. Sales of used goods and sales from inventories of goods produced in prior years are excluded, but the services of dealers, agents, and brokers in implementing these transactions are included.

2.2 National Income as an Index of Development

National income is the total market value of production of an economy during a year. It can be measured alternatively and equivalently in three ways:

- i. Value of expenditures method
- ii. Value of inputs used in production method
- iii. Sum of value added at each level of production method.

Various economists have shown preference for the national income as index of development where in the *net national product* (NNP) is preferred to *gross national product* (GNP), as it better depicts the progress of a nation.

2.3 Per Capita Income as an Index of Development

Per capita national product is the most widely used measure of the level of national economic development. Per capita income estimates are drawn from dividing the 'national income' by size of population. This measure is used to assess sector's average income and compare the wealth of different populations and often used to measure standard of living in a nation. It is useful as it is easily calculable from readily available national income statistics and population estimates, and produces a useful statistic for comparison of wealth between different countries and for calculating the human development index.

2.4 Human Development Index (HDI)

The Human Development Index (HDI) (United Nations Development Programme, 1994) is a comprehensive measure of socio-economic development. *To compare the level of development of different nations HDI approach is most commonly used as the GDP and per capita income approaches are narrower indicator of economic development and fail to indicate other aspects of development.* HDI is a summary measure of average achievement in three key dimensions of human development and a composite index of these social indicator:

- a) Longevity (life expectancy),
- b) Educational Attainment (adult literacy) and
- c) Decent standard of living.

HDI value of a country is calculated by taking three indicators *Longevity*, *Educational attainment* and *decent standard of living* and considers real GDP per capita. However, it ignores some indicators of human development such as infant mortality, nutrition and such others. The HDI has two main features:

- A scale from 0 (no development) to 1 (complete development).
- An index, which is based on three equally weighted components:
 - i. Longevity, measured by life expectancy at birth
 - ii. Knowledge, measured by adult literacy and number of years children are enrolled at school
 - iii. Standard of living, measured by real GDP per capita at purchasing power parity

HDI ranges from 0.897 in high human development countries, while for low human development countries it is 0.436. India has moved up to 130th position from 189 rank in year 2018. India's HDI value for 2017 was 0.640 (UN, 2018). The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) comprehensively analyses the comparative status of socio-economic development in different countries and publishes the annual assessment in the form of Human Development Reports.

3.0 UNDERSTANDING POVERTY

Poverty is a state of an individual, a family or a society where people are unable to fulfill even their basic necessities of life. Poverty is a social phenomenon in which, necessities of a large section of the population are not fulfilled. It exists across nations. When a substantial segment of a society is deprived of the minimum level of quality of living and continues to be a bare subsistence level, that society is said to be plagued with mass poverty (Rao, 2005). The problem of poverty and unemployment is considered as the biggest challenge to development planning of a nation and India is no exception. High poverty levels are synonymous with poor quality of life, deprivation, malnutrition, illiteracy and low human resource development. In view of this, to design effective policies, programmes and strategies to avert poverty in a given country or region, it is important to look at its characteristics.

3.1 Poverty Concept

The concept of poverty is multi-dimensional and covers not only the levels of income and consumption, but also levels of health and education, elements of vulnerability and risk, and marginalization and exclusion of the poor from the mainstream. The lower levels of income which restricts a family from attaining the basic necessities of life, including a minimum of food, clothing, shelter and water are associated with income poverty. Non-income poverty elements include deprivation in relation to health, education, sanitation and others. The poverty concept has two dimensions viz. relative and absolute, one measures the affordability and the other is about relative deprivation. These are discussed in the following section.

3.2 Poverty Definitions

Poverty is easier to recognize than to define and compare. Generally, poverty is defined with reference to certain basic amenities such as food, shelter or floor space per person and medical care, etc. When a family lacks a certain proportion of basic amenities, it is considered poor, regardless of income. The definition is broad enough to cover a miser who denies himself

basic amenities even though he has the ability to purchase these, and a family who has zero income but manages to fulfill the basic needs by borrowing, reducing saving, or living on the charity of friends and relatives.

Poverty is defined as a lack of income to acquire minimum necessities of life; per capita income, per capita consumption expenditure, per capita calorie intake and availability of the size of land holding, are the main indicators of poverty in different definitions (Sinha & Sen, 2000). Poverty has been defined in various ways using different standards.

Definitions by United Nations (Gordon, 2005) and The World Bank, (2001)

UNITED NATIONS

“Fundamentally, poverty is denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe to family, not having a school or clinic to go to not having the land on which to grow one’s food or a job to earn one’s living, and not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living in marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation.”

WORLD BANK

“Poverty is pronounced as deprivation in well-being, and comprises many dimensions. It includes low incomes and the inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity. Poverty also encompasses low levels of health and education, poor access to clean water and sanitation, inadequate physical security, lack of voice and insufficient capacity and opportunity to better one’s life”

3.3 Poverty Measurement

The poverty measure is a statistical function which implies the comparison of the indicators of household well-being and the chosen poverty line into one aggregate number for a population. Here population can be considered as a whole or as a population sub-group. Many methods of measurements exist, but broadly following three approaches of poverty measurement are used (The World Bank, 2002):

- a) *Headcount index*: the percentage of the population living in households with a consumption per capita less than the poverty line, i.e. share of population living below poverty line and is also known as *incidence of poverty*.

- b) *Poverty gap index*: the mean distance below the poverty line expressed as a proportion of that line, where the mean is formed over the entire population, counting the non-poor as having zero poverty gap, i.e. how far off households are from the poverty line and known as *depth of poverty*.
- c) *Squared poverty gap index*: it is similar to poverty gap index except that it is the mean of the squared proportionate poverty gaps, such that the resulting measure penalizes inequality amongst the poor, i.e. it takes into account the distance separating poor from the poverty line and also the inequality amongst them.

3.4 Human Poverty Index (HPI)

The United Nations Development has created a measurement system based on what is lacking in different areas of the world known as 'Human Poverty Index'. First launched in 1990, to complement the Human Development Index, United Nations uses Human Poverty Index to signify the standard of living in a specific country. It measures the deprivation levels experienced by people in different countries. It encapsulates the factors such as short life expectancy, low literacy rates and overall living conditions. Recently, a new poverty index HPI-2 has been introduced to measures poverty in industrial countries. This has been done to better reflect socio-economic differences and also addressing widely different measures of deprivation in two groups of countries. Since 2007, the HPI is derived separately for developing countries (HPI-1) and a group of select high-income Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries (HPI-2).

3.5 2018 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (2018 MPI)

Addressing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the 2018 MPI (Initiative, 2018) is estimated for poverty eradication that goes beyond the economic deprivation and measures acute multi-dimensional deprivations in 105 countries covering 77 percent of the global population. Looking beyond the economic parameters of income the MPI measures how people experience poverty in multiple and simultaneous ways. In this method dimensions of poverty identifies how people are being left behind in terms of health, education and standard of living and is assessed on ten weighted indicators:

- i. Nutrition,
- ii. Child mortality,
- iii. Years of schooling,
- iv. School attendance,
- v. Cooking Fuel,
- vi. Sanitation,
- vii. Drinking Water,
- viii. Electricity,
- ix. Housing
- x. Assets.

People who experience deprivation in at least one third of these weighted indicators fall into the category of multi-dimensionally poor.

3.6 Poverty Line

In estimation of poverty, generally the concept of the '*poverty line*' is used. A common method used to measure poverty is based on the income or consumption levels. A person is considered poor if his or her income or consumption level falls below a given 'minimum level' necessary to fulfill basic needs. What is necessary to satisfy basic needs is different at different times and in different countries. Therefore, poverty line may vary with time and place. Each country uses an imaginary line that is considered appropriate for its existing level of development and its accepted minimum social norms. In the early 1950s, about 85% of the poor lived in rural areas and depended on the rural economy for sustenance. It is thus not surprising to find that it was rural growth that largely determined the magnitude of poverty reduction in the country. This is borne out by a decomposition analysis of the total decline in poverty into three components representing the contributions of:

- a) rural growth
- b) urban growth
- c) a distributional component representing changes in inequality and the shift of population from rural to urban areas.

3.7 Absolute Poverty

Absolute poverty, is measured in terms of the ability of the population to afford a minimum standard of living typically specified as a minimum level of per capita consumption or income for the household and the level varies from country to country depending on their economic conditions. And absolute poverty line is fixed in terms of the standard indicator being used and fixed over the entire domain of the poverty comparison. It is useful for analyzing impacts of anti-poverty policies over time of a scheme or a project (for example, micro-credit) on poverty (Haughton & Shahidur, 2009). Estimating absolute poverty line, absolute standard minimum physical quantities of agriculture produce used like cereals, pulses, milk, butter etc. are determined for a sustenance level and then those physical quantities are converted using price quotient into monetary terms (Datt, 2008).

3.8 Relative Poverty

Relative poverty is described as 'relative deprivation' because the people in this category are not living in total poverty but are not able to get the same standard of life as everyone else in the country. It views poverty as socially defined and dependent on social context, hence relative poverty is a measure of income inequality. Usually, relative poverty is measured as the percentage of population with income less than some fixed proportion of median income. According to the relative standard, income distribution of the population in different fractile groups is estimated and a comparison of the levels of living of the top 5 to 10 percent with the bottom 5 to 10 percent of the population reflects the relative standards of poverty. There

exists a lacuna in this approach, it indicates the relative position of different segments of the population in the income hierarchy. Even in affluent societies, such pockets of poverty exist, but for underdeveloped countries, the existence of mass poverty that is alarming (Datt, 2008).

3.9 Rural Poverty

Poverty found in rural areas is considered as rural poverty. This includes the factors of rural society, rural economy and rural political systems. India being agrarian in nature, maximum population lives in rural areas. The rural poverty is a major concern in India. Many poverty studies deal mostly with rural areas as the vast majority of poor are in African and Asian region and live in rural settlements. These studies have tried to look at the reasons for rural poverty and amongst the various reasons, the main reasons identified are;

- a) Rapid population growth
- b) Lack of capital
- c) Excessive population pressure on agriculture
- d) Illiteracy
- e) Regional disparities
- f) Lack of alternate employment opportunities other than agriculture
- g) Lack of proper implementation of public distribution system.
- h) Indifferent attitude towards investment

In India, rural poverty largely emanates from the semi-feudal relations of production in the agriculture. It is attributed to rapid population growth that puts pressure on the limited land base which leads to fall in real per capita income of labour and rural economy get crippled by decline of labour productivity and employment as well as by the increases in food prices.

3.10 Urban Poverty

In last decade the global urban population has increased many folds. As per the recent UN estimates nearly 48% of global population now lives in urban areas and the rapid growth in city dwellers are developing countries including India. The number of towns and the absolute urban population in India has risen during the last six decades. More than 25% of India's population now lives in urban settlements implying that poverty are no more a rural phenomenon in India.

Urban poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. The challenges faced by urban poor in their daily life are many and are of many dimensions. The majority of them face the problems of limited access to employment opportunities and gainful income, inadequacy of housing and services and insecurity. The prevalence of violent and unhealthy environments and little or no social protection mechanisms, including limited access to adequate health and education opportunities are ever growing for urban poor. Therefore, urban poverty is not only collection of characteristics but also ever evolving and changing conditions of vulnerability and susceptibility to risk (Baker, 2008).

4.0 NEED OF (SUSTAINABLE) DEVELOPMENT FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Poverty is a major cause and effect of global environmental problems as stated in the influential Brundtland Commission in a sentence that captures widely held beliefs: *Poor people are often seen as compelled to exploit their surrounding for short-term survival and are assumed to be the ones most exposed to natural resources degradation*. With economic development poverty alleviation became focal point of international development policies and initiatives. In 1990, the World Development Report published with the title 'Poverty' and in the same year the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its Human Development Report emphasized on poverty reduction by way of access to social services like health and education. The poverty alleviation and development remain a daunting task as even in Rio+20 Conference (UNCSD) 2012 reported as *'Eradicating poverty is the greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. In this regard we are committed to freeing humanity from poverty and hunger as a matter of urgency'* (UN, 2012). The report highlighted the approach to sustainable development by promoting policy measures of;

- a) promoting sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth
- b) creating greater opportunities for all
- c) reducing inequalities
- d) raising basic standards of living
- e) fostering equitable social development and inclusion
- f) promoting integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems.

These measures focus on ecosystem conservation, regeneration and restoration and resilience in the face of new and emerging challenges. In developing countries, the poverty alleviation programmes have been add-on measures of the development plan for overall economic growth. The international development investments have largely focused on rural development in developing countries. The development landscape is being addressed with emphasis on creation of infrastructure and the basic amenities of electricity, water, sewerage and sanitation etc. continues to be the major problems of the poor. In the global development agendas of sustainable development goals, the developmental priorities of poor are crucial for poverty alleviation.

4.1 From MDGs to SDGs

In September 2000, at the UN Millennium Summit, the UN General Assembly adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The Declaration, which called for a global partnership to reduce extreme poverty, was the first ever global strategy with quantifiable targets to be agreed upon by all UN member states and the world's leading development institutions. To support the Declaration, former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan established eight accompanying objectives. These objectives (listed below in Table 1) were set with a deadline of 2015 and became known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Nations, 2011).

Table 1: Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

1.	Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2.	Achieve universal primary education
3.	Promote gender equality and empower women
4.	Reduce child mortality
5.	Improve maternal health
6.	Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7.	Ensure environmental sustainability
8.	Develop a global partnership for development

In the post-2015 development agenda, overcoming the MDGs focus, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were uniformly made applicable to all countries of the world. And while there are similarities in regard to the format of the MDGs and the SDGs – e.g. each framed the international development agenda for a 15-year period. The SDGs focuses on a global development with an understanding that the environment is not an add-on and is not against sustainable development. SDGs were structured as foundations of all goals. This resulted in the SDGs included new themes which reflect an approach that sees the environment, economy and society as embedded systems rather than separate competing ‘pillars’ in comparison to the MDGs which maintained a retrospectively narrow focus on poverty reduction. In the SDGs, the urban areas, water and sanitation, energy, and climate change are all prominent. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development consists of 17 SDGs (SDGs, 2015) listed below in Table 2.

Table 2: The 17 Sustainable Development Goals

1.	End poverty in all its forms everywhere
2.	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture
3.	Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages
4.	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
5.	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6.	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7.	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
8.	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all
9.	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation
10.	Reduce inequality within and among countries
11.	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (noting agreements made by the UNFCCC forum)
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

To achieve the economic betterment of the poorer sections, it is important to augment the social transformation involving structural changes, educational development, growth in awareness, and change in out-look, motivation and attitudes. As mentioned in the roadmap for SDGs “all of the SDGs have targets directly related to the responsibilities of local and regional governments’. However, the SDGs are not legally binding, governments are expected to establish national frameworks to achieve the goals.

5.0 SUMMARY

It is clear from the above discussions that sustainable development and poverty alleviation are interdependent. Development is must for poverty alleviation. However, if development is not sustainable then in the long run, it will lead to increased poverty rather than poverty alleviation. For example, depletion of resources will lead to increase in scarcity and cost of products and services which will affect the lower income group people leading to increase in poverty. Similarly, poor people striving for survival will try to use, whatever resources are in their reach, for example cutting trees for fuel or defecating in open. This will lead to environmental degradation. Thus, sustainable development is required for poverty alleviation and poverty alleviation is required for sustainable development. The close scrutiny of above 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reveals that most of these goals have element of poverty alleviation by making development more inclusive (in terms of gender, age, race and geographical regions). Thus, it may be concluded that sustainable development and poverty alleviation have synergic relationship and are inter-building and inter-dependent.

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DISCUSSION FORUM

- a) Discuss influence of economic growth on poverty alleviation.
- b) 'Growth becomes more pro-poor' Comment and supplement your opinion.
- c) Discuss the role of rural and urban economic growth on poverty reduction.
- d) Evaluate growth influence in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy contributed to poverty alleviation.
- e) Analyse the role of different poverty lines for different countries.