A Sociological Study of Causes and Remedies of Poverty in India

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ABSTRACT

India is a country with great economic potential, yet its citizens continue to struggle with poverty and inequality. Despite the country's impressive economic growth in recent years, poverty and inequality remain pervasive and deeply ingrained issues that affect millions of people. The root causes of poverty in India are complex, but they are also solvable. This blog post aims to explore some of the underlying factors that contribute to poverty in India and suggest ways to break the cycle of poverty. By addressing these root causes head-on, we can work towards creating a more equitable and prosperous India for all. From education and healthcare to infrastructure and governance.

Keywords: Poverty, India, population, Socio-economic, Inequality

DEFINITIONS OF POVERTY

Poverty is the state of not having enough material possessions or income for a person basic need. Poverty may include social, economic, and political elements. Absolute poverty is the complete lack of the means necessary to meet basic personal needs, such as food, clothing, and shelter. There are several definitions of poverty, and scholars disagree as to which definition is appropriate for India. According to the World Bank, India accounted for the world's largest number of poor people in 2012 using revised methodology to measure poverty, reflecting its massive population. However, in terms of percentage, it scored somewhat lower than other countries holding large poor populations.[37] In July 2018, World Poverty Clock, a Vienna-based think tank, reported that a minimal 5.3% or 70.6 million Indians lived in extreme poverty compared to 44% or 87 million Nigerians.

As with many countries, poverty was historically defined and estimated in India using a sustenance food standard. This methodology has been revised. India's current official poverty rates are based on its Planning Commission's data derived from so-called Tendulkar methodology. It defines poverty not in terms of annual income, but in terms of consumption or spending per individual over a certain period for a basket of essential goods. Furthermore, this methodology sets different poverty lines for rural and urban areas. Since 2007, India has set its official threshold at ₹ 26 a day ($0.43) in rural areas and about ₹ 32 per day ($0.53) in urban areas. While these numbers are lower than the World Bank's $1.25 per day income-based definition, the definition is similar to China's US$0.65 per day official poverty line in 2008.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:
1) To understand the The issue of poverty in India .
2) To know about the role of socio-economic inequality inperpetuating poverty.
3) To study the Gender and Caste-wise poverty in india.
4) To study the Government policies

METHODOLOGY

This is an analytical study, used secondary relevant data from other Books, Research articles, Publications. to analyze the Indian poverty problem and Government policies.

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE ISSUE OF POVERTY IN INDIA

India, a land of vast diversity and rich cultural heritage, is also home to a significant number of people living in poverty. The issue of poverty in India is multifaceted, deeply rooted, and has far-reaching consequences for both individuals and society as a whole. It is a problem that requires urgent attention and comprehensive solutions.

With a population of over 1.3 billion, India is home to a staggering number of people living below the poverty line. According to recent statistics, more than 20% of the population, or approximately 270 million people, are struggling to meet their basic needs. This alarming figure highlights the urgent need to address the root causes of poverty and work towards sustainable solutions.

One of the key factors contributing to the prevalence of poverty in India is the lack of access to quality education. Education is often seen as a crucial pathway out of poverty, as it equips individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to secure better employment opportunities. However, in many impoverished communities, educational resources are scarce, schools are underfunded, and dropout rates are high. This perpetuates the cycle of poverty, as generations of families are unable to break free from its grip.

Another significant factor is the unequal distribution of wealth and resources. India's rapid economic growth has led to a significant divide between the rich and the poor. The concentration of wealth in the hands of a few exacerbates the issue of poverty, as marginalized communities are left without access to essential services, such as healthcare, clean water, and sanitation. This further deepens the disparities and hinders social mobility.

Furthermore, the issue of poverty in India is closely intertwined with various social and cultural factors. Discrimination based on caste, gender, and ethnicity often leads to marginalization and exclusion from economic opportunities. Women and children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of poverty, facing higher rates of illiteracy, malnutrition, and limited access to healthcare.

Addressing the root causes of poverty in India requires a comprehensive approach that encompasses economic, social, and political dimensions. It involves investing in education and skill development, promoting equitable distribution of resources, and empowering marginalized communities. Additionally, it requires creating an enabling environment that promotes inclusivity, equality, and social justice.

In this study, delve deeper into the various aspects of poverty in India and explore potential solutions that can break the cycle of poverty.

2. UNDERSTANDING THE ROOT CAUSES OF POVERTY IN INDIA

To effectively address the issue of poverty in India, it is crucial to understand its root causes. Poverty is a complex challenge with multifaceted causes that extend beyond just income levels. By delving deeper into these underlying factors, we can develop targeted strategies that bring about lasting change. One of the primary causes of poverty in India is the lack of access to quality education. Limited educational opportunities perpetuate a cycle of poverty, as individuals are unable to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to secure better-paying jobs. This not only affects individuals but also hinders the overall development and progress of the nation.

Unemployment and underemployment also contribute significantly to poverty rates in India. The lack of job opportunities, particularly in rural areas, forces many individuals to settle for low-paying jobs with limited prospects for growth. This perpetuates a cycle of poverty, as individuals struggle to meet their basic needs and are unable to invest in their own development.

Furthermore, inadequate healthcare infrastructure and limited access to healthcare services exacerbate the challenges faced by impoverished communities. Illnesses and medical emergencies can push families further into poverty, as they are burdened with exorbitant medical expenses and are unable to afford necessary treatments.

Another crucial factor to consider is the prevalence of social inequality and discrimination. Marginalized communities, such as Dalits and tribal populations, face disproportionate levels of poverty due to social exclusion and limited access to resources and opportunities. Addressing these systemic barriers is essential for creating a more equitable society and breaking the cycle of poverty.

Finally, agricultural dependency and vulnerability to natural disasters also contribute to poverty rates in India. A significant portion of the population relies on agriculture for their livelihoods, but factors like unpredictable weather patterns, lack of irrigation facilities, and inadequate market access pose substantial challenges. These factors often lead to income instability and food insecurity, trapping individuals and communities in a cycle of poverty.

Understanding these root causes of poverty in India is the first step towards implementing effective solutions. By addressing issues such as education, employment, healthcare, social inequality, and agricultural development, we can work towards breaking the cycle of poverty and creating a brighter future for all Indians. It requires a comprehensive and holistic approach, involving government initiatives, community empowerment, and collaboration between various stakeholders to bring about sustainable change and uplift the lives of millions.

3. THE ROLE OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC INEQUALITY INPERPETUATING POVERTY:

Socio-economic inequality plays a significant role in perpetuating poverty in India. The vast disparities between the rich and the poor create a cycle that is difficult to break. In a country where a small fraction of the population holds a large portion of the wealth, it is not surprising that poverty persists.

At the heart of this issue is the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities. Limited access to quality education, healthcare, and basic services further marginalizes those already living in poverty. The lack of adequate infrastructure and social support systems in impoverished areas further exacerbates the problem.

Furthermore, the income gap between different social classes widens the divide, making it challenging for those in poverty to escape their circumstances. Limited access to credit, job

opportunities, and entrepreneurial support further hinders their ability to break free from the cycle of poverty.Addressing socio-economic inequality requires a multi-faceted approach. It involves implementing policies that promote equitable distribution of resources and opportunities. This can be done through progressive taxation, targeted social welfare programs, and investments in education and skill development.Additionally, promoting inclusive economic growth is crucial. Encouraging entrepreneurship, creating job opportunities, and fostering a supportive business environment can empower individuals and communities to lift themselves out of poverty.

POVERTY: 2011–2012 PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE BY CASTE
Findings below are based on a survey conducted during 2011–12. Total population of India then: 1,276,267,631
Caste-wise population distribution:

Caste	% of total population	No. of People
FC	28.0%	357M
OBC	44.1%	563M
SC	19.0%	242M
ST	8.9%	114M
Total	100%	1276M

Poverty In India Based On Castes.

Caste	% of Poverty (intra-caste)	No. of People	% of Poverty in total population
FC	12.5%	44.6M	3.5%
OBC	20.7%	116.5M	9.1%
SC	29.4%	71.2M	5.8%
ST	43.0%	49.0M	3.8%
Total	-	281M	22%

From the above 2 tables, we could derive the following to see if the distribution of poverty follows as that of the total population

Caste	% Of Total Population	Poverty % Over Poverty Population
FC	28.0%	15.9%
OBC	44.1%	41.4%
SC	19.0%	25.3%

ST	8.9%	17.4%

Poverty in India based on Social and Religious Classes: The Sachar Committee looked at the Poverty by Social and Religious Classes.

Social and Religious Class	Percentage of Living in Poverty
Urban Hindus	20.4%
Urban Hindu General	8.3%
Urban Hindu OBC	25.1%
Urban Hindu SC/ST	36.4%
Urban Muslims	38.4%
Urban Other Minorities	12.2%
Rural Hindus	22.6%
Rural Hindu General	9.0%
Rural Hindu OBC	19.5%
Rural Hindu SC/ST	34.8%
Rural Muslims	26.9%
Rural Other Minorities	14.3%

4. LACK OF ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION AND ITS IMPACT ON POVERTY

Lack of access to quality education has long been identified as one of the key factors contributing to the cycle of poverty in India. It is an issue that affects millions of children and young adults across the country, particularly in rural and marginalized communities.

Education is not just about acquiring knowledge and skills; it is a fundamental tool for social and economic empowerment. It opens doors to better opportunities, higher-paying jobs, and improved living conditions. However, the lack of access to quality education perpetuates the cycle of poverty, making it difficult for individuals to break free from its grip.

Addressing the root causes of poverty in India requires a holistic approach that prioritizes access to quality education for all. This includes investing in infrastructure and resources for schools in

marginalized areas, recruiting and training qualified teachers, and revising curricula to ensure relevance and inclusivity.

In conclusion, the lack of access to quality education plays a significant role in perpetuating poverty in India. It is imperative that concerted efforts are made to address this issue and provide equal opportunities for all individuals, irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds. Only through investing in education can we hope to break the cycle of poverty and pave the way for a brighter and more prosperous future for India.

5. UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT AS CONTRIBUTORS TO POVERTY:

Unemployment and underemployment are two significant factors that contribute to the cycle of poverty in India. The lack of job opportunities and the inadequate availability of decent work options trap individuals and families in a state of economic vulnerability.Underemployment is another critical issue that perpetuates poverty. Many individuals in India are engaged in low-paying and informal sector jobs that do not offer job security, benefits, or fair wages. These individuals often work long hours under exploitative conditions, barely earning enough to meet their basic needs. This type of underemployment prevents individuals from escaping poverty as they are unable to save, invest, or improve their living standards.

Addressing unemployment and underemployment requires a multifaceted approach. It involves creating more job opportunities through promoting entrepreneurship, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, and attracting investments in sectors that have the potential to generate employment.Policy interventions focused on labor market reforms, social protection programs, and inclusive economic growth are also essential. These measures can help address the structural barriers that perpetuate unemployment and underemployment, such as lack of access to credit, inadequate infrastructure, and discriminatory practices.

Breaking the cycle of poverty in India requires a comprehensive and holistic approach that tackles the root causes, including the pressing issues of unemployment and underemployment. By creating an enabling environment for job creation, providing quality education and skills training, and implementing supportive policies, India can empower its population and pave the way for sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction.

6. GENDER INEQUALITY AND ITS EFFECT ON POVERTY RATES:

Gender inequality is a pervasive issue that significantly contributes to the cycle of poverty in India. Despite progress in various sectors, women in India continue to face numerous challenges that limit their economic opportunities and perpetuate poverty.

Limited access to education is another critical aspect of gender inequality in India. Many girls are denied the right to education, forcing them into early marriages or child labor. Without education, women are unable to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to participate fully in the economy, perpetuating their vulnerability to poverty.

Furthermore, gender-based violence and discrimination further exacerbate the poverty rates among women in India. The fear of violence or social stigma prevents many women from seeking employment or pursuing entrepreneurial ventures, trapping them in a cycle of poverty.Addressing gender inequality requires a multi-faceted approach that includes policy reforms, awareness campaigns, and empowering women economically. Implementing and enforcing laws that protect women's rights,

promote gender equality, and provide equal opportunities for education and employment are crucial steps towards breaking the cycle of poverty.Empowering women through skill development programs, entrepreneurship training, and access to financial resources can help overcome the barriers they face in the workforce. It is also essential to challenge societal norms and promote cultural shifts that value gender equality, ensuring that women have equal opportunities to participate and contribute to India's economic growth.

7. GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND THEIR IMPACT ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Government policies play a crucial role in addressing and alleviating poverty in India. The impact of these policies can be far-reaching and have the potential to break the cycle of poverty for many individuals and communities.One of the key areas where government policies have made a significant impact is in the provision of social welfare programs. These programs aim to provide essential services and support to the most vulnerable populations, including access to healthcare, education, housing, and food security. By ensuring that these basic needs are met, the government is able to create a safety net for those living in poverty and provide them with opportunities for upward mobility.

Another important aspect of government policies is their focus on economic development and job creation. By implementing strategies that promote entrepreneurship, investment, and innovation, the government can stimulate economic growth and create employment opportunities. This, in turn, helps to reduce poverty by providing individuals with the means to earn a sustainable income and improve their standard of living.

In conclusion, government policies play a crucial role in addressing the root causes of poverty in India. By focusing on social welfare, economic development, and income inequality, the government can create an enabling environment where individuals and communities can break free from the cycle of poverty and achieve sustainable development.

8. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR EFFORTS TO ADDRESS POVERTY IN INDIA

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a crucial role in addressing poverty in India. One such NGO is "Hope for Change," which focuses on providing education and vocational training to underprivileged children and young adults. Another notable organization is "Empower Women," which is dedicated to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in India. Recognizing the significant impact that women can have on poverty eradication, this NGO works towards creating a supportive environment where women can thrive economically, socially, and politically.

These NGOs, among many others, play a vital role in addressing the root causes of poverty in India. They work in collaboration with local communities, government agencies, and other stakeholders to implement sustainable solutions that address the multifaceted nature of poverty.

9. SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVES AND MODELS FOR POVERTY ERADICATION:

In the fight against poverty, it is crucial to highlight successful initiatives and models that have effectively addressed the root causes of poverty in India. These initiatives not only provide inspiration but also serve as practical examples for policymakers, organizations, and individuals who are committed to making a difference.One such successful initiative is the Self-Help Group (SHG) movement, which

has gained significant traction across the country. Another successful model is the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), which focuses on creating sustainable livelihood opportunities for the rural poor. Through a multi-pronged approach that includes skill development, access to credit, and market linkages, the NRLM has helped millions of individuals break free from the cycle of poverty. By providing training and support, this initiative has enabled individuals to start their own businesses, improve their income, and enhance their overall well-being.

Furthermore, innovative social enterprises have emerged as powerful agents of change in addressing poverty. These enterprises leverage market-based approaches to tackle social issues and create sustainable impact. For instance, organizations like SELCO Foundation have pioneered the use of solar energy to bring electricity to remote rural areas, thereby improving living conditions and creating opportunities for economic growth.

Additionally, government-led programs like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) have played a significant role in providing employment opportunities to the rural poor. By guaranteeing a minimum number of days of employment, this program has been instrumental in reducing poverty and enhancing rural infrastructure.

These successful initiatives and models demonstrate that poverty eradication is not an insurmountable challenge. By implementing comprehensive strategies, fostering collaboration between stakeholders, and prioritizing the needs of the most vulnerable, India can continue to make significant strides in addressing the root causes of poverty and creating a more inclusive society.

RESERVE BANK OF INDIA ANNUAL REPORT

In its annual report of 2012, the Reserve Bank of India named the state of Goa as having the least poverty of 5.09% while the national average stood at 21.92%. The table below presents the poverty statistics for rural, urban and combined percentage below poverty line (BPL) for each State or Union Territory. The highest poverty statistics for each category column is coloured light red and the lowest poverty statistics for each category column is coloured light Blue in the table below.

Hidestate Or Union Territory	No. Of Persons (Thousands) Rural	% Of Persons (Rural) Below Poverty Line	Poverty Line (Rs)/Month (Rural)	No. Of Persons (Thousands) Urban	% Of Persons (Urban) Below Poverty Line	Poverty Line (Rs)/Month (Urban)	No. Of Persons (Thousands) Combined	% Of Persons (Combined) Below Poverty Line
Andhra Pradesh	6180	10.96	860.00	1698	5.81	1009.00	7878	9.20
Arunachal Pradesh	425	38.93	930.00	66	20.33	1060.00	491	34.67
Assam	9206	33.89	828.00	921	30.49	1008.00	10127	31.98
Bihar	32040	34.06	778.00	3775	31.23	923.00	35815	33.74
Chhattisgarh	8890	44.61	738.00	1522	24.75	849.00	10411	39.93

Goa	37	6.81	1090.00	38	4.09	1134.00	75	5.09
Gujarat	7535	21.50	932.00	2688	10.14	1152.00	10223	16.63
Haryana	1942	11.64	1015.00	941	10.28	1169.00	2883	11.16
Himachal Pradesh	529	8.48	913.00	30	4.33	1064.00	559	8.06
Jammu & Kashmir	1073	11.54	891.00	253	7.20	988.00	1327	10.35
Jharkhand	10409	40.84	748.00	2024	24.83	974.00	12433	36.96
Karnataka	9280	24.53	902.00	3696	15.25	1089.00	12976	20.91
Kerala	1548	9.14	1018.00	846	4.97	987.00	2395	7.05
Madhya Pradesh	19095	35.74	771.00	4310	21.00	897.00	23406	31.65
Maharashtra	15056	24.22	967.00	4736	9.12	1126.00	19792	17.35
Manipur	745	38.80	1118.00	278	32.59	1170.00	1022	36.89
Meghalaya	304	12.53	888.00	57	9.26	1154.00	361	11.87
Mizoram	191	35.43	1066.00	37	6.36	1155.00	227	20.40
Nagaland	276	19.93	1270.00	100	16.48	1302.00	376	18.88
Odisha	12614	35.69	695.00	1239	17.29	861.00	13853	32.59
Punjab	1335	7.66	1054.00	982	9.24	1155.00	2318	8.26
Rajasthan	8419	16.05	905.00	1873	10.69	1002.00	10292	14.72
Sikkim	45	9.85	930.00	6	3.66	1226.00	51	8.19
Tamil Nadu	5923	15.83	880.00	2340	6.54	937.00	8263	11.28
Tripura	449	16.53	798.00	75	7.42	920.00	524	14.05
Uttar Pradesh	47935	30.40	768.00	11884	26.06	941.00	59819	29.43
Uttarakhand	825	11.62	880.00	335	10.48	1082.00	1160	11.26
West Bengal	14114	22.52	783.00	4383	14.66	981.00	18498	19.98
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	4	1.57	–	0	0.00	–	4	1.00
Chandigarh	0	0.00	–	234	22.31	–	235	21.81
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	115	62.59	–	28	15.38	–	143	39.31
Daman and Diu	0	0.00	–	26	12.62	–	26	9.86

Delhi	50	12.92	1145.00	1646	9.84	1134.00	1696	9.91
Lakshadweep	0	0.00	–	2	3.44	–	2	2.77
Puducherry	69	17.06	1301.00	55	6.30	1309.00	124	9.69
India	216658	25.70	816.00	53125	13.70	1000.00	269783	21.92

According to this revised World Bank methodology, India had 179.6 million people below the new poverty line, India, in other words, while having 17.5% of total world's population, had 20.6% share of world's poor. The Rangarajan Committee set up to look into the poverty line estimation in India submitted its report in June 2014. It amended the calculation of the poverty line based on per capita consumption expenditure per month or day given by the Tendulkar Committee. The new poverty threshold for rural areas was fixed at Rs 972 per month or Rs 32 per day. For urban areas, it was fixed at Rs 1407 per month or Rs 47 per day. Under this methodology, the population below the poverty line in 2009–2010 was 454 million (38.2% of the population) and that in 2011–2012 was 363 million (29.5% of the population).

From November 2017, the World Bank started reporting poverty rates for all countries using two new international poverty lines: a "lower middle-income" line set at $3.20 per day and an "upper middle-income" line set at $5.50 per day. India falls in the lower middle-income category. Using the $3.20 per day poverty line, the percentage of the population living in poverty in India (2011) was 60%.

10. THE IMPORTANCE OF A MULTI-FACETED APPROACH TO BREAKING THE CYCLE OF POVERTY IN INDIA

Addressing the root causes of poverty in India requires a multi-faceted approach that tackles the issue from various angles. Poverty is a complex problem that cannot be solved through a single solution or intervention.

Firstly, economic empowerment plays a crucial role in breaking the cycle of poverty. This involves creating opportunities for job creation and entrepreneurship, especially in rural areas where poverty is most prevalent. Access to microfinance, vocational training, and skill development programs can empower individuals to lift themselves out of poverty by starting their own businesses or finding stable employment.

Secondly, education plays a pivotal role in addressing poverty. Quality education equips individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to secure better employment opportunities, thereby increasing their earning potential. Investing in education at all levels, from primary to tertiary, is essential for breaking the cycle of poverty and ensuring long-term sustainable development.

Lastly, addressing the underlying political factors that contribute to poverty is crucial. This involves promoting good governance, transparency, and accountability at all levels of government. By advocating for policies that prioritize poverty alleviation and social welfare, we can create an environment that supports the efforts of individuals and communities to break free from the shackles of poverty.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, breaking the cycle of poverty in India necessitates a multi-faceted approach that encompasses economic empowerment, education, social interventions, and political reforms. By

addressing these interconnected factors, we can create lasting change and pave the way for a brighter and more prosperous future for all.Poverty is a complex issue that requires a multifaceted approach, and understanding the root causes is crucial for implementing effective solutions. By delving into the systemic issues such as lack of education, limited access to healthcare, and unequal distribution of resources, we can start breaking the cycle of poverty and creating a more equitable society. It is our collective responsibility to advocate for change and work towards empowering individuals and communities. Together, we can make a significant impact in the fight against poverty in India.

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