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The Impact Of Public Expenditure On Poverty Alleviation In India

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Abstract

Since independence India is growing by adopting various initiations like five years plans, industrial revolutions, green revolution, new economic policy etc., which lift up India by socially and economically. But still after 75 years of its independence India is categorized as developing country and poverty is still prominent issue which play its despot role in hunger and malnutrition. Public expenditure made by the government on various development activities which results to declining rate of poverty in India but at the same time state wise poverty rate disparity is increasing continuously. Literature reviews found that distinction in public expenditure on development especially lack of invest in infrastructure, education and health among Indian states are the reasons behind this disparity. In this background, the present study is attempted to analyze status and state wise disparity of poverty in India. Further it studies the public expenditure on development expenditure especially on social service and economic activities. This study is purely based on secondary data, which collected by government reports, journal articles and employed average, percentage, coefficient of variation (CV) and GIS (Geographic Information System) to show the state wise disparity and analyzing the data. This study found out that India's poverty rate is declining and at the same time state wise disparity is increasing which is caused by the differentiate in public expenditure on developmental expenditure. It also found that northern states of India are categorized as highly poor states compared to southern states. Therefore, the study recommends that the government should spend money on social overheads and it should release poverty related data to prepare appropriate policy to alleviate poverty.

Keywords: **Public Expenditure, Poverty, Interstate Disparity**

1. Introduction:

India is a developing country which became independent from British role by 1947. From which, it adopted many policies for economic development. Five years plan, industrial revolutions, green revolution, new economic policy etc.are contributes to growth in Indian economy. Public planned expenditure through budgets on various sectors makes this possible. But after 75 years of its independence India is still categorized as developing country. Before 1950, India's GDP was only 3 percent of the world's GDP or Rs. 2.7 lakh crores, which is accounts for 8.5 percent of world's GDP or Rs. 135 lakh crores in 2017. In the same time (before 1950), incidence of poverty in India was 80 percent and it was fallen to about 21.92 percent, but still 228.9 million people are poor in India, which is highest in the world(Nitnaware, 2022). Poverty is still prominent issue in India, especially in rural areas absolute poverty plays its despot role in hunger and malnutrition.

There are many programs that the government spent to eradicate poverty especially by employment programs, building infrastructures, MGNREGS, Integrated rural development program (Fan et al, 1998; Jha et al, 2001). After green revolution (1967-68) and new economic policy (1991), Indian economy takes brisk sector wise growth and open up new investments (including foreign direct investment) resulting into rise real national income and which percolates to the people who stand in ground floor of the economy. But at the same time, due to concentration of economic benefits in only few hands, the inequality emerged and widening as rich and poor. According to annual publication reports by Oxfam (2023) note that, in 2017, 73 percent of the wealth generated went to the richest 1 percent. This shows how India's economic wealth concentrate on only few hands. In this background, the present paper study the present poverty status in India, state wise disparity, the reasons behind this and government expenditure on economic, social and developmental activities are analyzed. Finally concludes with the findings and policy implications.

2. The Concepts of Public Expenditure and Poverty:

Briefly, Public expenditure referred as government spending for social welfare of its citizen. In other words, it helps the government to achieve its objectives of promoting economic growth, reducing poverty and improving the standard of living for its citizens. It also serves to stabilize the economy during times of pessimistic environment in the economy by providing a boost to demand through increased government spending. According to Keynes, public expenditure can serve as an important tool for increasing aggregate demand and promote economic growth during times of recession or slowdown. This is achieved by increasing government spending on goods and services, which in turn stimulates demand and helps to create jobs. In the context of developing countries like India, public expenditure is also seen as a means of promoting equity and reducing poverty. By investing in education, health and social welfare programs, the government can help to improve the standard of living for its citizens, especially those who are most in need.

Poverty is a multidimensional concept that refers to a lack of access to basic amenities such as food, clothing, shelter and healthcare, as well as a lack of participation in the economic, social and political life of a community. Lack of education, unemployment, low income, illness etc. are the reasons as well as results of the impoverishment. To address this, the government has implemented a number of programs and initiatives through spending aimed at reducing poverty and promoting economic growth. Despite these efforts, poverty remains a major challenge. In India, the poverty line (BPL) is determined using both the monetary and the non-monetary approaches. The monetary approach uses the consumption expenditure required to meet the minimum caloric intake (Dandekar and Rath committee, 1971) and other basic needs, while the non-monetary approach focuses on the availability of essential services and facilities such as education, healthcare, and housing. The latest poverty line estimate for rural areas is Rs. 33 per capita per day and Rs. 47 per capita per day for urban areas (2011-12 prices).

3. Review of Literature:

Many literatures reviewed on this topic regarding poverty, government expenditure on poverty alleviation programs and inequality of poverty distribution and the reasons behind this. Here some instances on this;

Sasmal and Sasmal (2016) examine the impact of public expenditure on economic growth and poverty alleviation in developing countries like India. Government poverty alleviative schemes may fail due o lack of good governance, lack of proper targeting and problems in implementing such schemes. this paper finds out that government expenditure on infrastructure development will contribute more to increase per capita income and reduce poverty. **Tripathi and Yenneti** (2019) measures multidimensional poverty index (MPI) by considering standard of living, education and income as indicators which found that poverty is declined about 50 percent since 2004-05 to 2011-12, especially rural poverty reduces than urban. Lack of education, income and standard of living are the main contributors to the poverty. State level analysis shows more than half of northern states in India have higher poverty head count ratio.

Thakur et al (2021) evaluate poverty alleviation program in India by saying that since independence India has made huge economic growth but still one third of people are in below poverty line, which is due to basic need of safe drinking water sanitation, food security, health infrastructure etc. further lack of these amenities makes people vulnerable to diseases and loss productive capacity. In this situation, government of India implemented many employment generation programmes. It concludes that implementation of these programs may not reach some of the corner mob in this massive BPL population. **Shukla and Mishra** (2013) studied employment generation and poverty alleviation in developing countries, which discusses several factors that affect employment opportunities in developing countries, with a focus on India. These include corruption, the gap between policy and implementation, political rivalry, illiteracy, and reservation/quota systems, these are hinder factors to alleviate poverty in developing countries like India.

4. Objective and Methodology:

Many articles throw light on poverty alleviation programs and performance to achieve their intended objectives and measures poverty line and define it in various dimensions and there are few studies focused on region wise or state wise disparity in poverty status in terms of socio-economic conditions (for instance, Datt and Ravallion, 1996). In this background, the present study wants to analyze status and state wise disparity of poverty in India. Further it studies the public expenditure on development expenditure especially on social service and economic activities which helps to reduce poverty (Yesudian, 2007).

For this purpose, this study used secondary data by various government reports, journal articles to seek status of poverty and its spread among states. On the other hand, this study employed simple statistical tools like average, percentage, coefficient of variation (CV) and GIS (Geographic Information System) to show the state wise disparity and analyzing the data.

5. Discussion:

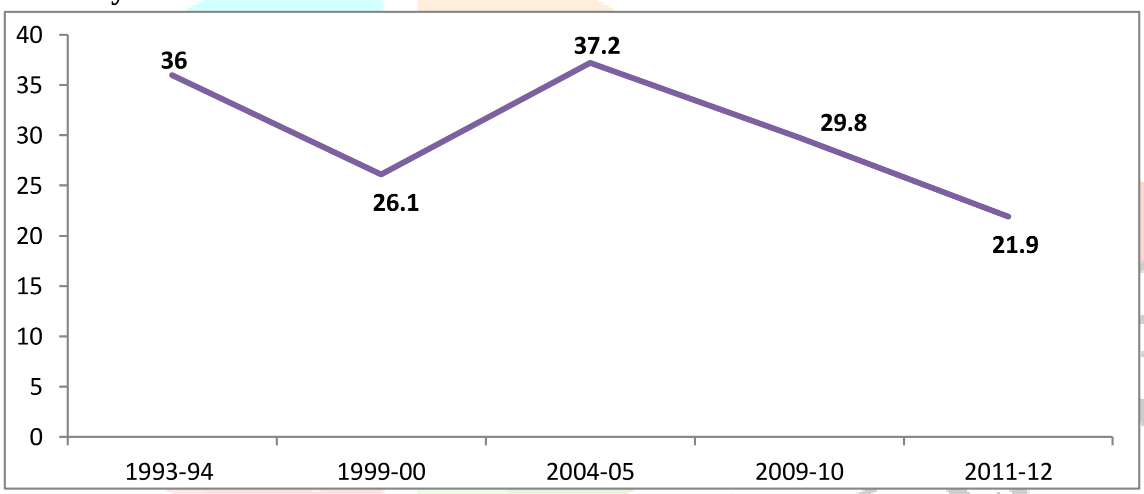
Poverty is a major issue which affects millions of people in the country. In India, poverty is not just limited to financial scarcity, but also encompasses a lack of access to basic services such as education, healthcare, and sanitation. The root causes of poverty are complex and interrelated, including low levels of education and job skills, limited access to credit and capital, and widespread discrimination and inequality. The country has a large population of low-wage workers and informal sector laborers, who lack job security and access to social safety nets. Additionally, corruption, bureaucratic inefficiencies and limited government resources also contribute to poverty in India.

Despite India's status as one of the world's fastest-growing major economies, the country continues to struggle with high levels of poverty and inequality. According to the World Bank, 27.5 percent of the Indian population lived below the national poverty line in 2020. This figure is still high, despite a decline from the previous decades and highlights the need for continued efforts to address poverty in India.

5.1. Poverty Status in India:

There are many types of measurements of poverty in India including, headcount Ratio (the proportion of people living below the poverty line), poverty gap index (the average distance of the poor from the poverty line), squared Poverty Gap Index (the squared distance of the poor from the poverty line), Foster-Greer-Thorbecke index (which measures poverty based on the headcount ratio, poverty gap index, and squared poverty gap index, and takes into account the severity of poverty), multi-dimensional Poverty Index (this measures poverty in terms of multiple dimensions, such as education, health, and living standards, in addition to income or consumption). in this study we used mixed recall period (MRP) which is used by NSSO (National Sample Survey Office) survey to collect data on household consumption and expenditure. The survey data is then used to estimate poverty rates and the number of people living in poverty in the country.

Figure.1Poverty Rate in India from 1993-94 to 2011-12



Sources: National Sample Survey Organization; and NITI Aayog (Erstwhile Planning Commission).

Figure 1 demonstrates that the poverty rate is declined i.e., from 36 percent (in 1993-94) to 21.9 percent (in 2011-12). Continues efforts made by the government to structural changes in economic activity it has expanded and therefore more job opportunities and increased income levels for many citizens, lifting them out of poverty. Panagariya and More (2013) rightly note that poverty has declined sharply between 1993-94 and 2011-12 with a significant acceleration during the faster-growth period of 2004-05to 2011-12. Additionally, the Indian government has implemented several programs aimed at reducing poverty like MGNREGA (Shukla and Mishra, 2013). Another factor that has contributed to the decline in poverty is improvements in healthcare and education(Fan, 2008). Better access to healthcare has led to improved health outcomes and reduced poverty, while better education has helped to increase people's earning potential and reduce poverty over the long-term.

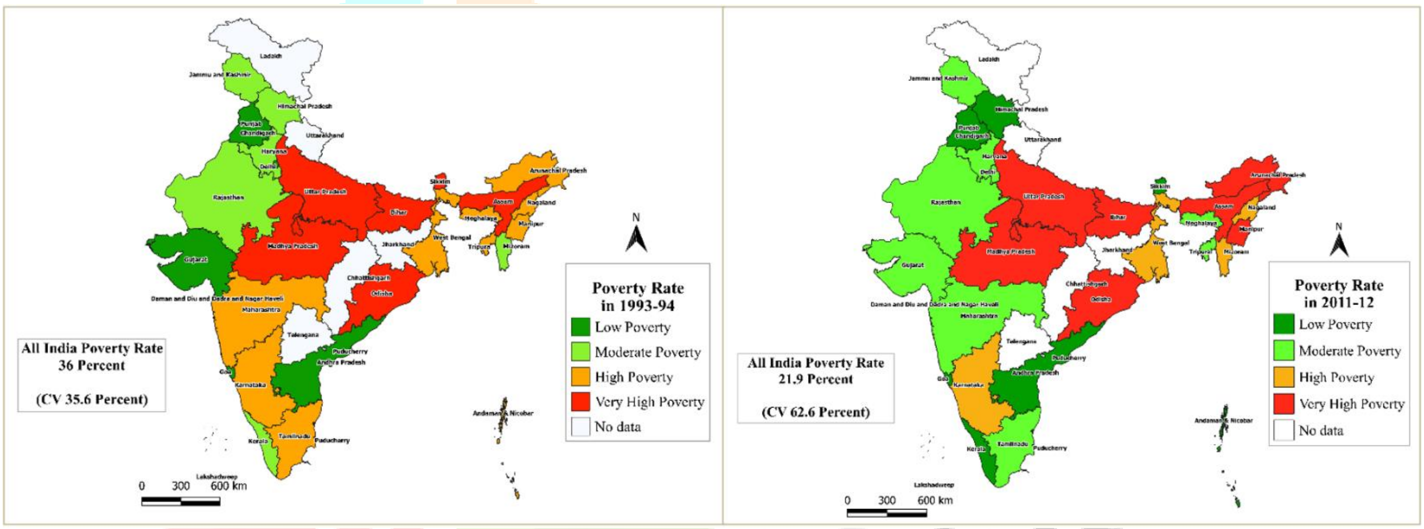
However, it's important to note that while the poverty rate has declined overall, there are still many regions and communities in India where poverty is widespread and persistent. The reason is unequal distribution of national income and local traditional economy (Tripathi and Yenneti, 2019). The Indian government and private sector organizations continue to work towards finding ways to reduce poverty even further.

5.2. State wise Poverty Rates in India:

Poverty in India is not uniform across the country and varies significantly from state to state. Some states have significantly lower poverty rates compared to the national average, while others have higher poverty rates. Understanding the state-wise distribution of poverty is crucial for the effective implementation of poverty reduction programs and policies. There are several factors that contribute to differences in poverty rates across states in India, including economic development, levels of industrialization, availability of job opportunities, distribution of income and access to basic services such as education and healthcare.

Here map 1 expose state wise poverty rates change since 1993-94 to 2011-12. Briefly this map demonstrates that more than fifty percent of north Indian states are fall in very high poverty category, even in the north-east states of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Sikkim and Mizoram are shifts to higher poverty category but only Meghalaya and Tripura are shifts high poverty to moderate poverty category. On the other side, south Indian states especially Kerala and Tamil Nādu states reduced their poverty.

Map 1. State Wise Poverty Rates in India 1993-94 & 2011-12



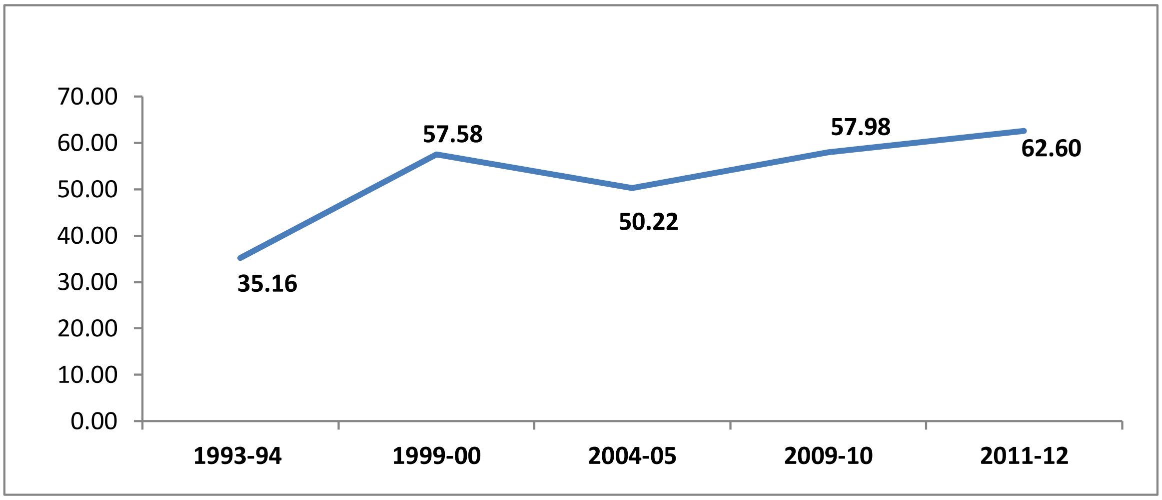
Sources: National Sample Survey Organization; and NITI Aayog (Erstwhile Planning Commission).

This disparity is caused by variation in public expenditure on social welfare programs and education. Some states, such as Kerala and Himachal Pradesh have well-developed social welfare systems and higher levels of human development, leading to lower poverty rates. On the other hand, states like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh have lagged behind in terms of economic and social development, leading to higher poverty rates. Economic development, transforming agriculture to industrialization (Tripathi and Yenneti, 2019), job opportunity, development expenditure etc. are improve economic conditions of the people and uplift them by the poverty.

5.3. Inter State Disparity in Poverty Rate in India:

In India, there is significant inter-state disparity in poverty rates. Despite the overall decline in poverty in recent years, some states still have much higher poverty rates compared to others. For instance, states such as Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Bihar have some of the highest poverty rates in the country, with more than 30 percent of their populations living below the poverty line. On the other hand, states like Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have much lower poverty rates, with less than 10 percent of their populations living in poverty.

Figure 2. Inter State Disparity in Poverty Rate in India CV from 1993-94 to 2011-12



Sources: National Sample Survey Organization; and NITI Aayog (Erstwhile Planning Commission).

Figure 1 explains that the trends of an inter-state disparity in poverty rate in India, which is measured by the CV (coefficient of variation) i.e., jumped by 35.16 percent (in 1993-94) to 62.60 percent (in 2011-12). This trend denotes that although overall poverty is reduced in India, still some states are lag behind in reduce poverty. This disparity is largely due to differences in the levels of economic development, human development and access to basic services such as healthcare, education and infrastructure across the states. Additionally, factors such as population density, migration and government policies also play a role in determining poverty rates in different states. Hence, the poverty is spread across the states of India according to their responses (taking measures to combat) with it.

On the other hand, in almost two decades there are many states improves their responses to combat poverty through various measures, therefore they shift into higher level poverty category into lower level poverty category. At the same time, other states are still fall in the same level of poverty and some other states fall in deep poverty at the same time period.

Table 1. Number And Percentage of States in Poverty Rate in India 1993-94 and 2011-12

Level of Poverty	1993-94		2011-12	
	Numbers	Percent	Numbers	Percent
Very High Poverty	7	21.88	8	25
High Poverty	11	34.38	5	15.63
Moderate Poverty	9	28.13	10	31.25
Low Poverty	5	15.63	9	28.13
Total	32	100	32	100

Sources: National Sample Survey Organization; and NITI Aayog (Erstwhile Planning Commission).

About 25 percent of states fall in very high poverty category in 2011-12 compared to 1993-94, where it was at only 21.88 percent of states fall in it (see the table 1). On the other side, 28.13 percent of states fall in low poverty category by improvement in economically. In the same way, about 31.25 percent of states fall in moderately poor category which is increased by 28.13 percent in 1993-94. Overall, some states are improved continuously by fall in low poverty category and some others poor performance in reduce poverty, so that they fall in very high poverty category.

Table 2. Category wise States fall in Poverty in India in 1993-94 and 2011-12

	Very High Poverty 2011-12	High Poverty 2011-12	Moderate Poverty 2011-12	Low Poverty 2011-12	**Number of States**
Very High Poverty 1993-94	Assam, Bihar, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh.	-	-	Sikkim.	7
High Poverty 1993-94	Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur.	Karnataka, Nagaland, West Bengal.	Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Tamil Nadu, Tripura.	Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Pondicherry.	11
Moderate Poverty 1993-94	-	Mizoram.	Gujarat, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan,	Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Lakshadweep.	9
Low Poverty 1993-94	-	Chandigarh.	Delhi, Daman & Diu.	Goa, Punjab.	5
Number of States	8	5	10	9	**32**

Sources: National Sample Survey Organization; and NITI Aayog (Erstwhile Planning Commission).

We can see here table 2 that which state is fall in deep poverty and which one is out of it. Assam, Bihar, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Madya Pradesh, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh fall in Very high poverty category still after around two decades of 1993-94 to 2011-12. But in the case of Sikkim, which is fall in low poverty category by very high poverty category because of its public expenditure on development and social service expenditure. In the same way, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Pondicherry, Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala and Lakshadweep are shifts their position by higher level of poverty to lower level. On the other hand, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Chandigarh, Delhi and Daman and Diu shows their poor performance in alleviate poverty by shift higher level of poverty category.

There are many causes which affecting to some states being poor and some are rich; education level, employment opportunities, improved industrial sector, less agriculture depended livelihoods, level of capital expenditure etc., are improves people welfare and generate income.

5.4. Public Expenditure on Poverty Reduction (As % to GSDP):

Public expenditure on poverty reduction refers to the government spending aimed at reducing poverty and promoting economic growth among the poorest and most vulnerable communities. This can include spending on programs and services that directly benefit the poor, such as food assistance, housing subsidies, education and health care. The governments continue to invest in various programs like social safety nets, education and job-creation programs to help lift people out of poverty and reduce income inequality.

Here the table 3 shows state wise public expenditure as percentage to their respective GSDP. In 2011-20, Meghalaya, Jammu and Kashmir, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh states spent more than 20 percent of their GSDP on Developmental expenditure, on the other hand, Karnataka, West Bengal, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, Telangana and Delhi are spend less than 10 percent of their GSDP for the same purpose.

Table 3. State wise Public Expenditure on Social and Economic Services (As % to GSDP in 2011-12 constant prices)

	Developmental Expenditure			Social Services Expenditure			Economic Services Expenditure		
Year	**1990-2000**	**2001-2010**	**2011-2020**	**1990-2000**	**2001-2010**	**2011-2020**	**1990-2000**	**2001-2010**	**2011-2020**
Andhra Pradesh	16.9	18.6	15.9	8.4	8.6	8.8	8.5	9.9	7.1
Arunachal Pradesh	43.2	43.1	41.4	14.9	16.2	17.3	28.4	26.9	24.2
Assam	9.7	11.2	13.4	5.7	6.5	8.3	4.0	4.7	5.1
Bihar	16.3	14.2	17.9	9.3	8.2	9.6	6.9	6.1	8.2
Chhattisgarh	-	10.6	15.8	-	5.5	7.9	-	5.1	7.9
Delhi	2.4	4.3	4.4	1.8	3.0	3.1	0.6	1.4	1.2
Goa	16.3	14.0	12.7	8.0	6.2	6.5	8.3	7.7	6.3
Gujarat	10.4	9.8	8.2	4.6	4.9	4.5	5.8	4.9	3.6
Haryana	9.5	9.1	8.9	4.4	4.3	4.7	5.1	4.8	4.2
Himachal Pradesh	17.9	16.0	14.2	9.1	8.9	8.1	8.8	7.0	6.2
Jammu & Kashmir	13.9	22.1	23.6	9.3*	9.6	10.9	10.6*	12.5	12.7
Jharkhand	-	11.2	13.5	-	6.0	6.6	-	5.2	6.8
Karnataka	8.1	8.7	9.7	3.9	4.1	4.8	4.2	4.6	4.9
Kerala	8.0	6.7	7.4	4.8	4.1	4.8	3.2	2.5	2.6
Madhya Pradesh	13.6	12.3	14.6	6.9	5.7	7.5	6.7	6.6	7.1
Maharashtra	7.9	7.6	7.4	3.7	4.1	4.4	4.2	3.5	3.0
Manipur	23.3	26.0	27.6	11.3	12.7	13.2	11.9	13.2	14.4
Meghalaya	18.1	15.8	21.6	9.0	8.2	11.1	9.2	7.6	10.4
Mizoram	4.5	42.2	35.6	0.0	20.7	18.4	-	21.5	17.1
Nagaland	21.7	27.0	26.9	14.2*	12.5	12.5	16.7*	14.5	14.4
Orissa	12.0	9.9	14.6	6.1	5.8	7.4	5.8	4.1	7.2
Puducherry	-	9.1	14.8	-	4.4	8.2	-	4.7	6.6
Punjab	8.3	7.4	7.2	3.8	3.6	3.8	4.5	3.9	3.4
Rajasthan	10.6	10.9	12.5	5.9	6.7	6.8	4.7	4.2	5.8
Sikkim	26.5	36.0	17.1	17.8*	17.8	9.4	20.2*	18.2	7.7
Tamil Nadu	9.0	7.8	8.3	4.9	4.6	4.9	4.1	3.3	3.4
Telangana	-	-	6.3	-	-	3.1	-	-	3.2
Tripura	26.9	21.3	19.3	14.4	12.1	12.1	12.5	9.2	7.1
Uttar Pradesh	8.2	11.2	13.4	4.3	5.4	7.3	3.9	5.8	6.2
Uttarakhand	-	11.2	9.5	-	6.0	5.7	-	5.2	3.8
West Bengal	8.3	7.8	9.6	5.0	5.0	6.4	3.3	2.8	3.2

Source: Computed from various issues of RBI, State Finances: A Study of Budgets.

*Data from 1993-94

- No Data

Social and economic services expenditure by the government refers to the funds allocated by the government to support various welfare programs. This can include spending on areas such as healthcare, education, social security, housing, infrastructure, and public utilities. The expenditure on social and economic services will have a significant impact on reducing inequality and poverty. In this regard it is important to analyze the different state governments spending priority on social and economic services. In connection with this table 3 gives clear picture of different states spending priority of developmental activities that to more specifically on social and economic services in post economic reform period. When all the states of India are considered, it can be observed that Bihar and Andhra Pradesh have spent the most on development as a proportion of their gross domestic product, except for the northeastern states. It can be observed that relatively developed states such as Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu states have given higher priority to economic service expenditure than social service expenditure in their total development expenditure. Expenditure on social services directly contributes to poverty alleviation while expenditure on economic services indirectly helps. Poverty can be controlled by government spending on education, health, social security and housing schemes. But government spending on road, power, banking, irrigation and dams will help control and eradicate poverty. It can be observed in Table 3 that relatively developing states have given less priority to economic services than to social services. Compared to the 1990s and 2000s decade as a whole, most states in the 2010s decade they have spent more on social and economic services as a proportion of their gross domestic product, indicating that current poverty and future poverty alleviation are being prioritized.

Table: 4 Decade wise (1990s, 2000 and 2010s) Inter State Disparity in Public Expenditure on Social and Economic Services in India

Descriptive Statistics	Developmental Expenditure			Social Services Expenditure			Economic Services Expenditure		
	1990-2000	2001-2010	2011-2020	1990-2000	2001-2010	2011-2020	1990-2000	2001-2010	2011-2020
Mean	14.29	15.44	15.27	6.53	7.71	8.00	7.03	7.72	7.26
Standard Deviation	8.70	10.17	8.50	3.64	4.43	3.78	5.58	5.91	4.89
Coefficient of Variation (%)	**60.91**	**65.88**	**55.70**	**55.67**	**57.49**	**47.22**	**79.42**	**76.61**	**67.36**

Source: Computed from Table.3

In the 2000s decade compared to the 1990s decade, the disparity between states in India increased from 60.91 per cent to 65.88 per cent when expenditure on development was considered. It further decreased to 55.70 percent in the 2010s decade (table 4). This gives a picture of the disparity in inter-state development expenditure in the post-economic reform period. The interstate disparity in development spending in recent decades is a matter of little consolation. But the inter-state inequality of 55.70 percent is statistically considered to be very high inequality. It can be observed that there is no change in social service expenditure as compared to the change in development expenditure. But it is noticeable that India's inter-state disparity in social service expenditure is less than inter-state disparity in economic service expenditure. The highest disparity among states is observed when the expenditure on economic services is considered (67.36 per cent in 2010s). This inter-state disparity in expenditure of economic services will make India's future economic growth uneven.

6. Findings, Suggestions and Conclusion:

The important key role that public expenditure play in alleviating poverty in India. Through the various programs government spent huge amount to improve welfare of its citizens, which results into reduce overall poverty in India. But in the same time, poverty rates in different states is varied, especially, northern states of India shows high poverty compared to the southern states. This study finds out that, overall poverty rate in India declines due to continued efforts made by the government but state wise poverty rates shows that more than fifty percent of north Indian states categorized as very high poverty states and which is same in almost two decades. Further, the poverty rate disparity is increases continuously among Indian states. About one fourth of states are categorized as very high poverty states. the study also finds out that the public expenditure on various poverty alleviation programs varied in developing states and developed states, where former states spending less to development as compared to later states. this disparity will increase the disparity as poor states and rich states.

In this background, the study finds that the public expenditure on social overheads namely education and health play key role in reducing poverty, where education and health improve the human capital and potential employability and in the same way it also important to invest in infrastructure facility and self-help-groups (SHGs), which creates employment opportunities. Further, this study also recommends that government should release poverty related data which will helps to policymakers for prepare appropriate measures and region wise concentration to alleviate poverty.

In conclusion, public expenditure can play a crucial role in poverty alleviation in India. The government has implemented various policies and programs aimed at reducing poverty through public expenditure. However, there is still much more that needs to be done in order to ensure that the benefits of these programs reach the intended beneficiaries. One of the main challenges that need to be addressed is the issue of targeting. While many poverty alleviation programs have been implemented, they often fail to reach the poorest and most vulnerable segments of the population. This can be due to a lack of accurate data on poverty and inadequate implementation and monitoring mechanisms. Another challenge is the sustainability of public expenditure. Poverty alleviation programs are often implemented as short-term measures, with limited funding and resources. A more long-term approach to public expenditure on poverty alleviation is necessary in order to achieve sustainable results.

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