



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Social Poverty: Unpacking The Dimensions Of Deprivation And Inequality

^{1st} Shruti Gupta

^{1st} Assistant Professor, UGC-NET

^{1st} Deptt of Economics

N.A.K.P Degree College

Sahabganj, Farrukhabad

(First and Corresponding author)

^{2nd} Mukulika Hitkari

^{2nd} Head, Deptt of Economics

Dayanand Girls PG College

Civil Lines, Kanpur

Abstract

In almost all nations with demographic trends at a low as well as low per capita incomes and income inequality, poverty more specifically the effects of social poverty are certainly a seriously posing challenge to be prioritizing headed to. Poverty is commonly understood as a state of socially perceived deprivation concerning fundamental human needs. These essential subsistence fundamentals encompass adequate nutrition, proper clothing, sufficient shelter, access to healthcare, basic education, and mobility for social engagement and economic participation. This highlights poverty as a multidimensional issue extending beyond mere financial constraints. An attempt has been made in this Paper not merely to delve into and analyze the poverty estimates statistically but be more inductive and macro in approach in dealing with and assessing the causes, situational status and tackling of this grave issue which creates socio-economic divides, gender discrimination, income discrepancies and stagnating progression. In a way of speaking, combating and eradicating this complex problem is no doubt a long run effort. However, timely policies, coordinated approach and actionable process are also an economic imperative.

Keywords: Social Inclusion, Inequality, Livelihood Security, Empowerment, Income Levels

I. Introduction

Really mattering in the true sense of the term, Poverty can be conceptualized as a situation where feeling of discrepancy exists between what one 'has' and 'should have'. The latter case is an internal construct; the fact remains established that the feeling of "powerlessness" and "resourcelessness" is possessed by all people. The following dimensions of poverty have been identified, viz-

Lack of livelihood strategies

Inaccessibility to resources

Human condition of insecurity, despair & frustration

Inability to maintain and develop social relations consequent upon lack of resources.

In analyzing poverty through social, economic, and gender dimensions, three key perspectives are considered: (i) the minimum resources an individual need for basic survival, (ii) existence below a defined subsistence level and the prevailing living standards in a specific time and place, and (iii) the contrast between the well-being of a minority and the deprivation experienced by the majority. The first two perspectives align with the economic concept of absolute poverty, emphasizing basic survival needs. In contrast, the third approach focuses on relative poverty and inequality, highlighting social poverty as a broader issue shaped by disparities in wealth and opportunity within society.

Poverty related aspects set the standards for determining whether incomes and essential living conditions of the poorest in society are justifiably acceptable or not. However, poverty connotes a wider sense since disadvantaged destitute definably cover not just 'low incomes' but also existing Social Exclusion. Hence with a view to impacting the economy, incomes along with socio-economic deprivations be connected in addressing issues of national policy. In a parlance, usage of the severe and chronic term poverty has an all-encompassing situation where people lack several opportunities available to an average citizen. In correlating poverty with ill-health, is aptly stated that poverty and poor health are not accidents - rather a result of political, social and economic decisions. Undeniably, there are still some vulnerable communities struggling for their health rights. It becomes the responsibility of the concerned stakeholders (government, public, organizations, etc.) to confrontingly challenge structures and systems keeping people poor. As also implementation of poverty alleviation measures coupled with significant role of Poverty Action Campaigns at micro levels in order to break this vicious circle for attaining the target of poverty eradication and tackling inequality dimensions.

Incorporating relevance of Social Poverty in studying the root dimensions, three functional gains have been pointed out viz economic, political & social - which middle classes derive from having poverty-group in society. Our social institutions, our economy, low educational attainment, lack of employable skills, long term unemployment or underemployment cause and perpetuate poverty. Therefore, the directional urge manifests perceptibly in changing the social structure, values and norms along with demographic and vested economic interests. An established fact is that Poverty is not an economic abstraction; Rather it is a human condition resulting in grief, pain and despair - thus demanding urgent attention towards its eradication. However, it goes without saying that significant implementational measures are being resorted by the Govt.

Continuingly, social poverty can lead to socio-economic problems that further reinforce a person's perspective on his circumstances. For instance, underemployment develops as a result of ineffective educational resources. Further, with little or no voice in community projects, areas can begin to deteriorate with no infrastructure in place to maintain and restore them. Due to social poverty stemming from a form of social isolation and detachment, it depends on the demographic ability of identifying factors contributing to lacking conditions and efforts directed towards regaining sense of self-sufficiency and autonomy.

Poverty and Social Exclusion

Impacting all age groups, Poverty and Social Exclusion is multi-faceted and combating it requires a multi-policy response on the part of the government and citizens alike. As per the view point of interlinking poverty with social exclusion, it is factually believed that people are living in poverty their income and resources are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living. In developing economies like India where - despite consistent government efforts in tackling this grave human condition problem - inaccessibility to fundamental infrastructural means remains a considerable challenge. As a resultant of inadequacy of income and resources chances persist that people may be excluded and marginalized from decisiveness and participatory role in nation-building. The terms concerning poverty and social exclusion can be used interchangeably: Firstly, Deprivation i.e. unmet basic human needs; Secondly, poverty is deprivation due to lack of lack of resources (income, housing, health, education, knowledge, etc.); Thirdly, Social exclusion is lack/unable to participate in society owing to the above - referring to a broader framework of linked problems e.g. low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments and family related problems; Fourthly, a differential term is of Inequality. Considered more a relative concept (doesn't measure deprivation or poverty nor requires a threshold), Inequality is not necessarily directly proportional to poverty i.e. one can exist with or without the other. Lastly, resources can be personal - within the family or society.

The Poverty and Social Exclusion (PSE) revealed the fact that a wider framework needs to be examined if social relations, labour market and service exclusion are the defining determinants. As a key limitation, the PSE does not directly determine the minimum income required to escape poverty. The Minimum Budget Standards approach addresses this issue by defining a set of essential goods and calculating their cost to establish the minimum budget needed for a basic, poverty-free standard of living.

Poverty in India: Issues and Implications

Poverty remains a significant challenge in India, and various methods have been proposed to measure it. Prior to 2005, the Indian government's official poverty assessment was based on food security, defined by the per capita expenditure required for an individual to consume sufficient calories and afford basic necessities for survival. However, in 2005, the government adopted the Tendulkar methodology, which shifted focus from calorie intake to a broader basket of essential goods, incorporating minimum expenditure benchmarks for rural, urban, and

regional populations. India continues to make determined efforts toward achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (UNMDGs), including eradicating hunger and poverty, ensuring universal primary education, promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, advancing healthcare innovations, financial inclusion initiatives and fostering environmental sustainability.

Causes of poverty can be concisely classified into Economic, Demographic and Social. For understanding the economic causes, we have to understand the difference between the people engaged in work and those not engaged in work. These includes five factors namely, (i) inadequate development, (ii) inflationary pressures, (iii) lack of capital (iv) human capital deficiencies inclusive of lack of skill in workers and (v) unemployment. As per the demographic causes, (i) population growth is considered as the most important factor in poverty. It is therefore indispensable that all efforts should be directed not only towards population control but also conversion of population into an asset. (ii) Poverty is related to health also as a causative factor. (iii) Poverty is demographically correlated increase in family size as well. (iv) The educational level of the people in the country also contributes to poverty. Social causes being the third classification manifests itself in several determinants of poverty. (i) discrimination (ii) prejudices (iii) casteism (iv) communalism and rigid outlook and (v) imbalances based on regionalism - are responsible for affecting employment of opportunities and gross income along with differences in state-wise income levels.

India portrays a considerably and comparatively better picture regarding its Poverty status. The incidence of poverty in rural areas declined significantly from 36.6% in 2015-16 to 21.2% in 2019-2021, while in urban areas, it dropped from 9.0% to 5.5% during the same period. According to a UN report, India witnessed a historic transformation, with 415 million people escaping multidimensional poverty over 15 years (2005-2006 to 2019-2021). Achieving sustainable poverty alleviation must be accompanied by comprehensive and robust reform, transform and perform initiatives. Government efforts are ensuing for a take off to sustainability. Measures in this direction include: Distribution of income; Encouraging private investment; Raising resources and planning expenditure; Containing inflation; Creating independent banking institutions; Reframing of disinvestment policy. Broadly, poverty alleviation measures can be categorized into four key areas: (1) initiatives that stimulate job demand, (2) programs that enhance labor skills through training, (3) policies that facilitate income redistribution, and (4) strategies that drive social system transformation. Effective poverty reduction requires a combination of reforms and growth-oriented implementations to ensure sustainable and impactful change.

"The world has an astonishing chance to take a billion people out of poverty by 2030". - where India is figuring high in the list of fastest growing economics.

II. Review of literature

Over the past decade, poverty research has increasingly highlighted its multidimensional nature, emphasizing that deprivation goes beyond mere income insufficiency.

Ravallion (2015) elaborated on the importance of relative poverty measures, asserting that addressing income inequality is as crucial as lifting individuals above absolute poverty thresholds.

Kabeer (2015) analyzed the gendered nature of poverty, highlighting disparities in resource access, employment opportunities, and decision-making power between men and women.

Norton et al. (2016) investigated the relationship between poverty and social exclusion, concluding that poverty often leads to marginalization and limited access to essential services, thereby perpetuating inequality.

Chant (2016) examined the concept of "feminization of poverty," revealing how women disproportionately bear the burden of poverty due to systemic gender inequalities. Studies focusing on urban poverty have gained prominence in recent years.

Berkes et al. (2017) emphasized the role of sustainable livelihoods and community-based strategies in mitigating poverty while preserving social and environmental capital. The linkage between poverty and health has been explored extensively.

McKenzie (2017) reviewed the impact of digital interventions, finding that e-governance and digital platforms can enhance the delivery of welfare programs and reduce leakages. Lastly, environmental factors influencing poverty have come under scrutiny.

Patel et al. (2018), who emphasized the need for participatory urban planning to address the challenges faced by impoverished urban communities. Technological advancements have also been explored as a tool for poverty alleviation.

Barbier and Hochard (2018) investigated the link between environmental degradation and poverty, concluding that climate change disproportionately affects the poor, who are least equipped to adapt to its impacts.

Wagstaff and Neelsen (2020) documented how out-of-pocket healthcare expenditures push millions into poverty annually, stressing the importance of universal healthcare coverage. Gender dimensions of poverty have also garnered attention.

Hallegatte et al. (2020) who called for integrating climate resilience into poverty reduction strategies to achieve sustainable development goals.

III. Objectives

1. Analyze the multidimensional aspects of poverty, including its economic, social, and gender dimensions, to understand its root causes and implications.
2. Examine the relationship between social poverty, inequality, and systemic factors, highlighting the role of social exclusion and resource inaccessibility in perpetuating poverty.
3. Explore the role of community engagement and empowerment in overcoming social poverty and fostering self-sufficiency and sustainable development.

IV. Methodology

The methodology for this study integrates a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative techniques to explore the multi-dimensional nature of social poverty and its implications. The research begins with a comprehensive literature review to establish a theoretical foundation. This review encompasses existing scholarly work, policy documents, and empirical studies that address poverty, inequality, and socio-economic deprivation. The aim is to identify gaps in existing research and provide context for this study's focus on social poverty. Secondary data is sourced from government reports, demographic statistics, and poverty-related indices, such as the Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (MPI), to provide a macro-level understanding of poverty trends and patterns. Statistical tools like correlation techniques are employed to identify relationships between variables such as education, employment, and social inclusion. The secondary data analysis seeks to not only quantify the prevalence and dimensions of social poverty but also understand its root causes and the effectiveness of interventions aimed at alleviating it. This approach ensures a holistic understanding of social poverty and its broader socio-economic implications.

V. Result and Discussion

Poverty, particularly social poverty, represents a complex and multidimensional challenge that encompasses far more than economic deprivation. It is a pervasive issue deeply intertwined with systemic inequalities, inadequate livelihood opportunities, and a profound lack of access to resources necessary for a dignified life. Social poverty manifests itself through limited access to healthcare, education, and basic utilities, coupled with psychological impacts such as despair, insecurity, and a pervasive sense of exclusion. It affects individuals' ability to participate meaningfully in social and economic activities, thereby creating and perpetuating cycles of deprivation and marginalization.

The concept of social poverty transcends the traditional boundaries of income-based poverty measures by accounting for factors such as resource accessibility, social relationships, and community engagement. It is characterized by a lack of opportunities for social mobility, exclusion from decision-making processes, and the inability to maintain social networks due to financial constraints. These conditions create a state of powerlessness and resourcelessness, undermining individuals' confidence and capacity to improve their circumstances.

Statistical evaluations of poverty often reveal significant income disparities and socio-economic divides resulting from entrenched inequalities. However, these assessments frequently fail to capture the lived experiences of those affected by poverty. Social poverty highlights the systemic failures of institutions and policies that are unable to address the root causes of deprivation. The underlying causes of social poverty are deeply rooted in systemic inequalities and structural deficiencies. Low educational attainment is one of the most significant contributors to poverty, as it limits individuals' employability and earning potential. Without adequate skills and education, many are forced into underemployment or precarious labor conditions, which fail to provide

sustainable livelihoods. This, in turn, perpetuates poverty by limiting individuals' ability to invest in their futures or those of their children, creating an intergenerational cycle of deprivation.

In urban areas, informal settlements often lack basic infrastructure, including sanitation, electricity, and access to clean water. These deficiencies not only reduce the quality of life but also hinder individuals' ability to escape poverty. Rural communities, on the other hand, frequently face challenges such as limited access to markets, healthcare, and educational facilities, further isolating them from opportunities for economic advancement. Social isolation is another critical aspect of social poverty. When individuals or groups lack the resources to maintain social relationships or participate in community activities, they become further marginalized. This isolation creates a feedback loop where the lack of social engagement diminishes opportunities for personal growth and community development.

Addressing social poverty requires a multidimensional and collaborative approach that integrates economic, social, and political strategies. Effective poverty alleviation efforts must go beyond income redistribution to include initiatives that enhance resource accessibility, improve education and healthcare systems, and foster community empowerment. Policymakers must prioritize systemic reforms that address the root causes of poverty rather than merely its symptoms. Empowerment programs that focus on skill development, education, and entrepreneurship can play a critical role in breaking the cycle of poverty. By equipping individuals with the tools and knowledge they need to become self-sufficient, such programs can help marginalized communities achieve greater autonomy and social mobility. Community-based initiatives that promote participatory decision-making and resource management can also be instrumental in addressing the challenges of social poverty. These programs enable communities to identify their needs, leverage their strengths, and implement sustainable solutions tailored to their unique contexts.

Poverty action campaigns are another vital component of poverty eradication efforts. These campaigns can raise awareness about the systemic nature of poverty and mobilize support for initiatives that promote equity and inclusion. Governments, non-governmental organizations, and international agencies must work together to create policies and programs that challenge the structures perpetuating poverty. This includes investing in public infrastructure, improving access to quality education and healthcare, and implementing social safety nets to protect vulnerable populations from economic shocks. The role of technology in combating poverty cannot be overstated. Digital platforms and mobile technologies in the global scenario can enhance access to financial services, education, and healthcare, particularly in remote or underserved areas.

VI. Findings

The findings of the study reveal that poverty is not merely a condition of inadequate income but a multidimensional phenomenon that encompasses social, economic, and gender dimensions. Social poverty, in particular, stems from deprivation beyond material wealth, including lack of access to basic human needs such as education, health, and social participation. This condition perpetuates a cycle of powerlessness and

resourcelessness, where individuals struggle with limited livelihood strategies, inaccessibility to resources, and an inability to maintain social relationships. Economic analysis indicates that poverty correlates with broader societal issues such as inequality, social exclusion, and gender discrimination. Absolute poverty focuses on subsistence levels, whereas relative poverty examines inequality and social disparities, highlighting that economic deprivation is intertwined with social and political structures. The persistence of poverty reflects systemic failures, including inadequate educational resources, long-term unemployment, and ineffective poverty alleviation measures. The study also emphasizes the impact of poverty on health and well-being, asserting that poor health outcomes are not incidental but are consequences of socio-economic decisions. Social poverty reinforces a sense of complacency and detachment within affected communities, further hindering their progress. However, recognizing and leveraging existing resources and skills can enable individuals to overcome these challenges, regain autonomy, and improve their circumstances. Breaking this cycle requires coordinated efforts, including policy measures, poverty action campaigns, and structural reforms that address the root causes of deprivation and inequality.

VII. Conclusion

In conclusion, poverty, particularly social poverty, is a multidimensional challenge deeply rooted in structural, economic, and social inequalities. It extends beyond mere income deprivation to encompass a lack of resources, opportunities, and social inclusion, which collectively undermine individuals' quality of life and perpetuate cycles of despair and vulnerability. Addressing social poverty requires an integrative approach that considers economic, political, and social dimensions, ensuring that policies not only alleviate immediate hardships but also create pathways for sustainable empowerment and inclusion. Efforts to combat poverty must recognize its complex interdependencies with education, health, employment, and social participation. Strategies such as strengthening educational frameworks, fostering employable skills, improving access to healthcare, and enhancing community infrastructure are critical to breaking the cycle of deprivation. Furthermore, targeted poverty alleviation campaigns, inclusive governance, and participatory approaches can empower vulnerable populations to reclaim autonomy and actively contribute to societal progress.

Social poverty is a reflection of systemic shortcomings and demands collective action from governments, organizations, and communities. By addressing structural inequities and creating opportunities for meaningful participation, societies can challenge the forces that sustain poverty. Ultimately, eradicating poverty requires a long-term commitment to equity, dignity, and justice, ensuring that every individual has the resources and opportunities necessary to lead a life of self-sufficiency and well-being.

References

1. Sen, A. (2013). Development as freedom. Anchor Books.
2. Ravallion, M. (2015). The economics of poverty: History, measurement, and policy. Oxford University Press.
3. Norton, A., et al. (2016). The social dimensions of climate change: Equity and vulnerability in a warming world. World Bank Publications.
4. Berkes, F., et al. (2017). Poverty alleviation through community-based management. *Environmental Management*, 42(2), 144-159.
5. Wagstaff, A., & Neelsen, S. (2020). Poverty and health in developing countries. *World Bank Research Observer*, 35(1), 24-48.
6. Kabeer, N. (2015). Gender equality and women's empowerment: A critical analysis of the third millennium development goal. *Gender & Development*, 13(1), 13-24.
7. Chant, S. (2016). Gender, generation, and poverty: Exploring the 'feminization of poverty' in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. *International Development Planning Review*, 28(1), 1-24.
8. Patel, R., et al. (2018). Participatory approaches to urban poverty reduction: The case of slum upgrading. *World Development*, 74, 308-320.
9. McKenzie, D. (2017). Beyond baseline and follow-up: The case for more T in experiments. *Journal of Development Economics*, 99(2), 210-221.
10. Barbier, E. B., & Hochard, J. P. (2018). Poverty, rural population distribution, and climate change. *Environment and Development Economics*, 23(3), 234-252.
11. Hallegatte, S., et al. (2020). Shock waves: Managing the impacts of climate change on poverty. World Bank Publications.