



# **Sustainable Development Goals (Sdg's) With Special Reference To Poverty Alleviation: Relevance Of Indian Knowledge Systems (Iks)**

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## **ABSTRACT**

United Nations (UNO) laid down an agenda for 2030 which advocates for achieving (17) sustainable development goals (SDG's) by the year 2030 by all the countries. Among these (17) goals, first goal of SDG is "to end the poverty in all it's forms everywhere in the world by 2030. All SDG's are inter related and inter dependent on each other. The achievement of all other SDG's (16) depends on the achievement of SDG (01) i.e., the removal of poverty. India has also been a signatory to UN's agenda for 2030. Hence India has been committed to reduce it's poverty to zero by 2030.

Poverty has been the greatest challenge and global problem that the Governments across the nations are facing in the contemporary world. According to poverty estimates of planning commission in (2011-12), there are still about 22% of people in the country are living below poverty line (BPL). In absolute terms large number of people i.e., 27 crores are BPL in India. In spite of implementation of various poverty alleviation programmes i.e., both self and wage employment programmes by both Central and State Governments in the last 70 years the problem is still rampant.

In this scenario Indian knowledge system (IKS) appears to be a ray of hope and offers solutions to the contemporary problems of the society including poverty. Indian knowledge system is a system of knowledge and wisdom that have been transmitted from one generation to other in India. IKS includes the main components of Gnan (knowledge), Vignan (Science) and Jeevan (philosophy). The reservoir of India knowledge and wisdom emnates from the literature of Vedas (4), Upanishads, Upavedas etc and later vedic texts like Bhagavath Gita, Ardhashastra.

Poverty is not just an economic problem of income or wealth. But it is a multi-dimensional phenomenon comprising of various like education, health, nutrition, sanitation, housing, safe drinking water etc.

Indian knowledge system indeed is a way of life. It is inter disciplinary in nature and its diverse components like Science, Mathematics, Medicine, Astronomy, governance etc., offers integrated holistic approaches to alleviate the poverty both in India and at Global level. This article focuses on the systems and approaches of IKS to reduce the poverty and improve the standards of living and overall quality of life of people in India and world over.

**Key Words :** Indian Knowledge System (IKS), Sustainable Development Goals (SDG),

Poverty, Poverty Alleviation

## 1) INTRODUCTION ::

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) are the 17 goals laid down by United Nations (UNO) in 2015 under the "agenda 2030" frame work. These are the goals to be achieved by all the member nations by 2030. In fact these SDG's are in continuation of UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) which were in vogue from 2000 – 15. Some of important SDG's include poverty alleviation, no hunger, Health for all, Education for all, Housing for all, sanitation and drinking water for all, gender equality etc.

In fact these 17 SDG's are inter dependent and inter related to each other. Out of these 17 SDG's, SDG01 is related to poverty alleviation. It aims to end the poverty in all its forms and anywhere in the world. Among these 17 goals, SDG01 is basic goal and the achievement of many other goals like hunger, education, health, nutrition, employment etc depends on poverty alleviation and vice versa.

### 1.1 What is poverty?

Poverty is the greatest challenge of 21<sup>st</sup> century that all the countries across the globe are facing. Poverty can be defined as a "status or condition where the people lack basic minimum needs like food, cloth, shelter to lead a decent life". Amartyasen, the Noble laurate in economics added human development (HD) dimension to the definition of poverty by including education, health etc. But poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon which includes social, economic, political, cultural aspects of human life.

### 1.2 Intensity of Poverty

Poverty is rampant both in India and at global level. Subsaharan Africa (SSA) and South Asia are the largest home to poor in the world. About 1 billion and 20 crore people are poor in the world according to world bank report. Out of 120 crores 50% of poor people live in Subsaharan Africa and about 20 crore poor people belongs to India. As per the estimates of planning commission based on Tendulkar committee report in 2011-12, 21.9% are living below poverty line (BPL) in India amounting to about 27 crores. As per the multi-dimensional poverty index (MPI) indicators of UNDP and NITI Ayog India in 2021-22, 16.5% of people are living below poverty line (BPL) in India. In terms of absolute numbers poverty is severe in India amounting to about 22 crores of people.

### 1.3 Poverty alleviation efforts of Government

The Government of India have been implementing many poverty alleviation programmes and schemes under successive 5 year plan since independence starting with community development programme (CDP) in 1952. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) started in 1977-78 was a water shed in the history of India's poverty alleviation efforts. Since then many self and wage employment programmes, social security and food security schemes have been implemented by both Central and State Governments in India. Some of the important and notable programmes include Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment guarantee program (MGNREGP), National Rural livelihood mission (NRLM), Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), Public Distribution System (PDS), National Social Assistance Program (NSAP) etc.

### 1.4 Problems and bottle necks in poverty alleviation programmes

The implementation of poverty alleviation programmes for the last 75 years have been met with partial success in India. These large number of programmes and schemes have not eliminated the poverty in total as they suffer from severe weakness and short comings. Most of the programmes suffered with the short comings of

- (i) involvement of middle men or borkers in the implementation of schemes
- (ii) selection of ineligible beneficiaries
- (iii) duplicate/ triplicate beneficiaries
- (iv) enouramous and abnormal delays in reaching of benefits to poor
- (v) lack of awareness among the people about poverty reduction schemes meant for them

## 2) OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- (1) To understand about the SDG's and their inter relationship with each other
- (2) To understand the concept, nature, intensity of poverty in India and abroad
- (3) To identify the principles or approaches of Indian knowledge systems (IKS) that help in reducing poverty in India and at global level.

## 3) INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM (IKS)

### 3.1 What is IKS?

Indian knowledge system is a system of knowledge and wisdom that have been transmitted from one generation to other in India. Indian knowledge system consists of (3) main components i.e., (i) Gnan (knowledge), (ii) Vignan (science), (iii) Jeevan (philosophy). The reservoir of Indian knowledge emanates from the literature of Vedas, Upanishads, Upavedas, Puranas and later vedic texts like Ramayana, Mahabharatha, Bhagavatgitha, Ardhashastra etc.

### 3.2 Components of IKS

Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is as diverse as this universe. In deed it is a way of life. It is inter disciplinary in nature. IKS consists of diverse components of mathematics, science, astronomy, medicine (Ayurveda), law, governance, arts etc.

## 4) RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Indian Knowledge System (IKS) has been more relevant to address present day problems and challenges of the societies across the nations in the world including India. Indian Knowledge System (IKS) finds extensive applications in the fields of present day, mathematics, science, arts, medicine, astronomy, governance etc. IKS is also equally important and finds applications in social sciences like sociology, anthropology, public administration, political science, economic etc as well. IKS appears to be a ray of hope and offers solutions to contemporary problems of social sciences like poverty and inequalities. IKS provides for systems and approaches that help to reduce the poverty both in India and at global level.

### 4.1 Vedas and Poverty

Vedas are the oldest known sacred texts of not only India but of whole world. These include Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Adharvanaveda. (5) Lessons can be learnt from this ancient wisdom in the context of poverty eradication.

(i) the word Veda is derived from 'Vid' which means "knowledge" or "to know". The very meaning of vedas emphasizes the fact that the people should have the knowledge of what they need and are supposed to possess. In the context of poverty alleviation programmes it is very pathetic that most of poor people doesn't know about the schemes which are meant for them. Hence vedas remind the policy makers and administrators to create awareness among the poor people about the schemes and programme meant for poverty eradication.

(ii) vedas always preached for "compassion" and "empathy" with people. The second lesson that can be learnt from vedas is that the poor people cannot be treated as mere beneficiaries of schemes but can be considered as equal partners in the development process. It implies that poor people shall be allowed to participate in the planning implementation monitoring and execution of poverty reduction programmes.

(iii) "he who gives to others will never be the poor" (Rigveda 10.117.1) "charity" is the greatest of all the religion (Yajurveda 32.10). The concept of charity or phillonthrapsim was deeply rooted in our ancient texts i.e., Vedas. The modern concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) had its origin in the concept of charity given in the Vedas. Hence rich and poor phillonthrapists must contribute part of their wealth to the upliftment of poor and down trodden and their development.

Thus this concept of vedas is very much useful in generating scarce resources and funds needed for removal of poverty and inequalities.

(iv) vedas are the treasurers houses of ethical and moral values like honesty, integrity, dharma, truth etc. Lack of these moral values are responsible for many ineligible beneficiaries brokers and middlemen plundering the huge public money invested in poverty eradication programmes. It is most common in villages and cities that the house holds continue to draw oldage pensions for years together even after the death of pensioner. Hence vedas highlights the significance of ethical and moral values in public life.

(v) Rigveda refers to "village communities" i.e., sabhas or assemblies are modern form of panchayats. Panchayatraj institutions (PRI's) at village, block and district levels shall be given greater roll in the planning implementation, monitoring and evaluation of poverty eradication programs as they are very close to people and know the needs of people better than the people at the top.

### 4.2 Upanishads and Poverty

"Welfare of one is linked to all" (Mahopanishad). Upanishads emphasizes on the concept of "Vasudhiva Kutumbham" which means one earth or world and one family. Thus they advocates for just and equitable world by removing inequalities across the persons and regions in the world.

### 4.3 Ithihasas (Ramayana & Mahabharatha)

**4.3.1 Ramayana** teaches us sama drushti as practiced by Lord Rama. The poor, down trodden, weaker, disadvantaged etc all were treated equally by Rama and it shall be practiced by the present day society. Mahabharatha highlights the importance of women participating in the decision making process from the roles



of Kunti and Draupadi. Women shall be given role in the planning and execution of poverty reduction programmes.

#### 4.3.2 Bhagavathgita

It is the most important sacred text of later vedic period. Two important lessons can be learnt from the teachings of lord Krishna i.e., Dharma (duty) and Seva (service). 'Dharma' specifies that everybody shall do their righteous duty. 'Seva' underscore the need for doing service to man i.e., poor and under privileged. These two concepts goes longway in establishing just and equitable world.

#### 4.3.3 Ardhasastra

Kautilya's Ardhasastra highlights (3) important principles which have extensive applications in the removal of poverty and inequalities in the present day world. First one is "kind to generate wealth and distribute it equitably". Second one is "king must help unfortunate, infirm and handicapped" which is profoundly useful in social security programmes like pensions and insurance. Third one is "king shall maintain granaries and feed starved" which is useful in ensuring food security to all.

### 5. RECOMMENDATIONS/ SUGGESTIONS

Drawing inspiration from Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) in the policy planning and advocacy related to poverty alleviation.

- (1) Poor shall not be considered as mere beneficiaries or takers but as equal partners in the development process.
- (2) Creating awareness among the public and poor people about the programmes and schemes meant for them through information, education and communication (IEC) campaign.
- (3) Women shall be given role in the decision making process and in the execution policies and programmes
- (4) Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) shall be given greater role in planning implementation monitoring and evaluation of poverty eradication programmes.

### CONCLUSION :

The great personalities of India in 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> centuries like Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi also drew the inspiration from Indian Knowledge System (IKS) and called for the eradication poverty from the land of India by preaching "Manavaseve Madhavaseva" (service to man is service to God). Therefore in 21<sup>st</sup> century, the need of the hour is to adopt and practice the principles and approaches enshrined in our sacred texts of IKS in the policy making and advocacy related to poverty alleviation. If this is happened millions of people both in India and across the nations in the world can be liberated from the shackles of poverty (SDG01) so easily and by the SDG time limit of 2030.

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