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***3. Poverty as a Challenge***

***Introduction-***

* We come across many poor people in our daily life.
* For example- landless laboureres in villages.
* People living in overcrowded ***jhuggies*** in cities.
* Workers, working at constructing sites.
* Children working in ***dhabas.***
* Beggars with children at railway platforms or bus stands.
* We see poverty all around us.
* It means nearly 270 million (or 27 crore) people in India live in poverty.
* That means every fourth person in India is poor.
* India has the largest single concentration of the poor in the world.

**Meaning of Poverty:**

***Poverty is a situation in which a person is unable to get minimum basic necessities of life, i.e. food, clothing and shelter for his or her sustenance.***

***Mass Poverty-***

**When a large section of the people in an economy are deprived of these basic facilities, that economy is said to be in mass poverty.**

**Characteristics of poor people-**

* Poverty means hunger and lack of shelter.
* Parents are unable to send their children to school.
* Sick people cannot afford treatment.
* Poverty also means lack of clean water and sanitation.
* It can also mean lack of regular job.
* Above all it means living with a sense of helplessness.
* Poor people are ill treated at almost every place.

**Poverty seen by Social Scientists:**

* **Usually the indicators used above are related to the levels of income and consumption.**
* **But social scientists now look through other social indicators like-**
* **Illiteracy level,**
* **Lack of general resistance to malnutrition,**
* **Lack of access to healthcare,**
* **Lack of job opportunities,**
* **Lack of access to safe drinking water,**
* **And lack of sanitation etc.**
* **Analysis of poverty now is based on social exclusion and vulnerability.**
* **According to this concept, poverty must be seen in terms of the poor living in a poor surrounding with other poor people.**
* **They are excluded from enjoying social equality like that of better- off people living in better surroundings.**
* **Broadly, it is a process through which individuals or groups are excluded from facilities, benefits and opportunities that others enjoy.**
* **A typical example is the working of the caste system in India.**
* **People belonging to certain castes are excluded from equal opportunities.**
* Vulnerability to poverty is a measure , which describes the greater possibility of certain communities or individuals becoming or remaining poor in the coming years.
* Such as members of backward caste, widow or a physically handicapped person.
* It is determined by the options available to different communities in terms of assets, education, health and job opportunities.
* It is analyzed on the basis of the greater risks these groups face at the time of natural calamities like earthquakes, tsunami, and flood etc.
* In addition, it is analyzed on the basis of their social and economic ability to handle these risks.

**Poverty Line:**

**Meaning-**

***Poverty Line is an imaginary line which indicates the level of purchasing power required to satisfy the minimum needs of a person.***

* A common method used to measure poverty is based on the income or consumption levels.
* A person is said to be poor if his/her income or consumption level falls below a given ‘minimum level’ necessary to fulfill basic needs.
* What is necessary to satisfy basic needs is different at different times and in different countries.
* While determining the poverty line in India, a minimum level of food requirement, clothing, footwear fuel and light, educational and medical requirement are determined.
* These physical quantities are multiplied by their prices in rupees.
* The accepted average calorie requirement in India is 2400 calories per person per day in rural areas and 2100 calories per person per day in urban areas.
* On the basis of these calculations, for the year 2014-15, the poverty line for a person was fixed at Rs. 972 per month for the rural areas and Rs.1407 for the urban areas.
* In this way, a family of five members living in rural areas earning less than Rs. 4860 per month will be below poverty line.
* Similarly, a family living in urban area would need a minimum of Rs. 7035 per month to meet their basic requirements.

NB[important]-

* The poverty line is estimated periodically (normally every five years) by conducting sample surveys.
* These surveys are conducted by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO).
* It was established in 1950 under the Ministry of Statistics and Programmes Implementation of the Government of India.
* The International Organizations like the World Bank use a uniform standard for poverty line i.e. $ 1 per person per day as to compare developing countries.

**Table 3.1: Estimates of Poverty in India**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Poverty Ratio (%)** | | | **Number of poor(In millions)** | | |
| **Year** | **Rural** | **Urban** | **Combined** | **Rural** | **Urban** | **Combined** |
| **1973-74** | **56.4** | **49.0** | **54.9** | **261** | **60** | **321** |
| **1993-94** | **37.3** | **32.4** | **36.0** | **244** | **76** | **320** |
| **1999-00** | **27.1** | **23.6** | **26.1** | **193** | **67** | **260** |
| **2004-05** | **42** | **26** | **37** | **326** | **81** | **407** |
| **2009-10** | **34** | **21** | **30** | **278** | **76** | **355** |
| **2011-12** | **26** | **14** | **22** | **217** | **53** | **270** |

**Vulnerable Groups:**

1. **The proportion of people below poverty line is not same for all social groups and economic categories in India.**
2. **Social Groups- Scheduled caste and scheduled tribe households are the most vulnerable social groups.**
3. **Economic Groups- The rural agricultural labour households and the urban casual labour households are the most vulnerable groups.**
4. **Within a family- Women, elderly people and female infants are systematically denied equal access to resources available to the family.**

* **They are called poorest of the poor.**

**Inter- state Disparity:**

The proportion of poor people is not the same in every state called as inter- state disparity.

1. Although state level poverty has witnessed a decline from the levels of early seventies.
2. The success rate of reducing poverty varies from state to state.
3. Recent estimation show that in 20 states and Union territories, the poverty ratio is less that the national average.
4. On the other hand, poverty is still a serious problems in Odisha, Bihar Assam, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh.
5. Urban poverty is also high in Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.
6. There has been a significant decline in Kerala, Jammu and Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and West Bengal.
7. States like Punjab, Haryana have traditionally succeeded in reducing poverty with the help of high agricultural growth.
8. Kerala has focused on human resource development.
9. In West Bengal, land reform measures have helped in reducing poverty.
10. In Andhara Pradesh and Tamil Nadu public distribution of food grains could have been responsible for the improvement.

**Global Poverty Scenario:**

1. The World Bank states that people living on less than $ 1.90 per day experience extreme poverty in developing countries.
2. Although, extreme economic poverty has reduced from 43% in 1990 to 22% in 2008.
3. But there is vast regional differences throughout the world.
4. Poverty has declined in China and Southeast Asian countries as a result of rapid economic growth and investments in human resource development.
5. In China, the number of poverty has come down from 88.3% in 1981 to 14% in 2008.
6. But the decline has not so rapid in South Asian countries like India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal Bangladesh, Bhutan.
7. Despite decline in the percentage of the poor; the number of poor has declined marginally from 475 million in 1981 to 428 million in 2001.
8. This variation is due to different poverty line definition in the world.
9. In Latin America, the ratio of poverty remained the same.
10. In Sub- Saharan Africa, poverty in fact rose from 41% in 1981 to 46% in 2001.
11. Poverty has resurfaced in some of the former socialist countries, where officially it was non-existence earlier.
12. The new ***Sustainable Development goals*** of the United Nation proposes ending all types of poverty by 2030.

**Causes of Poverty:**

1. **British Rule-**

* **The policies of the colonial government ruined traditional handicrafts like textiles.**
* **This left millions of weavers unemployed and became poor.**

1. **Rural Economy-**

* India economy is predominately rural economy.
* 64% of the total population is engaged in agriculture.
* But its contribution to the national income is only one-third.

1. **Heavy Pressure of Population-**

* **Population of India has been increasing very rapidly.**
* **Main factors for it is sharp fall in death rate but stable birth rate for the last many decades.**
* **Growth rate of population was 1.0 per cent in 1941-51, that rose to 1.64 per cent in 2011.**
* **In 2011, the population rose to 1210.2 million as against 361 million in 1951.**
* **This pressure of population serves as a big stumbling block to economic development.**

1. **Chronic unemployment and Under employment-**

* **With constant increase in population there has developed a situation of chronic unemployment and underemployment.**
* **Due to increasing pressure on land per hectare availability of land is decreasing.**
* **Also due to land division, agricultural production is decreasing.**
* **Agricultural sector is also facing problems of disguised unemployment in India.**

1. **Lack of proper Industrialization-**

* **India is very backward from the industrial point of view.**
* **Hardly 3% of working population is engaged in large scale industries.**
* **Indian industries have not developed properly; we still depend on foreign countries with regard to these industries.**

1. **Socio- Cultural and Economic Factors-**

* **To fulfill social obligations and observe religious ceremonies, people in India spend a lot of money.**
* **Small farmers need money to buy agricultural inputs like seeds, fertilizers, pesticides etc.**
* **Poor people borrow money and become the victims of indebtedness.**

**Anti Poverty Measures:**

* **The major objectives of Indian development strategy is the removal of poverty.**
* **It is based broadly on two planks-**

1. **Promotion of Economic Growth.**
2. **Targeted anti poverty programmes.**

**Promotion of Economic Growth:**

* **Since the 1980s, India’s economic growth has been one of the fastest in the world.**
* **The growth rate jumped from the average of about 3.5 per cent a year in the 1970s to about 6 per cent during 1980s and 1990s.**
* **The higher economic growth rates have helped significantly in the reduction of poverty.**
* **Economic growth rate widens opportunities and provides the resources needed to invest in human development.**
* **However, the poor may not be able to take advantage from the opportunities created by economic growth.**
* **Moreover, growth in the agricultural sector is much below expectations.**
* **As a result, a large number of poor people live in villages and depend on agriculture.**

**Anti Poverty Programme:**

* **In these circumstances, there is a clear need for targeted anti- poverty Programmes.**
* **Some of the worth mentioning programmes are as following-**

1. **National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (NREGA):**

* **This Act was passed in September 2005.**
* **This Act provides 100 days assured employment every year to every rural household in 200 districts.**
* **Later, the scheme to be extended to 600 districts.**
* **One third of the proposed jobs would be reserved for women.**
* **The central and the state government will establish National Employment Guarantee Funds and State Employment Guarantee Funds respectively.**
* **If an applicant is not provided employment within fifteen days he/she will be given a daily unemployment allowance.**

1. **National Food for Work Programme( NFWP):**

* **It was launched in 2004 in 150 most backward districts of the country.**
* **It was open to all poor who are in need of wage employment and desired to do manual unskilled work.**
* **This programme was 100 per cent centrally sponsored scheme and food grains are provided free of cost to the state.**
* **It was decided once the NREGA is enforced the NFWP will be subsumed within this programmes.**

1. **Prime Minister Rozgar Yozana(PMRY):**

* **It was started in 1993.**
* **The programme aimed at creating self-employment opportunities for educated unemployed youth in rural areas and small towns.**
* **With the help of this programme they can set up small business and industries.**

1. **Rural Employment Generation Programme(REGP):**

* **This programme was launched in 1995.**
* **The main aim was to create self employment opportunities in rural areas and small towns.**
* **Under the Tenth Five Year Plan, it targeted to create 25 lakh new jobs.**

1. **Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yozana (SGSY):**

* **It was launched in 1999.**
* **The programme aimed to assist poor families above the poverty line by organizing them into Self- Help- Groups through a mix of bank credit and government subsidy.**

1. **Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yozana (PMGY):**

* **This programme was launched in 2000.**
* **Additional central assistance is given to states for basic services such as primary health, primary education, rural shelter, rural drinking water and rural electrification.**

1. **Antyodaya Anna Yozana(AAY):**

* **An important milestone in providing food grains to the poor was launched on Dec. 25, 2000.**
* **The government of India is to ensure food security for all and creating a hunger free India in the next five years.**
* **This also aimed to reform and improve the Public Distribution System to serve the poorest of the poor in rural and urban areas.**
* **Accordingly, each family below the poverty line will be provided 25 kg of food grains per month at highly subsidized rate of Rs. 2 per kg wheat and Rs. 3 per kg rice.**
* **Antyodaya Anna Yozana has started in six states- that is Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh Uttar Pradesh and Union territories of Dadra & Nagar Haveli.**

**The Result of these programmes:**

* **The result of these programmes has been mixed.**
* **One of the major reasons for less effectiveness is the lack of proper implementation and right targeting.**
* **Despite good intensions, the benefits of these schemes are not fully reached to the deserving poor.**
* **Therefore, the major emphasis in recent years is on proper monitoring of all the poverty alleviation programmes.**

**Poverty as Challenges Ahead:**

1. **Poverty has certainly declined in India, but despite the progress, poverty reduction remains India’s most compelling challenge.**
2. **Wide disparities in poverty are visible between rural and urban areas and among states.**
3. **Certain social and economic groups are more vulnerable to poverty.**
4. **The official definition of poverty captures only a limited part what really poverty means to the people.**
5. **It generally includes about ‘minimum’ subsistence level of living.**
6. **Where as poverty should involve even ‘Reasonable’ level of poverty.**
7. **Many scholars now advocate that this concept must broaden the concept into ‘human poverty.**
8. **Along with people feeding themselves, they should be having proper education, shelter, health care, job security, self confidence, free from child labour, caste inequalities and gender discrimination etc.**

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**Exercises**

**I. Very short answer type questions-**

1. **Define the followings-**
2. **Poverty**

**Ans.**

**Poverty is a situation in which a person is unable to get minimum basic necessities of life, i.e. food, clothing and shelter for his or her sustenance.**

1. **Poverty line**

**Ans.**

**An imaginary line which indicates the level of purchasing power required to satisfy the minimum needs of a person.**

1. **Mass poverty**

**Ans.**

**When a large section of the people in an economy are deprived of the basic necessities, that economy is called in mass economy.**

1. **Mention any four indicators defined by the social scientists.**

**Ans.**

**Illiteracy level, lack of general resistance due to malnutrition, lack of access to healthcare, lack of job opportunities, lack of access to safe drinking water, sanitation etc.**

1. **What is vulnerability?**

**Ans.**

**Vulneralability to poverty means the chances of some communities or persons to become poor or remain poor in future.**

1. **What does NSSO stand for?**

**Ans.**

**NSSO stands for National sample survey Organization.**

1. **Who are considered as the poorest of the poor?**

**Ans.**

**Women, elderly people and female infants within the poor family are called as the poorest of the poor.**

1. **What do you understand by Inter- state disparity?**

**Ans.**

**The proportion of poor people is not the same in every state within the country is called as Inter- State Disparity.**

1. **How does the global poverty defined by the World Bank?**

**Ans.**

The World Bank states that people living on less than $ 1.90 per day experience extreme poverty in developing countries.

1. **Mention the two broad planks of the current anti- poverty strategy.**

**Ans.**

1. **Promotion of Economic Growth.**
2. **Targeted anti poverty programmes.**
3. **Mention the major targeted anti- poverty programmes in India.**

**Ans. The major targeted anti- poverty programmes in India-**

1. **National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (NREGA):**
2. **National Food for Work Programme( NFWP):**
3. **Prime Minister Rozgar Yozana(PMRY):**
4. **Rural Employment Generation Programme(REGP):**
5. **Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yozana (SGSY):**
6. **Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yozana (PMGY):**
7. **Anyodaya Anna Yozana(AAY):**

**10. Mention two methods to estimate poverty.**

**Ans.**

**1. Expenditure method**

**2. Income method**

**11. Which anti- poverty programme is subsumed within NREGA?**

**Ans**

**National Food for Work Programme (NFWP) is subsumed within NREGA.**

**II Short answer type questions-**

1. **Describe the poverty trend in India since 1973.**

**Ans.**

**Table 3.1: Estimates of Poverty in India**

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**1. There is decline in poverty ratio in India from about 55 per cent in 1773 to 36 per cent in 1993.**

**2. The proportion of people below poverty line future came down to about 26 per cent in 2000.**

**3. If the trend continues, people below poverty line may come down to less than 20 per cent in the next few years**

1. **Identify the social and economic groups which are most vulnerable to poverty in India.**

**Ans.**

**The proportion of people below poverty line is not same for all social groups and economic categories in India.**

1. **Social Groups- Scheduled caste and scheduled tribe households are the most vulnerable social groups.**
2. **Economic Groups- The rural agricultural labour households and the urban casual labour households are the most vulnerable groups.**
3. **Within a family- Women, elderly people and female infants are systematically denied equal access to resources available to the family.**

* **They are called poorest of the poor.**

1. **Give an account of inter- state disparity in India.**

**Ans.**

1. Recent estimation show that in 20 states and Union territories, the poverty ratio is less than the national average.
2. On the other hand, poverty is still a serious problems in Odisha, Bihar Assam, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh.
3. Urban poverty is also high in Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.
4. There has been a significant decline in Kerala, Jammu and Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and West Bengal.
5. States like Punjab, Haryana have traditionally succeeded in reducing poverty with the help of high agricultural growth.
6. Kerala has focused on human resource development.
7. In West Bengal, land reform measures have helped in reducing poverty.
8. In Andhara Pradesh and Tamil Nadu public distribution of food grains could have been responsible for the improvement.
9. **Describe global poverty trends in the world.**

**Ans.**

There is vast regional differences of poverty throughout the world.

1. Poverty has declined in China and Southeast Asian countries as a result of rapid economic growth and investments in human resource development.
2. But the decline has not so rapid in South Asian countries like India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan.
3. Despite decline in the percentage of the poor; the number of poor has declined marginally from 475 million in 1981 to 428 million in 2001.
4. In Latin America, the ratio of poverty remained the same.
5. In Sub- Saharan Africa, poverty in fact rose from 41% in 1981 to 46% in 2001.
6. Poverty has resurfaced in some of the former socialist countries, where officially it was non-existence earlier
7. **What do you understand by human poverty?**

**Ans.**

1. **The official definition of poverty captures only a limited part what really poverty means to the people.**
2. **It generally includes about ‘minimum’ subsistence level of living.**

**Where as poverty should involve even ‘Reasonable’ level of poverty.**

1. **Along with people feeding themselves, they should be having proper education, shelter, health care, job security, self confidence, free from child labour, caste inequalities and gender discrimination etc.**
2. **Mention any three characteristics of poverty.**

**Ans. Characteristics of poor people-**

* Poverty means hunger and lack of shelter.
* Parents are unable to send their children to school.
* Sick people cannot afford treatment.
* Poverty also means lack of clean water and sanitation.
* It can also mean lack of regular job.
* Above all it means living with a sense of helplessness.

1. **Describe the principle measures taken in Punjab, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal to reduce poverty.**

**Ans.**

1. States like Punjab, Haryana have traditionally succeeded in reducing poverty with the help of high agricultural growth.
2. Kerala has focused on human resource development.
3. In West Bengal, land reform measures have helped in reducing poverty.
4. In Andhara Pradesh and Tamil Nadu public distribution of food grains could have been responsible for the improvement.
5. **How can you assess that the Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yozana assisted the rural poor people in India?**

**Ans.**

* **This programme was launched in 2000.**
* **Additional central assistance is given to states for basic services such as primary health, primary education, rural shelter, rural drinking water and rural electrification.**

1. **Mention the importance of Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yozana.**

**Ans.**

* **It was launched in 1999.**
* **The programme aimed to assist poor families above the poverty line by organizing them into Self- Help- Groups through a mix of bank credit and government subsidy.**

**III. Long answer type questions-**

1. **Explain any five features of Global poverty scenario.**

**Ans.**

**Global Poverty Scenario:**

1. The World Bank states that people living on less than $ 1.90 per day experience extreme poverty in developing countries.
2. Although, extreme economic poverty has reduced from 43% in 1990 to 22% in 2008.But there is vast regional differences throughout the world.
3. Poverty has declined in China and Southeast Asian countries as a result of rapid economic growth and investments in human resource development.
4. But the decline has not so rapid in South Asian countries like India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan.
5. In Latin America, the ratio of poverty remained the same.
6. In Sub- Saharan Africa, poverty in fact rose from 41% in 1981 to 46% in 2001.
7. Poverty has resurfaced in some of the former socialist countries, where officially it was non-existence earlier.
8. **Discuss the major causes of poverty In India.**

**Ans.**

**Causes of Poverty:**

1. **British Rule-**

* **The policies of the colonial government ruined traditional handicrafts like textiles.**
* **This left millions of weavers unemployed and became poor.**

1. **Rural Economy-**

* India economy is predominately rural economy.
* 64% of the total population is engaged in agriculture.
* But its contribution to the national income is only one-third.

1. **Heavy Pressure of Population-**

* **Population of India has been increasing very rapidly.**
* **Main factors for it is sharp fall in death rate but stable birth rate for the last many decades.**
* **Growth rate of population was 1.0 per cent in 1941-51, that rose to 1.64 per cent in 2011.**
* **In 2011, the population rose to 1210.2 million as against 361 million in 1951.**
* **This pressure of population serves as a big stumbling block to economic development.**

1. **Chronic unemployment and Under employment-**

* **With constant increase in population there has developed a situation of chronic unemployment and underemployment.**
* **Due to increasing pressure on land per hectare availability of land is decreasing.**
* **Also due to land division, agricultural production is decreasing.**
* **Agricultural sector is also facing problems of disguised unemployment in India.**

1. **Lack of proper Industrialization-**

* **India is very backward from the industrial point of view.**
* **Hardly 3% of working population is engaged in large scale industries.**
* **Indian industries have not developed properly; we still depend on foreign countries with regard to these industries.**

1. **Socio- Cultural and Economic Factors-**

* **To fulfill social obligations and observe religious ceremonies, people in India spend a lot of money.**
* **Small farmers need money to buy agricultural inputs like seeds, fertilizers, pesticides etc.**
* **Poor people borrow money and become the victims of indebtedness.**

1. **Why do you think the promotion of economic growth is essential to reduce poverty?**

**Ans.**

**Promotion of Economic Growth:**

* **Since the 1980s, India’s economic growth has been one of the fastest in the world.**
* **The growth rate jumped from the average of about 3.5 per cent a year in the 1970s to about 6 per cent during 1980s and 1990s.**
* **The higher economic growth rates have helped significantly in the reduction of poverty.**
* **Economic growth rate widens opportunities and provides the resources needed to invest in human development.**
* **However, the poor may not be able to take advantage from the opportunities created by economic growth.**
* **Moreover, growth in the agricultural sector is much below expectations.**
* **As a result, a large number of poor people live in villages and depend on agriculture.**

1. **Discuss in detail about the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (2005).**

**Ans.**

**National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (NREGA):**

* **This Act was passed in September 2005.**
* **This Act provides 100 days assured employment every year to every rural household in 200 districts.**
* **Later, the scheme to be extended to 600 districts.**
* **One third of the proposed jobs would be reserved for women.**
* **The central and the state government will establish National Employment Guarantee Funds and State Employment Guarantee Funds respectively.**
* **If an applicant is not provided employment within fifteen days he/she will be given a daily unemployment allowance.**

1. **Discuss how Antyodaya Anna Yozana a programme launched by the government of India played a great role in poverty eradication in India.**

**Ans.**

**Antyodaya Anna Yozana(AAY):**

* **An important milestone in providing food grains to the poor was launched on Dec. 25, 2000.**
* **The government of India is to ensure food security for all and creating a hunger free India in the next five years.**
* **This also aimed to reform and improve the Public Distribution System to serve the poorest of the poor in rural and urban areas.**
* **Accordingly, each family below the poverty line will be provided 25 kg of food grains per month at highly subsidized rate of Rs. 2 per kg wheat and Rs. 3 per kg rice.**
* **Antyodaya Anna Yozana has started in six states- that is Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh Uttar Pradesh and Union territories of Dadra & Nagar Haveli.**

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