

## **Unit 22**

### **Poverty**

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#### **Learning Objectives**

A study of this unit on “poverty” will enable you to

- define the concept of poverty
- describe the socio-historical analysis of poverty studies
- provide a theoretical framework within which poverty studies may be placed
- discuss the nature of urban poverty in general
- explain the nature of urban poverty in India
- discuss the process of globalization in the context of urban poverty, and family
- describe briefly the changing policy perspective on poverty.

#### **22.1 Introduction**

This study presents a sociological analysis of poverty, specifically focusing on urban poverty the theoretical framework emphasises the main approaches, which define poverty-the cultural perspective and the situational perspective. The study not only tries to understand simply the human reality of what it means to be poor, but also the central paradox of modern India, half a century of democracy, economic growth and constitutional commitment to social justice has not lessened the acute, mass poverty of the country. The first section tries to examine the socio-historical analysis of poverty

studies and research of poverty in India. The early studies of poverty in Britain and also in US focus largely on urban poverty. On the other hand in India much of the research on poverty in the period since independence was driven in by the concern for growth and development. Income and expenditure were considered to be better measures of poverty which relied on data provided by National Sample Survey (NSS). But several issues pertaining to urban poverty in India still lie unanswered. Therefore this study tries to expand its framework beyond the analysis of calorie consumption and include dimensions of well being other than nutritional intake like housing, health, education, impact of globalization, access to basic amenities etc. and it also tries to analyze the label of facilities across different regions. This unit also undertakes a systematic study of globalization and poverty as well as the changing policy perspective on poverty. The recent focus on poverty has shown that in individual countries poverty is caused by

- (i) Paucity of resources or by failure of economic development
- (ii) Failure of state
- (iii) Transition from state control economy to market based economy.

This paper attempts to first define poverty, identify poor geographical area and tries to carry out systematic investigation with an open mind to understand the phenomena of poverty and adjudge the strategies employed to combat it, which will help building a new theoretical perspective.

## **22.2 Poverty: A Definition**

It's a multidimensional phenomenon and caused by a variety of factors. Its manifestation also differs from context to context. There is no linear chain of cause and effect. It is an inter-related wave of economic, social, psychological, cultural and political factor which influence the occurrence and persistence of poverty. Real poverty may not be apparent and apparent poverty may not be real. Thus there cannot be a single strategy to eradicate it in different societal context.

At the conceptual level, poverty includes market based consumption (or income) as well as public provision of goods and services, access to common property resources and the intangible dimensions of good life. Such as clean air, dignity, autonomy and low levels of disease and crime. The proponents of the conventional approach argue that the

income and consumption measure is still the best single proxy for poverty since it can incorporate non market goods and services and wide range of other utility (clean air, democracy) and disutility (noise pollution) through “shadow prices” into a monetary equivalent that is easy to compare over time and across context. Their critics argued that common property resources and states provided commodities have usually been ignored in practice and consumption of non-traded goods has been underestimated. It is also questionable whether “Shadow prices” can meaningfully translate the different kinds of values that are embodied in non-market goods and services into monetary equivalents that are comparable. The poverty assessments (PAs) are country studies about poverty carried out by the World Bank as part of the new poverty agenda. By 1996 almost 50 PAs had been carried out, for some countries there is more than one assessment. There is also a little consistency in how the poverty line is established, even for the same country. Some of the P.As define the poverty line in absolute terms, some deflate household expenditure by average household size while others use expenditure per adult equivalent, such methodological inconsistency effectively defeats the purpose of collecting quantitative data, since one of the rationales for using quantitative data is precisely that they are comparable over time and across context.

### **22.3 Socio- historical Analysis of Poverty Studies**

Poverty studies go back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in Britain where they were closely associated with the beginnings of empirical sociology. The two great pioneers of poverty studies in Britain, Charles Booth (1840-1916) and Seebohm Rowntree (1871-1954), were both men of wealth who were guided by philanthropic motives. Their work did not enter the mainstream of sociological theory but influenced both directly and indirectly the development of the welfare state. The tradition of survey research initiated by Booth and Rowntree influenced later sociological enquiries, including the monumental work on poverty by Peter Townsend in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Rowntree’s book *Poverty: A study of town life* (1901) was based on investigation in York. For Rowntree, poverty was a condition in which earnings were insufficient to meet the minimum requirements of a healthy and productive life. Nutritional data made up the core of his index to which were added data relating to clothing, fuel and other household

sundries in addition to rent. Rowntree(1941) published a second study 40 years after the first. He came to feel that a single, invariant and unchanging definition of poverty would not do justice to the social reality, which varied across space and changed over time. He may be said to have laid the groundwork for the ‘relative’ and ‘absolute’ conception of poverty. American studies of poverty have also concentrated on the city, and in recent decades more particularly on what is called the ‘inner city’. The distinctive feature of poverty studies, particularly by sociologist, in the US is the attention given by them to the problem of race. Poverty in urban America is highly concentrated among the blacks and other racial minorities. At the same time, there are poor whites as well as a black middle class. The sociologist William J Wilson (1987), himself a black has drawn attention to what he calls ‘the truly disadvantaged’. These in his view should be defined not so much in terms of race as in terms of a combination of economics, demographic and social characteristics such as joblessness, broken families, teenage pregnancy, out –of –wedlock births and violent crimes. The American anthropologist Oscar Lewis (1964), who worked in India and Mexico and among the Puerto Ricans in the US, popularizes the concept of ‘The culture of poverty’. His work has failed to stand the test of time. It has been criticized for being superficial, impressionist and subjective, and for diverting attention away from the roots of poverty in the economic structure of society.

## **22.4 Poverty: Theoretical Framework**

Sociologists, have not typically viewed the question of poverty and the poor solely in terms of income. While in the past several years sociologists such as Peter Townsend,S.M.Miller and Martin Rein have been drawn to the question of the poverty line. Sociologist have taken the determination of poverty as their point of embarkation. What the precise income level is in the determination of poverty has not been the question so much as is the matter of the effect of that determination. Most sociologist have viewed poverty within the framework of social problems and have concerned themselves with the causes and effects of poverty, primarily by studying those who have been designated as poor. Others have argued that the sociologist study of poverty and the poor must also encompass the study of those who make the determination of poverty. The fact that the criteria used in the determination of poverty are not uniformly agreed upon

by economist and moreover until recently, rarely been of major concern to sociologists presents us with a number of important problems in examining sociological perspective of poverty. One serious problem is that it is very often difficult to ascertain whether sociologists are referring to the same population. Are 'the poor' discussed by one the same as the 'the poor' discussed by another. What of lower class, working class? One is forced to examine the context of the discussion and determine from that context whether or not the various studies are referring more or less to the same population. For the sociologist this determination rests upon the understanding that he or she is not actually defining the poverty level or the size of the poor population: others –economist, policy makers etc, have already done that. The second related difficulty with an examination of poverty and the poor is that the very term 'the poor' often obfuscates the fact that there are often different types of poverty and poor, even within the same society at the same time. Two major theories that have described poverty are:

### **1. The cultural perspective**

Since the 1960 it has been fashionable to speak of a 'culture of poverty' in U.S. This term, coined by Oscar Lewis and popularised by Michael Harrington, draws from one of the two major sociological conceptualisations and explanations of poverty in American society. It refers to the lives of the poor or at least many of the urban poor not only economically, but in many other respects as well. They being different or deviant with respect to a whole set of pattern of behavior, it is suggested, sets them apart basically from the rest of the society. According to the cultural perspective on poverty, the lower class is seen as manifesting patterns of behavior and values which are characteristically different from those of the dominant society and culture. Moreover, according to the culturalists, these unique patterns of behaviour and values are transmitted inter-generationally through socialization and have become the sub-cultural determinants of the lower socio-economic status of the poor.

### **2. The situational perspective**

In contrast to the cultural perspective, there is the alternative situational or structural perspective according to which poor are viewed in a very different light. Granting that the poor do manifest statistically unique pattern of behaviour, the situationalist argues that these derive not internally, generated by the unique values of the poor, but rather

externally, as the inevitable consequence of their occupying unfavorable position in a restrictive social structure. The poor behave differently not because they possess their own unique value systems. But on the contrary, because they possess their own unique value system, though they have internalized the dominant values but do not have the opportunity to realize these values through the socially sanctioned avenues. To loving about a change in so far as poverty is concerned, the situationalist argue, requires not changing the poor themselves, but rather changing their situation by correcting the restrictive social structure.

## **22.5 Poverty Studies in India**

Poverty studies in India have been preserve of the economists rather than sociologists (Bardhan and Srinivasan. 1974, Dantwala. 1973, Krisnaswami). They have been driven by the preoccupation with development planning in which economists have played leading part. The Planning Commission, set up soon after independence, played a leading part in initiating, stimulating and organizing the research on poverty. The cause, nature and eradication of poverty in India have been subjects of long debate. In the colonial period, the main pre-occupation of Indian writers on the topic was with the poverty of India. This was traced to exploitation by and unequal exchange with the imperial power. After de-colonization, the instruments of policy became national and the debate shifted inward to address poverty within India. This process of enquiry into conditions of poverty has been influenced by the government policies for the mitigation of poverty and inequality. Poverty reduction is a prominent objective of social and economic development in the Indian constitution, finding expressions in plans, policy statements and programmes. Poverty has long been recognized as an interlocking condition of assetlessness, underemployment, low-wages and incomes, proneness to diseases, illiteracy, gender, and economic vulnerability social disadvantage and political powerlessness. The condition itself is not sharply defined and enquiry into it has had certain distinctive preoccupations. These have varied from one phase to another.

The types of research studies on poverty in India can be classified into:

1. The early corpus of research in India has addressed the measurement of poverty, expressed in terms of a poverty line related to income or more commonly to estimates of consumption expenditure based on successive rounds of the National Sample Survey (NSS). The poverty line began life defined as a per capita monthly consumption of Rs.15 for the rural population or Rs.20 for the urban in 1960-61 prices (Planning Commission 1962). More recently this norm has been modified to the expenditure necessary to acquire a daily consumption of 2400 kilo calories in rural areas and 2100 in urban one (Planning Commission 1981). The poverty line is thus a concept closely related to subsistence survival. Research tended to focus on insights to be got from numbers, proportions, regional distribution and trends over time (Bardan and Srinivasan 1974) an influential argument related to the concept of the poverty line was also made for govt. action in the form of public works and employment generation programmes (Dandekar and Rath 1971). The analysis of trends in the incidence of both rural and urban poverty showed that it was characterized by fluctuations largely stemming from variation in agricultural output, which were the results of seasonal conditions. The proportion of people below the poverty line varied roughly between 40 and 50%, while absolute numbers of the rural poverty increased relentlessly.

2. A second concern has been more specifically with the breakdown of poverty by state or region (international labour organization 1977). Poverty studies at the regional levels also draw attention to inadequacies in basic needs fulfillments and to a whole host of specific macro-level features which are responsible for the incidence and perpetuation of poverty (Kurien, 1981 for Tamilnadu).

3. A third body of work has acted as a voluntary or co-opted vigilance force for the state and has critically evaluated the implementation and impact of Anti-poverty programmes, particularly those related to asset transfers and employment creation. These programmes appears to be characterized in the general run of such work, by inadequate scale, by narrowed reach down to the poor and by the proneness to waste, leakage and inefficiency inherent in bureaucratic delivery systems, exacerbated by lack of local participation.

4. In recent years research on poverty has branched off in a number of directions which go beyond the strict framework of the poverty line: exploring aspects of the

complexity of the condition such as the relationship between poverty and extreme events, ecological degradation, gender, age, caste and legal access; examining the conceptualization and experience of poverty of the poor themselves and carrying out participatory and action research ( Chambers ed.1989).

5. Related to this, the fifth type of poverty research consists of micro-level research studies of small localities, villages and slums are no recent phenomena. They have rarely addressed themselves explicitly to poverty or to Anti-poverty policy. Instead in examining economic structure, be they agrarian or urban, micro studies have located poverty socially, sought to understand the textures of deprivation and explored the processes and relations which create and perpetuate it. Many of these studies are specific and counterintuitive.

Poverty studies in India have concentrated on counting the number of units—usually households or individuals—falling below a certain level of consumption expenditure or income. Amartya Sen (1973) wrote, ‘The Indian poor may not be accustomed to receiving much help, but they are beginning to get used to being counted. The poor in this country have lately been lined up in all kinds of different ways and have subjected to several sophisticated head counts.’ It was widely believed among planners, policy makers and the intelligentsia that economic stagnation was at the root of most social evils and that economic growth would be the engine of social transformation. But later it was realized that both within and outside the Planning Commission that high rate of growth might be accompanied, particularly in the short run, by an increase rather than a decrease in poverty.

## **22.6 Urban Poverty**

The emergence during broadly the same historical period of industrial capitalism on the one hand and democratic institutions on the other set in motion important changes in poverty. The demographic and social dislocations of the early phase of the industrial revolution probably increased the magnitude, the severity and the intensity of poverty. They certainly made poverty more visible, particularly in the industrial towns and cities where large numbers of labouring poor were to be found, in and out of ill-paid and insecure employment. They received scientific attention from those from writers such as



Engels and Marx and literary attention from those such as Charles Dickens. Even the first great sociological studies of poverty in Britain, those by Booth and Rowntree, were studies of urban poverty. The new economic order created not only great poverty but also great wealth. Industrial capitalism changed the spatial distribution of population. In rural societies based agricultural and handicraft, poverty tend to be dispersed. It tends to be concentrated in industrial societies., particularly in the early stages of industrilisation. There is nothing really comparable to the industrial slums spawned by early capitalism in even relatively poor and stagnant agricultural societies. As Engels (1973) put in his classic account of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century England:

### **Reflection and Action 22.1**

Read on of the novels of Charles Dickens available in your local or Study Centre Library. Red it and then write an essay on the “poverty in England during the Industrial Revolution” basing on the description provided by Dickens in his novel.

Compare your description and analysis on poverty in England with those of other students at your study center.

Every great city has one or more slums, where the working class is crowded together. True, poverty often dwells in hidden alleys close to the palaces of the rich; but in general, a separate territory has been assigned to it, where, removed from the sight of the happier classes, it may struggle along as it can.

Poverty and overcrowding are the two most visible features of the industrial slum. Booth’s enquiry revealed the extent of concentration of poverty in the industrial and commercial capital of the world. A striking feature of his study was the use of maps showing the distribution of poverty in the city of London with different colours to indicate the degree of it street by street. It is not as if the territorial concentration of poverty or even the segregation of the poor was unknown in pre-industrial rural communities. India provides a classic example of segregation and exclusion prevalent since long before the advent of industrial capitalism. Detailed ethnographic studies have shown over and over again how certain sections of the village community, usually the

poorest, residentially segregated from and excluded from many of the common amenities of village life (Beteille 1965). Segregation and exclusion were governed by caste in India just as they were governed by race elsewhere, but poverty has a large part to play in these operations. Social disability and economic disadvantage went hand in hand in the past as they still do to a great extent. The studies by Booth, Rowntree and others were concerned with the social as well as the economic aspects of poverty. Income and expenditure were important, but other factors such as security of livelihood, disconnection from family and community and overcrowding, sanitation and health were also important. Sociological accounts of poverty tend to lack precision but they aim at a rounded picture. Individuals and families may suffer from a chronic sense of loss and deprivation even where there is an increase in their average earning and expenditure and poverty studies would remain incomplete unless they took some account of this sense of loss and deprivation. The early phase of industrial capitalism are marked throughout the world by large movements of population, from villages to towns and cities and across geographical and cultural regions. Although migration routes follow, even across large geographical distances, the ties of kinship, affinity and community, this does not always guarantee livelihood and security to the individual migrant. Economic hardship is often accompanied by social and cultural dislocation. The new settlements that emerge often have a makeshift character, and there is laxity in the rules for the regulation of conduct. Women and children become victims of new forms of social abuse.

## **22.7 Urban Poverty in India**

The acceleration of structural changes and poverty analysis is that, the level of urban is more closely linked with overall indicators of economic development than with specific indicators related to industrialization or urbanization. Indeed, the close correlation with level of rural poverty indicates that the two cannot be viewed separately. Given relatively high labour mobility, this is not surprising. Increasing level of urban welfare naturally pulls in job aspirants from rural areas if conditions there are much worse. Conversely, rural prosperity has its reflection in relative urban prosperity through generation of urban activities resulting from demand stimulation. It is also of some significance that the variance in rural poverty is much higher than in urban poverty. Urban activities are

essentially footloose- urban labour markets are probably more national in character than the rural labour markets. Moreover rural productivity is more clearly rooted in an immovable assets –land and hence less prone to greater variance between states. The rate of change in the employment structure has lagged far behind that of output and value added. Manufacturing activities have indeed grown apace but not perhaps fast enough. There is a clear evidence of an accelerating change in the employment structure also, contrary to the popular impression manufacturing employment and not the tertiary sector has been the fastest growing sector. There seems to have been a greater tendency of industrial dispersal up to the mid –1970 the subsequent. From the evidence it is difficult to argue that industrial dispersal had any significant effect on urban poverty removal- though the correlation of urban poverty and manufacture activity are generally in the right direction. The key regional pattern that emerges is really on east-west divide. The states with persistently high poverty level both rural and urban are Bihar, MP, Orissa, UP and Tamil Nadu. The advance states of West Bengal and Maharashtra are also exhibit high level of rural poverty. Thus the three traditionally advanced industrial states: West Bengal, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu all exhibits high levels of rural poverty. As a result their urban poverty levels are also not low as might have been expected. What is of great interest is that Haryana and Punjab are found to be the most successful in all spheres and this have been achieved without large-scale industrial investment. Yet the growth in manufacturing employment is among the highest in these states including employment in household industries, which is generally declining elsewhere. The level of urban poverty is lowest in these states as well, non-agricultural employment in both rural and urban areas.

Along with all these changes, urbanization also accelerated significantly in these states. So the key to removal of urban poverty is agricultural growth. It is difficult to sustain high growth rate in manufacturing activity and employment without the accompanying improvements in agricultural productivity. In deed the magnitude of non-agricultural employment growth that is needed for poverty removal can only occur if there is adequate growth in agricultural productivity. The evidence from the older industrialized states is clear: poverty removal in these states is stymied by languishing hinterlands

despite high levels of industrialization and urbanization. The effect of accelerated agricultural growth would be most felt in the generation of non-agricultural activities both in rural as well as in the small and medium towns whose primary function is the service of their hinterland.

Big cities are then indirectly affected through operation of the labour market and through enhanced demand for their products and services from the small and medium towns. The decay of the eastern region emerges as the most significant problem. The strategy of locating heavy industries in the eastern and central states has had little beneficial impact in terms of poverty removal. Vast areas in Bihar, MP, Orissa, UP, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka have very low productivity agricultural regions. Their levels of urbanization and industrialization are among the lowest in the world-along with some of the highest indices of poverty. Industrial dispersal in the absence of significant direct attack on agricultural productivity will do little to reduce urban or rural poverty in these areas. All the evidence suggests that the slow decrease in poverty in India has been caused by slow overall structural change. The fact that employment structure has changed much more slowly than that of value added suggest that the investment strategy has been wrong, being aimed at a dispersal of heavy and large industry rather than agriculture and light industries. A self-sustaining plan poverty removal in urban and rural areas can only be reached if the investment strategy is oriented toward a much more accelerated generation of non-agricultural employment.

### **Reflection and Action 22.2**

Conduct a field study by visiting a nearby village or town or a municipal cooperation in a city where you live. Interview at least 10 people across different class and occupations, such as, wage labourers clerks, bank officers, administrative officers, etc. Ask them to give such information as amount of wages or salaries they get; how much they send per month on consumable items and how many a non-consumable durable items

Write a report on “Poverty: Reality or Perception” in about two pages based on your own assessment of the accounts gathered by you. Discuss the report with other students at your study center.

## **22.8 Globalization and poverty**

Under economic globalization, many countries have opened up their economies to free flow of finance capital, technology and goods. This has de established many of the - traditional industries and led to reemployment of productive resources. It has also led to the reduction in the role of the state and shift from welfare to a market friendly system of governance. In urban sector it has meant handing over the responsibility of providing certain basic amenities to the private sector under commercial framework. While this has been the case in all urban areas it can be seen more clearly in large cities. Further it has meant large-scale displacement or eviction of slums for allocating of more land for commercial and other profitable usages.

Although the process of globalization strong and often all encompassing, the local communities have continued to pursue is their own demand and agendas. In countries having a democratic polity like India, the conflicts and contradictions between the counterveiling forces are more evident. In most of the less developed countries in the world rural poverty agenda has dominated the national policy debates and urban poverty is being neglected. Unfortunately, there is not much recognition of the fact that unless the process of urban industrial development is guided within a macro-economic frame work and if urbanization cases are not well managed, the deficiencies in the basic services such as housing, water supply and sanitation, etc are likely to acquire alarming proportions, which would jeopardize the survival strategy or the coping mechanisms of the urban poor.

Experience of Latin American countries, which underwent globalization in 1980 under external compulsions, shows that in several of these countries, urban poverty increased starkly. With it came up the problems of insecurity of property and life of the elite, group violence unhygienic living conditions and epidemics. Also the social structure got reorganized and there was an increase in female-headed households in the urban areas. Increase inequalities led to higher levels of relative poverty. The process of urbanization has not been healthy and has felt to promote balanced regional development in India.

After liberalization, new industries have often been located in the villages and small towns around the big cities, due to easy availability of land, access to unorganized labour market and less stringent implementation of environmental regulation. This has resulted in what may be described as “degenerated peripheralisation” where the pollutant industries and poor migrants are obliged to locate in the hinterland that have very poor quality of living. The smaller urban centres in the country are more rooted in their regional economy and thereby experience on an average low and unstable demographic growth. The few cities of which are emerging as global centres, on the other hand, exhibit high and steady demographic growth reflecting strength of their economic base.

## **22.9 The Changing Policy Perspective on Poverty**

Poverty in India has generally been seen as a problem of rural areas at the policy making level, as has been the case of many less developed countries. Official statistics supported this view until the 1980s, when urban poverty levels were about 8 to 10 % points below rural levels, irrespective of the poverty lines and price indices used by experts in their calculations. But the scenario has changed significantly in recent years. By the late 1980s the gap between the two poverty levels narrowed so much that the Expert group on poverty measurement, set up by the Planning Commission, reported a higher figure for urban than rural. In the 1990s though urban poverty levels have once again dipped below rural poverty, the rural-urban poverty differential in 1993-94 was narrower than in early 1980 or before. The Planning Commission using the controversial consumption expenditure data from the 55<sup>th</sup> round of the NSS for the year 1999-2000, the gap between the rural and urban poverty has gone up.

Table no. 1  
Trends in poverty in India

S. No.	Year	Number and Percentage of Poor					
		Rural		Urban		Combined	
		No. (lakh)	%	No. (lakh)	%	No. (lakh)	%
1	1973-74	2612.91	56.44	603.12	49.23	3216.03	54.93
2	1977-78	2642.46	53.07	677.40	47.40	3319.86	51.81
3	1983	2517.15	45.61	752.93	42.15	3270.08	44.76
4	1987-88	2293.96	39.06	833.52	40.12	3127.48	39.34
5	1993-94*	----	33.35	----	33.84	----	33.47
6	1999-2000**	1932.43	27.09	670.07	23.62	2602.50	26.10

Source: Amitabh Kundu and Darshini Mahadevia (Eds.). 2002. Poverty and Vulnerability in a globalising metropolis Ahmedabad, New Delhi.

In many Indian states, urban poverty is due to lack of economic development in others it is due to the nature of development itself. Urban poverty thus appears to be a complex phenomenon requiring serious attention of administrators and policy makers. It is often argued that urban areas do not need government support or budgetary resources to tackle their problems. People here have higher income level and can mobilize resources internally or receive investments from capital market. While the urban sector has indeed attracted more private sector resources, particularly since the launch of structural adjustment programmes, most of the investment has gone to commercially viable infrastructure projects. Funds for slum improvements have been extremely meagre. Given the political economy putting forward demand for transparency, discouraging transfer of funds across sectors. It is difficult for the local government to mobilize resources from rich areas within the city and cross subsidies civic amenities in slum colonies.

## 22.10 Conclusion

While in the late nineteenth century poverty in Britain was viewed mainly as a social problem, in mid 20<sup>th</sup> century India it was viewed as economic one, more specifically as problem arising out of economic backwardness. It is undeniable that economic stagnation and backwardness make the removal of poverty very difficult. It is very difficult, and this is particularly true when economic stagnation is accompanied by high population growth.

But poverty including absolute poverty persists even in countries that are economically advanced and have little population growth.

The assault on poverty in India has relied on four types of strategy: growth, redistribution, basic needs and direct-targeted programmes. This classification can be used to present a resume of performance. The long-term growth rate since independence has been 3.8 %, though this declines to 1.1 % after allowing for population growth. Growth however has been uneven over time, space and sectors of the economy. In this mixed picture, economic growth has at best constrained the spread of poverty and at worst has accentuated structural and regional inequalities. The redistribution of assets by means of land reform has been repeatedly proclaimed as a national objective, while responsibility for implementation has been vested in states. Ideological commitments to land reform have been weakened by the need to mediate between competing classes of beneficiaries (the land less and small peasant) and adjudicate between compensated and coerced redistribution and by difficulties in determining and implementing land ceiling. As a result, while 10-12% of cropland might be potentially available for redistribution. Basic needs provision did not await the initiative of either academic or international advocacy. Large proportions of the poor lived with few and variable 'minimum needs'. Their provision varies state- wise according to rural- urban location, gender and castes status. Minimum needs provision is neither decentralized nor is it directed at primary levels of deprivation. Direct programmes, the type of intervention have been related to the concept of target group. This concept itself has been derived from the poverty line which demarcates the technically (income or consumption based) poor and the technically not poor. The concept of the poverty line and of target groups are thus closely related.

### **22.11 Further Reading**

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