

## Issues relating to Poverty and Hunger

\* What are the issues relating to regarding definition of poverty? and different concepts of Poverty?

→ There has been long standing disputes whether poverty should be measured in absolute or relative terms. This can be better understood in the context of two different bro. approaches - one that considers only material deprivations and other that includes notions of social exclusion as well.

1. Absolute Poverty - People are in Poverty if they do not have resources to maintain human life. Poverty implies lack of resources. Here attempt is made to judge the basic subsistence needs that are required to maintain health and physical efficiency. Here measure of poverty are based on the idea of subsistence. This is also called as 'subsistence poverty' since it is based on assessment of minimum subsistence requirement.

2. Relative Poverty - argue that a definition must relate to standards of particular society at a particular time. People are in Poverty if there resources are much below <sup>of</sup> these average individuals, they are excluded from ordinary living patterns customs and activities.

→ they lack resources to obtain such diets, activities, living conditions and amenities which are customary or widely encouraged or approved in societies to which they belong. Thus it includes social exclusion and multiple deprivations.

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**Relative Poverty** :- argue that a definition must relate to standards of particular society at a particular time. People are in Poverty if their resources are much below these average individuals, they are excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities.

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**Other ways of categorising poverty** :- People who are always poor and those who are

who may some times have a little more money (casual workers) are grouped together as the chronic poor.

→ churning poor - who regularly move in and out of poverty (small farmers & seasonal workers) and occasionally poor who are rich most of the time but may sometimes have a patch of bad luck. They are called transient poor.

→ Those who are never poor and they are the non-poor.

\* What are the issues arising while using these years different concepts of poverty?

Absolute Poverty - Establishing a yardstick to measure poverty line. It should be applicable to all societies. Yardstick is known as poverty line below which poverty begins and above which poverty ends. Poverty line is based on resources required to maintain health and physical efficiency. However this raises the issue of pricing the basic necessities and using it to draw the poverty line.

→ There is no consensus on what should be included as basic necessities. While some argue that only health, nutrition, clothing & shelter be included, others have argued that basic cultural needs like education, security, leisure etc. should also be included, this broadens the idea of basic human needs by introducing the idea of basic cultural needs.

→ There have been arguments that concept of Absolute poverty is based on wrong assumption that these are minimum basic needs for all people in all of societies rather needs vary b/w and within societies.

→ It has also been argued that no account of the kind of and demand of occupation

this makes it difficult to define nutritional needs.  
→ It becomes even more difficult when it is broadened to include the idea of cultural needs, which vary from place to place and time to time. Therefore absolute standards cannot be fixed.

Relative Poverty - It can be measured only in terms of judgements by members of a particular society this introduces subjectivity.  
→ It involves preparing a deprivation index this index covers both material and social deprivations. This requires finding income below which deprivations increases rapidly. Households with less than this income are in poverty. But such a deprivation index have following issues:-

- i) The index may be inadequate.
- ii) Item in the index may not represent people's view, rather that of an expert.
- iii) It introduces subjectivity.
- iv) Decisions to include certain items are arbitrary.
- v) The point at which poverty starts is also arbitrary.
- vi) No account of ethnicity, class, age, religion.

Another issue is relationship b/w Inequality and Poverty. Any society which has inequality will have Relative Poverty this raises the issue whether there is no poverty if there is no inequality. This line of argument is however wrong. Relative poverty can only supplement, not supplant Absolute poverty.

What are the different models adopted to estimate poverty over the years?

→ The Planned Commission appointed a panel headed by Y K Alagh, which defined the