

# A Sociological Perspective on Poverty Eradication and Social Justice

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**Abstract:** *The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said, “Ending poverty is not a matter of charity, but a question of justice.” UNAI member institution in India serving as the UNAI SDG Hub for Goal 1 – No Poverty, through its Department of Social Work and in association with civil society partners like World Vision India, organized a national colloquium on Ending Poverty: A Pathway to Social Justice. Local authorities and more than 200 scholars as well social workers and students discussed what countries needed to do in order to meet the goals contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the design, development and further implementation of rigorous measures to combat poverty and the need to go beyond income poverty measures in the fight for economic inclusion. According to the 2019 United Nations Report on the Sustainable Development Goals, “the decline of extreme poverty continues, but the pace has slowed, and the world is not on track to achieving the target of ending poverty by 2030.” Participants discussed the role of academia in developing policies that can help re-focus efforts on and accelerate the eradication of poverty. The Eliminating poverty and advancing social justice are twogoals that go hand-in-hand and are essential for building an equitable society. A good society is a place where people’s values are respected and where they are able to liveout their aspirations of happiness, development, and fulfillment while making a positive contribution to society. This paper examines how poverty is multifaceted andhow it intersects with social justice. The five principles outlined in this paper envisions society in which individuals possess the necessary resources to be content and free to lead meaningful lives. It highlights the need for holistic strategies to address systemic inequities. It examines how government policies, empowerment of communities, education and economic opportunities can fight poverty and promote social justice.*

**Keywords:** Poverty eradication, social justice, good society, equitable society, government policies

## I. INTRODUCTION

A good society without poverty is one where everyone has access to essential needs and opportunities, eliminating the existence of financial disparity and ensuring that individual can leave a meaningful life. In such a society, basic needs like food, clothing, shelter, healthcare and education are accessible to everyone. Social support, economic equality and a strong safety play a pivotal role in creating a society where poverty is minimized or eradicated. In these ideal society, people can pursue their talents, ambitions and goals without the hindrance of poverty, fostering a more prosperous and equitable community for all.

For a good society without poverty, we need to reevaluate poverty. Welfare Government will no longer cater to our social needs. We need to revive ourselves if we want to move forward. In order to begin the process of redefining poverty, it is necessary to consider whether the concept of poverty should be used to create political and emotional divisions. This concept has historically been used to divide people, which has resulted in a lack of support for policies designed to alleviate poverty. A better approach is to build the society we want instead of creating poverty as a problem to be solved. We live in a society where a wealthy minority flourishes while one fifth live in long term poverty and many middle incomes people worry about their future. Social policy has not been able to address these issues, and now a new narrative needs to be created in order to escape the current state of affairs in society. It necessitates a daring outlook on social policy that speaks of long-term austerity, unsustainable institutions and social divisions.

## II. CONCEPT OF GOOD SOCIETY

The good society, on the other hand, is one in which these principles are respected and where individuals are able to pursue their aspirations of happiness, personal development, and fulfillment while contributing to the overall well-being of society. However, the definition of a good society may differ between cultures and individuals. “This finding is in line with numerous other findings from happiness research” Once basic material needs are taken care of, additional income adds very little to one’s happiness. “Economics plays a supporting role necessary up to a certain point to ensure that one has enough money to live a good life, but then human relationships, social interaction, and human ingenuity take on greater importance” <sup>1</sup>The concept of a good society is constantly changing, but these fundamental principles serve as a basis for constructing a more equitable and harmonious society. A good society is characterized by a few key elements, including:

1. **EQUALITY:** Achieving equality in a society free of poverty is a fundamental goal. It implies that all individuals in the society are able to access the essential resources of life, including food, housing, health care, and education. further more, there should be no extreme inequalities in wealth or opportunity. This objective is often achieved through a combination of sociolect-economic policies, economic structures, and cultural beliefs that prioritize equity and justice. Although it is a difficult goal, many societies seek to alleviate poverty and foster equality rough a variety of strategies, including progressive taxation, safety net programs, and policies designed to reduce income inequality. In spite of the constitutional safeguards, India is still struggling to achieve equality, especially when it comes to gender, caste and economic disparities. For instance, according to World Economic Forum’s<sup>2</sup>Global Gender Gap report, India has risen eight spots from its previous position in 2022 when it comes to gender equality indicators including economic participation, opportunity and political empowerment.
1. **2 EDUCATION:** In a poverty-free society, where the value of education is paramount, a virtuous cycle of education is established, which promotes economic growth, social justice, and the prosperity of individuals and society as a whole. The state invests in education in order to equip its citizens with the knowledge and skills necessary for intellectual development and innovation, as well as lifelong learning. India has made progress in terms of access to education. The Right to Education Act aims at providing free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of 6 and 14. However, challenges remain in terms of quality, infrastructure and urban-rural disparities. Case studies have shown that initiatives such as the Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) have positively impacted school attendance and nutrition outcomes among children in some areas.
2. **HEALTHCARE:** A society without poverty can create an environment conducive to access to, and quality of, health care. This can lead to improved health outcomes and a better quality of life for society’s members. Society can encourage healthy living through programs such as exercise and healthy eating, which can reduce healthcare needs. Additionally, healthcare providers can focus on providing quality care without the financial constraints that come with poverty. For instance: A good society also has access to quality healthcare that is affordable and accessible to all, thus promoting a healthy and prosperous population. While India has made strides in reducing Maternal and Child Mortality (MCM) rates, there is still a lack of access to basic health services and quality health care facilities, especially in rural areas.
3. **ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES:** Achieving economic opportunity in a poverty-free society typically requires policies and practices that promote access to education, health care, and work for all members of society. A poverty-free society requires a mix of policies, social interventions, and a dedication to social justice and equity. It is a multifaceted and continuous process that governments, companies, and communities must collaborate on. For example: Initiatives such as MNREGA and Skill India are helpingsignificant percentage of youth to find employment, especially among young people and people belonging to marginalized communities.

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<sup>1</sup>Maslow 1943.3

<sup>2</sup> WEF

## **WHAT WE DESIRE AND WHAT WE HAVE**

It is clear that the current society we inhabit is significantly different from the society we want.

### **The Five Pillars of Good Society:**

#### **1. Decent standard of living:**

It includes access to essential goods and services, such as food and shelter, health care and education. Decent standards of living ensure that people and families have enough resources to meet their basic needs and have a fair standard of living. This pillar addresses poverty, inequality and makes sure that everyone has enough resources to live a good life and participate in society.

#### **2. Safety and Autonomy:**

The concept of safety and autonomy is essential for the well-being of people. It includes protection from harm, crime, discrimination, and the ability to make decisions without being forced or forced by others. People should be able to do what they want, express themselves, live according to their beliefs, and be free from any kind of threat to their safety or freedom.

#### **3. Potential and growth both physically and emotionally:**

Human beings have an innate drive for growth and development, both in terms of physical and emotional development. This pillar focuses on helping people achieve their full potential by providing them with access to education, personal growth, and resources that promote physical and mental health. This includes nurturing talents, creativity, and lifelong learning.

#### **4. Participate, contribute and treat everyone with respect:**

A good society is a place where everyone has the right to play a part in decision-making and contribute to the well-being of society as a whole. It is a place of inclusiveness, diversity, and respect for others, where everyone's voice is heard and respected. A good society recognizes the dignity and worth of everyone and treats others with kindness, compassion, and justice

#### **5. Build a just and equitable future for future generations:**

Building a Just and Fair Future Systems and structures that foster fairness, justice and equality for present and future generations. This pillar addresses systemic inequalities, promotes social and economic justice, and protects the planet for generations to come. It calls for collective action to tackle poverty, discrimination and climate change, as well as inter-generational inequalities, so that future generations can inherit a sustainable, prosperous and just world. The five principles outlined above envision a society in which individuals possess the necessary resources to be content and free to lead meaningful lives. By achieving this, individuals would be able to foster relationships of care and respect, as well as cultivate their own creativity, while contributing to the development of a sustainable future for themselves and future generations.

However, envisioning a poverty-free future is based on people trying to get the most out of their money. We measure success by how many people shop and how much GDP per capital goes up each year. Unfortunately, this system has led to a situation where a wealthy group can live comfortably while one fifth of people are living in chronic poverty and a lot of middle class people are worried about their future. In a poverty-free society, the gap between what is desired and what is currently available is often considerable. This need for transformation is a powerful incentive for social progress. how it typically unfolds:

#### **1. DESIRED VISION:**

Our vision is to construct a society in which poverty is eliminated. This vision necessitates that all individuals have access to essential goods, education, medical care, and the right to live a dignified life.

#### **2. MEASURING PROGRESS:**

Measuring progress is all about using metrics and data to track how far we've come in reducing poverty, like how many people are living in poverty, how much education and healthcare we can access, and how much economic mobility we can take advantage of.

In order to combat poverty and promote a more just society, it is essential to make modifications to policies and institutions. This may involve the implementation of social security systems, affordable housing programs, and job-creation initiatives by governments.

4. **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:** A poverty-free society typically requires a high level of public involvement. People engage in philanthropic activities, volunteer work, and community-based initiatives to help those in need. The goal of poverty eradication is a long-term endeavour. It involves adapting to changing conditions and developing a vision of a society in which no one is excluded.

#### **ROLE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE TO MAKE A GOOD SOCIETY**

In order to create a poverty-free society, social justice is essential to address the underlying causes of poverty and social inequality. Social justice is the pursuit of justice, equality, and opportunity for all people within a society. Social justice policies can help to eliminate poverty and create a more equitable and sustainable society. The pursuit of poverty-free society is based on fundamental values such as decent living, safety, freedom of action, and opportunities for individual and collective development. It also involves promoting a culture of dignity, care, and involvement while building a just and sustainable society for future generations. Everyone has a different idea of what a good society is, and there's no one-size-fits-all answer. In order to create a society free of poverty, a citizen's mind-set is essential. This mind-set is composed of a number of core principles and activities. The most fundamental of these is the cultivation of empathy and sympathy towards those in less fortunate circumstances. This is because poverty is not always the result of individual failure, but rather is often a result of a variety of systemic factors. People with this mentality are willing to lend a helping hand to those in need, whether it be through voluntary activities, charitable contributions, or by contributing to social programs that safeguard the most vulnerable in society.

In addition, by promoting empathy, the process of policy-making becomes more inclusive, which, when combined with active civic engagement, ensures that the needs of marginalized communities are met. Policies that promote equal access to opportunities and resources, both at home and abroad, can also go a long way toward poverty reduction. Global cooperation strengthens these efforts by allowing for the exchange of knowledge, the allocation of resources, and the coordination of action on a global scale, all of which contribute to social justice and the achievement of poverty eradication. Poverty is a complex issue that needs to be addressed in all aspects of our lives. Investing in quality education is key to providing people with the skills they need to succeed in the job market and improve their economic mobility. Jobs should be created with fair pay, social safety nets should be strong, affordable housing should be available, and healthcare should be accessible. Taxation should be progressive, a fair wage should be set, and economic development should be increased to redistribute wealth and reduce income inequality. Access to affordable credit should also be improved, and community support networks should be strengthened. To make sure everyone has equal opportunities, it's important to promote diversity, equality, and inclusion. Finally, by supporting international aid in developing countries, we can help reduce global poverty rates and make the world a better place. To achieve poverty-free societies, we need to work together, have strong policies, and stay committed to social justice. In the final analysis, the citizens' mind-set is a key factor in achieving social justice and a cycle of poverty eradication. It refers to the ways, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of people within a society that shape how they interact with each other and the systems that surround them. By understanding how these intersect and influence each other, we can find ways to create a more just, inclusive society. A citizenry that is empathetic and sees the world as a place of justice and equity will be more likely to support systemic change that addresses inequality and lifts up marginalized communities. Fostering a culture of collective solidarity, as it can also help to amplify individual efforts and build a stronger foundation for sustained poverty eradication efforts. embracing the values of justice, compassion and empowerment, individuals become agents of transformation change and catalyze progress toward a more just, equitable world.

#### **POLICIES BY GOVERNMENT FOR WELFARE OF POOR PEOPLE**

India is a predominantly agricultural nation, with approximately 70 per cent of its population dependent on land for their sustenance and 75 per cent living in rural areas. The economic crisis has caused a decrease in per capita income, literacy, and widespread malnutrition and malnourished among Indian villages, which are deprived of essential amenities such as housing, transportation, and communication services. Government policies play an important role in poverty reduction by providing frameworks and tools to address socio-economic disparities. These policies include social welfare programs, educational reforms, access to health care, and job opportunities. By targeting specific interventions, governments can reduce the underlying causes of poverty, strengthen economic stability, and promote

inclusive growth. Effective policies not only lift people out of poverty, but also help build resilient and just societies. Governments have implemented various programs and policies in one way or another to eliminate poverty and create a poverty-free society.

These policies include:

#### **A. FOOD SECURITY SCHEMES:**

A food security scheme is a government program designed to provide adequate and nutritious food to all citizens. It may not eliminate poverty, but it can help reduce some of its consequences. A food security scheme typically involves subsidizing or providing low-cost food to low-income people and families, providing nutritional assistance, and providing social safety nets to combat hunger. It is part of a wider strategy to combat poverty and improve the lives of vulnerable people. How effective a food security scheme is depending on how it is designed, implemented, and the wider economic and social conditions in which it operates. (a) PradhanMantriGaribKalyan Ann Yojana(PMGKAY)<sup>5</sup> An integrated food security scheme to provide free food grains to **AAY** (Anthyodaya AnnaYojana) and **PHH** (Primary Household) beneficiaries from 1st Jan 2023. In the interest of the well-being of the beneficiaries and to ensure uniformity across the states, free food grains will be distributed under the **PMGKAY** scheme for the year of 2023 to all beneficiaries of the Public Health Scheme (**PHH**) and **AAY**, in accordance with their entitlement under the National Food Security Act (**NFSA**). The integrated scheme will reinforce the availability, affordability and accessibility of foodgrains to the poor. The aim of the **PMGKAY** is: 1. to the benefit of over 80 crore poor and poor people 2. to provide guidance on margin to the Fair Price Shop Dealers. 3. to provide zero prices in print receipts to the beneficiaries 4. to provide over Rs 2 lakh crore as food subsidies in 2023 5. to eliminate the financial burden on the poor and the poor people (b) National Food Security Mission<sup>6</sup> Special provisions have been made for supplementary nutrition for pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers and children between 6 months and 14 years of age. National food security mission was introduced in July 2013 with the aim of providing highly subsidized food grains for up to 75% of the rural population and up to 50% of the urban population. The life cycle approach of the NFSA is one of its key principles. The aim of the scheme is to provide nutritious food to: 1. Every pregnant woman and breastfeeding mothers are eligible for free meals during pregnancy and for six months after giving birth, so they can meet the nutritional standards and get maternity benefit. 2. Every child between six months and six years of age is also eligible for free meals, and 3. If they're in class VIII or six to fourteen, they'll get one free meal every day, except on holidays. 4. if they're underweight, they'll get a free meal too.

#### **B. EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE SCHEME:**

Employment guarantee schemes (EGS) are government programs that provide temporary wage-based employment to rural households. These schemes generate income and improve the standard of living. They also aim at creating public assets and social inclusion, thereby promoting economic growth and reducing social disparities. These programs help in providing food security to vulnerable people. However, their effectiveness depends on implementation and economic conditions. a) The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)<sup>7</sup> The primary focus of the Government is the generation of employment and the enhancement of employability. The Ministry of Rural Development is currently implementing the '**MGNREGA**' Act, 2005, which guarantees a minimum of one hundred days of wage-based employment to each household whose adult members voluntarily undertake unskilled manual work in each financial year. The main objective of these scheme is to be: 1. Ensure 100 days wage employment for all adult members of rural households within a financial year. 2. Focus on rural areas to tackle unemployment and under-employment in rural areas. 3. It provides predominantly unskilled manual labor, which can be employed in a variety of sectors, including road construction, energy conservation, and public works. 4. Aim to alleviate poverty and increase income for rural households by providing employment. 7PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU, [HTTPS://PIB.GOV.IN](https://pib.gov.in) (LAST VISITED APRIL 15, 2024) © 2024. b) DeenDayalUpadhyay – GraminKaushalyaYojana (DDU-GKY)<sup>8</sup> To provide skill development to poor rural youth by offering them jobs with a regular monthly wage or higher DDU-GKY was started. The criteria of these program are: 1. The scheme is part of the national rural livelihood mission. 2. The two main objectives of the scheme are: 3. To bring diversity to rural poor families' incomes 4. To support rural youth's



career aspirations 5. The scheme targets rural poor youth aged 15-35. 6. The scheme is a demand driven skills training programme that is linked to placements. 7. For women and other vulnerable groups like persons with disabilities, the upper age limit is relaxed to 45 years.

### C. FINANCIAL INCLUSION SCHEME:

Financial inclusion schemes are often implemented by governments to reduce poverty. The purpose of these schemes is to provide financial services to poor or underprivileged people, including banking, credit and insurance. When implemented properly, financial inclusion schemes can help reduce poverty and promote economic growth by helping people and communities save, invest and protect their money. a) PradhanMantri Jan Dhan Yojana<sup>9</sup> India's flagship initiative for fundraising, with the aim of providing affordable financial services, including savings and deposit accounts and remittances, insurance, pensions, etc. The project was launched in 2014 on the eve of India's Independence Day. According to the government, 60 per cent of the total accounts<sup>3</sup> are in rural areas, while 40 per cent are in urban areas. About 51 per cent of the accounts are owned by women. 1. There is no minimum balance requirement 2. Overdraft of Rs 10,000 or more per household gets an account preferably to housewives. 3. 4 percent interest rate per annum 4. Accident insurance amount Rs 1 lakh 5. Lifetime insurance amount Rs 30,000 6. Members of the weaker section, Minors under 10 years of age can avail this scheme when there is Guardian available to manage the account 7. Account can be opened in any bank branch and business reporter i.e., Bank Mitra.

### D. EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT SCHEME:

The pursuit of education is essential for the advancement of a nation, and this educational program will contribute to the eradication of poverty. This is only achievable when all daughters of the nation are educated, and this ambition is realized through the implementation of scholarships and programs that guarantee access to educational opportunities for children from economically weaker section. a) SukanyaSamridhiYojana (SSY)<sup>10</sup> The government of India stated small deposit scheme for girl child. This scheme is launched as part of the BetibachaoBetipadhao Campaign. It is intended for girl child's education and marriage related expenses. This scheme includes: • Parents and guardians are eligible for tax exemptions up to a limit of Rs.1.5 lakhs per financial year. • A minimum deposit of Rs.1,000 is allowed, while a maximum deposit of Rs1.5 lakh is permitted. 10 MYGOV.IN, [HTTPS://TRANSFORMINGINDIA.MYGOV.IN](https://transformingindia.mygov.in) (LAST VISITED APRIL 20, 2024) •The parent or guardian is required to have invested in the account for a period of 15 years from the opening date. Interest is then earned on the account until maturity. • If the woman wishes, she can withdraw 50% of the amount from the account after she turns 18 for higher education. • The account is only open in the name of girls aged 10 and under. Only two (SSY) accounts per family are permitted.

### III. CONCLUSION

Poverty has become one of the major issues in the world. Generally, when we look at information about poverty, we can see that poverty is common in developing countries. Eliminating poverty and advancing social justice are the building blocks for a poverty-free society. By providing equal access to goods and services, education, health care, and opportunity, we lay the foundations for a society in which all people can flourish. This ultimately leads to a society in which everyone can play a meaningful role in economic development and social advancement. Through pro active policies and concerted action, we can build a more equitable and inclusive society in which poverty is no longer an impediment to human flourishing. It's a common misconception that if the free market can't solve social issues, government can. Citizens and government can work together to create a society free of poverty. Social responsibility can be achieved by working together on multiple levels. On one hand Governments can promote responsible behavior through policies, such as tax incentives for green initiatives or grants for community engagement. On the other, citizens can actively engage in decision-making, voice their concerns and hold elected officials to account. By working

<sup>3</sup>8 e-shramevjayate, <https://eshram.gov.in> (last visited april 15, 2024) <sup>9</sup> [pradhanmantrijandhanyojana, https://pmjdy.gov.in](https://pmjdy.gov.in) (last visited april 17, 2024) © 2024.

together, citizens and governments can create a culture of accountability where each party plays an important role in building a better society. By working together on social responsibility, we can create a shared vision of a better future for everyone. © 2024

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