

**A STRATEGY FOR POVERTY ERADICATION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA**

Dr. Rajni Sharma

Assistant professor

University of Jammu

Abstract

In India economic growth make it possible for expansion of productive employment and generation of resources, which are vital to support any form of intervention for eradication of poverty. This paper study that poverty reduction has been the over riding objective of development planning in India and since 1991 India has undertaken trade reforms, financial sector reforms, and removal of controls, which primarily were introduced with the objective of improving efficiency and productivity to accelerate growth. The ultimate objective of such reforms was ensuring the expeditious eradication of poverty. Satisfactory precaution was taken to protect the poorer sections of the society against the short-term effects of these changes. This was done mainly through increased allocation of resources for programmes for poor in the national plan and sharpening the focus of such programmes on the poor. According to the Brundtland report sustainable development means the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Widespread poverty is an enduring problem and poverty alleviation has been a key component in development strategies over the past 50 years. In India for poverty reduction most programmes are implemented at the block/village level, where local bodies and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) play a significant role together with NGOs. The enactment of the 73rd and 74th Amendments of the Constitution have provided a framework for decentralization of governance and local participation in the formulation and implementation of plans for economic development and social justice including environmental protection and provision of basic services like water supply, sanitation and solid waste management.

Keywords: *Human Development Indicator, employment and labour welfare, population and health, Sustainable human settlements and Education*

Introduction

Economic growth will not reduce poverty, improve equality and produce jobs unless it is inclusive. Inclusive growth is also essential for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Poverty eradication is one of the major objectives of planned development. There has been over time a conceptual broadening in the notions of well being and deprivation. The notion of well being has shifted away from just material attainments, or the means for development, to outcomes that are either desirable in them or desirable because of their role in holding up better opportunities for people. Similarly, it is recognized that poverty is a multi-faceted phenomenon going beyond lack of satisfactory income and must be viewed as a state of deprivation spanning the social, economic and political context of the people that prevents their effective participation as equals in the development process. This recognition has resulted in a renewed focus on education and health- critical for capacity building- and other social and environmental factors that have a direct bearing on the state of well being (Planning Commission, 2002). Since Independence, the government has accordingly followed a three-pronged strategy for poverty eradication, which comprises:

1. Economic growth and overall development
2. Human development with emphasis on health, education and minimum needs, including protection of human rights and raising the social status of the weak and poor
3. Directly-targeted programmes for poverty alleviation through employment generation, training and building up asset endowment of the poor.

Thirty six per cent of the Indian population was below poverty line (BPL) in 1993-94, the latest year for which the data are available and the absolute number of poor was 320 million, out of which 244 million (37 per cent of the rural population) lived in rural areas. The incidence of poverty declined from 54.9 per cent in 1973-74 to 36 per cent in 1993-94. But the absolute number of poor did not decline much over this period of 20 years. According to the latest NSSO data for the year 2004-05, poverty in level in India has come down to 21.8% as compared to 36% in 1993 94. In urban areas, the level fell down 23.6% in 1999-2000 to 21.7% in 2004-05 while in

rural areas the poverty level came down from 27.1% to 21.8% during the same period as per mixed recall period (MRP).

The new poverty data reveals that the poverty level fell around 0.86% point per year between 1993-94 and 2004-05 (i.e post reforms period), which is marginally higher than the 0.81 % point between 1983-and 1993-94 (i.e pre-reforms period).

Economic growth is important and it creates more resources and has the potential of creating more space for the involvement of the poor. But the involvement of the poor depends on the sources of growth and the nature of growth. If the growth is sourced upon those sectors of the economy or those activities which have a natural tendency to involve the poor in their expansion, such growth helps poverty eradication. Therefore, it is important to source a large part of economic growth in agriculture, in rural non-agricultural activities and in productive expansion of the informal sector which all have high employment elasticity, as well as in an export strategy based on labour intensive exports.

Literature of the study

During the different plans period the strategies and approaches to tackle the problem have changed. In the 1950s and 1960s, efforts often involved investments in large-scale physical infrastructure projects, while in the 1970s the focus shifted to the development of human capital. During the 1980s, the emphasis moved toward decentralized decision-making, trade liberalization and economic reform. However, in spite of some progress in addressing poverty, the problem remains. Almost half the world's population currently lives on less than two dollars a day. In recent years, tackling such widespread poverty appears once more to have become a priority issue for many aid agencies. The issue was highlighted by Joseph Stiglitz of the World Bank in his Prebisch Lecture at the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 1998. In this lecture, Stiglitz called for a major change in strategy that emphasizes development as a transformation of society. His proposal focused on the need for cooperation among stakeholders and for the development of appropriate institutional structures. The idea of social capital – comprised of both formal and informal institutions and interactions – was a major component of his approach. In September 1999, the World Bank and International Monetary

Fund adopted a new framework for achieving sustainable poverty reduction that requires nationally-owned poverty reduction strategies – contained in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) – to serve as the basis for concessional lending and for debt relief within the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. Concept of human development of more significance Human Development is a development paradigm that is of more significance than the rise or fall of national incomes. It is about creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential and lead productive and creative lives in accord with their needs and interests. People are the real wealth of nations. Development is thus about expanding the choices people have to lead lives that they value. Therefore, much more than economic growth which is only means of enlarging people's choices (Mahbub ul Haq, 1998). Human development is related to economics and standards of living.

Human capital refers to the stock of competences, knowledge and personality attributes Embodied in the ability to perform labour so as to produce economic value. It is the attributes gained by a worker through education and experience. Many early economic theories refer to it simply as workforce, one of three factors of production, and consider it to be a fungible resource – homogeneous and easily interchangeable. Other conceptions of labour dispense with these assumptions. Human capital theory predicts that more educated individuals are more productive. According to the theory, productivity of labour is high with educated individuals and consequently they contribute far more to the level of national income and also earn higher income than their uneducated counterparts. Furthermore, education is a good measure of human development and the relationship between human development and poverty level has a significant effect on economic growth and development in some selected countries of the world.

Human Development Indicator and Poverty Redaction

A functional relationship between the poverty index and the HDI is established and used to project the debated end-of-1990s poverty head count. The result confirms a slow-down in poverty reduction in the post-reform period. The HDI (human development indicator), a composite measure reflecting health, education and economic attainment/deprivation for the country, has shown improvement by nearly 26% in eighties and another 24% in nineties (Planning Commission, 2002). The Human Poverty Index (HPI) recently formulated for the

country is an attempt to capture poverty in its various dimensions, including access to minimum services, reveals that the proportion of the deprived at the national level declined from about 47.3% in the early eighties to 39.4% in early nineties in line with the head count measure of poverty (Planning Commission, 2002). However, there are considerable variations in terms of the rural -urban incidence as well as at the state level. The rural-urban ratio for the proportion of the HPI is nearly twice as high as that on the head count ratio of poverty, possibly reflecting the lower levels of basic amenities in rural areas. At the state level, while the HDI declined in all states, interstate differences have persisted. As per the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report 2009 (HDR 2009), the Human Development Index (HDI) for India in 2007 was 0.612 on the basis of which India is ranked 134 out of 182 countries of the world placing it at the same rank as in 2006. According to the HDI report 2010, India is the fastest progressive country in the world in term of its exponential economic growth. India is classified in the medium human development category, placed at 119th rank out of 169 countries. India scores HDI value above average amongst South Asian countries, but below average among other medium human development countries such as China, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The HDI is based on three indicators, namely GDP per capita (PPP US \$), life expectancy at birth, and education as measured by adult literacy rate and gross enrolment ratio (combined for primary, secondary and tertiary education). The value of HDI for India gradually increased from 0.427 in 1980 to 0.556 in 2000 and went up to 0.612 in 2007. The HDI is a composite measure of human development covering health and education as well as income. It was devised by the late Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq for the first Human Development Report in 1990. The new 20th Anniversary Edition of the Report revisits that original analytical exercise, using new methodologies and international data sources, also looking back to 1970. The HDI 2010 report combines three dimensions: Longevity (a long and healthy life): measured by Life expectancy at birth; Knowledge (access to knowledge): measured by Mean years of schooling and Expected years of schooling; and Standard of living (decent standard of living): measured by purchasing power based on GNI per capita (PPP US\$). Human Development Index (HDI) 2010 ranks Nigeria 142nd position out of 169th listed low human development. Human Development (HD) concept takes into account all the products of development including education, health etc.

Hence, Policy makers and government must be reoriented and tutor to know the enormity of the combination of HDI concept as a guide to development effort to achieve the concept itself.

The HDR 2010 measures poverty in terms of new parameter, namely multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), which replaced the human poverty index (HPI) used since 1997. The MPI indicates the share of the population that is multi-dimensionally poor adjusted by the intensity of deprivation in term of living standard, health and education. According to this parameter, India with a poverty index of 0.296 and poverty ratios of 41.6 per cent (in terms of PPP\$1.25 a day) and 28.6 per (national poverty line) is not favourably placed when compared with countries like China and Sri Lanka. In fact, the difference in population below the poverty line (BPL) widens substantially in case of India when this indicator is used instead of the national poverty line indicator, while for other countries, there is less of a difference and in some cases even a fall.

Multidimensional Poverty Index

Poverty below Income poverty line

Country	Multidimensional Poverty index 2000-08	PPP\$ 1025 a Day 2000-08	National Poverty line 2000-08
Poland	-(41)	Less then 2	14.8
Malaysia	-(57)	Less then 2	12.8
Russia	0.005(65)	Less then 2	19.6
Brazil	0.039(73)	5.2	21.5
Turkey	0.039(83)	2.6	27
China	0.056(89)	15.9	2.8
Sri Lanka	0.021(91)	14	22.7

Thailand	0.006(92)	Less than 2	--
Philippines	0.067(97)	22.6	--
Egypt	0.026(101)	Less than 2	16.7
Indonesia	0.095(108)	29.4	16.7
South Africa	0.014(110)	26.2	22.0
Vietnam	0.075(113)	21.5	28.9
India	0.296(119)	41.6	28.6
Pakistan	0.275(125)	22.6	--
Kenya	0.302(128)	19.7	46.6
Bangladesh	0.291(129)	49.6	40.0

Sources: HDR 2010- Figures in parentheses in Column 2 give ranking among 169 countries

Education System and Poverty Reduction in India

India, however, has not accorded sufficiently high priority to the education of the poor and 33 million of its 105 million 6-to-10-years-olds are not in school. Education and poverty are inversely related to each other because higher the level of education of the population, lesser will be the number of poor persons because education imparts knowledge and skills which is supportive in higher wages. The direct effect of education on poverty reduction is through increasing the earnings/income or wages and the indirect effect of education on poverty is important with respect to 'human poverty' because as education improves the income, the fulfillment of basic necessities becomes easier and raises the living standard which surely means the fall in human poverty. Reducing the gender inequality among the poor requires a determined effort to focus on improved health care for women, maternal health care in particular, combined with basic education. India's health system needs to put a new emphasis on basic care. Doing so will improve not only the life span and well-being of poor women and their ability to determine

what family size they want, but it will also contribute to the economic health of their families, and consequently of India's society. And since poverty is not the only source of India's gender disparities, a determined government effort to eradicate such disparities is urgently needed.

The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act 2002 led to insertion of Article 21-A in Part III of the Constitution that made free and compulsory education for all children between 6 and 14 years of age, a fundamental right. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 to provide for free and compulsory education for all children of the age 6 to 14 years, was published in the Gazette of India on August 27, 2009 and has the following salient features:

Every child of the age 6-14 years shall have a right to free and compulsory education in a neighborhood school till completion of elementary education ; The appropriate Government and the local authority shall establish, within such area or limits of neighborhood, a school where it is not so established, within a period of three years; The Central and State Governments shall have concurrent responsibility for providing funds for carrying out the provisions of this Act.

At the national level, the inequality in consumption expenditure as captured by the Gini ratio has also shown a decline from 0.298 in 1983 to 0.258 in rural areas in 1999-2000 (Planning Commission, 2002). However, in urban areas, consumption inequality has increased marginally from 0.33 in 1983 to 0.341 in 1999-2000 (Planning Commission, 2002).

There are clear linkages between education, poverty reduction and sustainability. The poor and marginalized are disproportionately more affected by poor environmental and socio-economic conditions. Education sustainable development (ESD) can contribute to sustainable environmental management to improve livelihoods, increase economic security and income opportunities for the poor. Educational responses to poverty need to address the fact that many of the world's poor do not participate in the formal market economy but in non-formal economies, and many are self-employed entrepreneurs. Education that is relevant and purposeful has the power to transform people's lives. ESD has the potential to equip people with skills needed to improve their livelihoods by -:

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and “second chance” education can create employment opportunities for marginalized groups and at the same time integrate relevant learning skills. TVET can help youth find employment in “green jobs” in alternative energy supply, recycling, agriculture, construction and transportation.

The UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre responds to the need to develop and strengthen TVET worldwide. It manages the UNEVOC Network, an active worldwide network for TVET and through the network; knowledge and expertise about innovative practices are transferred from one country to another. The network also facilitates the information flow within countries.

The education indirectly helps in the fulfillment of basic needs like water and sanitation, utilization of health facilities, shelter, and it also affects the women’s behavior in fertility decisions and family planning. It is understood that such basic need’s presence increase the productivity and wages consequently putting people above the poverty line. The linkages between education and poverty broadly can be seen in two ways: Firstly, investment in education increases the skills and productivity of poor households. It enhances the income level as well as the overall standard of living (human development). Secondly, poverty is also a big impediment in educational attainment. Poverty affects the educational achievement in three dimensions:-

1. The first one is from resource-side (learning and financial resources),
2. The second one is the generation of such social pressures which mutilates the mindset of poor student.
3. When poverty grabs any institution it deteriorates the teaching standards. At macro level, we can generally examine that poor countries have low levels of education and at micro level children of poor families do not attend schools.

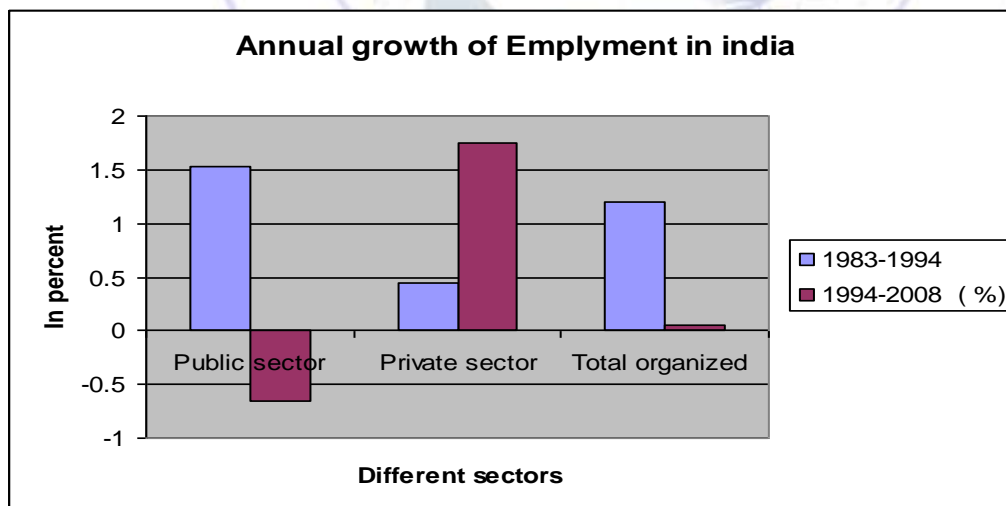
Employment Generation and Poverty Reduction in India

Employment growth in the organized sector, public and private combined, declined during the nineties. Annual employment growth in establishments covered by Employment market Information System of Ministry of Labour grew at 1.20% per annum during 1983-94 but

decelerated to 0.05 per cent during 1994-2008. Employment generation has been one of the important objectives of development planning in India. The problem of employment is closely interlinked with the eradication of poverty. There are three main aspects of the employment problem in India. They are the problem of proportion of labour to total population, problem of productivity of labour and problem of unemployment and underemployment of labour. These three aspects are interrelated. There is low rate participation of labour in India. Low rate of employment among women is a striking feature in India. There has almost been no change in LFPR (Labour Force Participation Rate). The dependency rate is quite high in India. Problem of unemployment and underemployment is the chronic feature of the Indian economy. It is the main cause of poverty in India. Unemployment in India is mostly structural.

Annual Growth of Employment in organized Sector

	1983-1994	1994-2008 (%)
Public sector	1.53	-0.65
Private sector	0.44	1.75
Total organized	1.20	0.05



Anti-Poverty, Employment Generation and Basic Services Programmes

(A) Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (Pmgsy)

Launched in December 2000 as a 100 per cent CSS, PMGSY aims to provide all-weather connectivity to all the eligible unconnected rural habitations. Bharat Nirman envisages connectivity by 2009 to all the habitations with a population of 1000 or more in the plains, and of 500 or more in the hilly, desert and tribal areas. The systematic up gradation of the existing rural road network also is an integral component of the scheme, funded mainly from the accruals of diesel in the Central Road Fund, with support of the multilateral funding agencies and the domestic financial institutions. Up to December 2005, with an expenditure of Rs.12, 049 crore, a total length of 82,718 km. of road works had been completed.

(B) Indira Awaas Yojana (Iay)

IAY aims to provide dwelling units free of cost, to the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and freed bonded labourers, and also the non-SC/ST BPL families in rural areas. It is funded on a cost sharing basis in the rates of 75.25 between the Centre and the States. Under IAY, the ceiling on construction assistance is Rs.25,000/- per unit in the plains and Rs.27,500/- for hilly/difficult areas; and Rs. 12,500/- on up gradation of unserviceable kutcha house to pucca/semi pucca house for all areas. Up to January 30, 2006, about 138 lakh houses had been constructed/upgraded with an expenditure of Rs.25, 208 crore.

(C) Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (Sgsy)

SGSY, launched in April, 1999 after restructuring the Integrated Rural Development Programme and allied schemes, is the only self-employment programme for the rural poor. The objective is to bring the self employed above the poverty line by providing them income-generating assets through bank credit and Government subsidy. Up to November 2005, the Centre and States, sharing the costs on 75:25 basis, had allocated Rs.8, 067 crore, of which Rs. 6,980 crore had been utilized to assist 62.75 lakh self-employed.

(D) Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (Sgry)

SGRY, launched on September 25, 2001 to provide additional wage employment in the rural areas, has a cash and food grains component, and the Centre bears 75 per cent and 100 per

cent of the cost of the two with the balance borne by the States/UTs. In 2004-05, 82.23 crore person days were generated with the Centre releasing Rs. 4,496 crore as cash component and about 50 lakh tonnes of food grains to the States/ UTs. Besides, Under the special component of the SGRY, with the States/UTs meeting the cash components, Centre released 26 lakh tonnes of food grains to the 13 calamity affected States. In 2005-06 up to November, 2005, the number of person days generated under SGRY was 48.75 crore, while the Centre's contributions in terms of the cash and food grains components up to January, 2006 were Rs. 4651 crore and 35 lakh tonnes, respectively. Under the special component, about 11.65 lakh tonnes of food grains have been released to the 11 calamity-hit States in the current year.

(E) National Food For Work Programme (Nffwp)

The NFFWP was launched as a CSS in November 2004 in the 150 most backward districts to generate additional supplementary wage employment with food security. States receive food grains under NFFWP free of cost. The focus of the programme is on works relating to water conservation, drought proofing (including a forestation /tree plantation), land development, flood-control/protection (including drainage in waterlogged areas), and rural connectivity in terms of all-weather roads. In 2004-05, allocation of Rs 2,020 crores and 20 lakh tonnes of food grains generated 7.85 crore person days of employment. In 2005-06, of the allocation of Rs 4,500 crore and 15 lakh tonnes of food grains (Revised), Rs.2,219 crore and 11.58 lakh metric tonnes of food grains had been released up to January 27, 2006. About 17.03 lakh person days were generated up to December 2005.

(F) DPAP, DDP And IWDP

Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) was launched in 1973-74 to tackle the special problems faced by those areas constantly affected by severe drought conditions. Desert Development Programme (DDP) was launched in 1977-78 to mitigate the adverse effects of desertification. Integrated Wastelands development Programme (IWDP) has been under implementation since 1989-90 for the development of wastelands/ degraded lands. The basis of implementation has been shifted from sect oral to watershed basis from April 1995. For 2005-06, Rs.353 crore, Rs.268 crore and Rs.485 crore have been allocated for DPAP, DDP and IWDP,

respectively. So far in 2005-06 up to October, 2005, 3000 new projects covering 15 lakh ha, 2000 new projects covering 10 lakh ha. and 340 new projects covering 16 lakh ha. have been sanctioned under DPAP, DDP and IWDP, respectively.

(G) Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (Sjsry)

In December 1997, the Urban Self-Employment Programme (USEP) and the Urban Wage Employment Programme (UWEP), which are the two special components of the SJSRY, substituted for various programmes operated earlier for urban poverty alleviation. The SJSRY is funded on a 75:25 basis between the Centre and the States. In 2003-04, the central allocation of Rs. 94.50 crore plus Rs. 10.50 crore for North- Eastern Region including Sikkim was fully utilized. Even 2004-05 saw the release of the entire budgetary allocation of Rs.122.00 crore. In 2005-06, out of an allocation of Rs. 160.00 crore, Rs. 84.52 crore had been utilized until November 30, 2005.

However, in spite of some progress in addressing poverty, the problem remains. Almost half the world's population currently lives on less than two dollars a day. In recent years, tackling such widespread poverty appears once more to have become a priority issue for many aid agencies. The issue was highlighted by Joseph Stiglitz of the World Bank in his Prebisch Lecture at the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 1998. In this lecture, Stiglitz called for a major change in strategy that emphasizes development as a transformation of society. His proposal focused on the need for cooperation among stakeholders and for the development of appropriate institutional structures. The idea of social capital – comprised of both formal and informal institutions and interactions – was a major component of his approach. In September 1999, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund adopted a new framework for achieving sustainable poverty reduction that requires nationally-owned poverty reduction strategies – contained in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) – to serve as the basis for concessional lending and for debt relief within the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative.

Population and Health and Poverty Reduction

The countries in which poverty levels are the highest are generally those that have the most rapid increases in population and the highest fertility levels like India. India has reduced

fertility and mortality by investing in universal health care, including reproductive health, as well as education and gender equality, has made economic gains. A 2001 study of 45 countries, for example, found that if they had reduced fertility by five births per 1,000 people in the 1980s, the average national incidence of poverty of 18.9 per cent in the mid-1980s would have been reduced to 12.6 per cent between 1990 and 1995. When women can negotiate their reproductive health decisions with men, this exercise of their rights leads to an increased decision-making role within families and communities that benefits all. Because smaller families share income among fewer people, average per-capita income increases. Fewer pregnancies lead to lower maternal mortality and morbidity and often to more education and economic opportunities for women. These, in turn, can lead to higher family income. As women become more educated, they tend to have fewer children, and participate more fully in the labour market. Families with lower fertility are better able to invest in the health and education of each child. Spaced births and fewer pregnancies overall improve child survival. Sexual and reproductive health services are key to curbing HIV. The pandemic is killing large numbers of people in their most productive years, increasing the ratio of dependents to the working-age population. Preventing AIDS-related disabilities and premature deaths translates into a healthier, more productive labour force that can improve a country's economic prospect and many developing countries have large youth populations. Reproductive health programmes that address the greater vulnerability of adolescents to unprotected sex, sexual coercion, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, unintended early pregnancies and unsafe abortions, and enable young women to delay pregnancy and marriage are important factors in breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty. Investments in reproductive health, particularly in family planning, that result in lowered fertility can open a one-time only 'demographic window' of economic opportunity.

There is strong links between Population, economic Growth and Poverty and there has been considerable debate over the relationships between population growths, economic growth and poverty. In recent years, statistical analysis has revealed that population growth alone doesn't inherently increase or decrease economic growth. However, other demographic trends do affect the prospects for economic development, including poverty reduction. In particular, countries can experience economic growth and improve individual well-being by taking advantage of specific changes in the age structure of their populations.

Over time, a population characterized by high fertility and mortality rates progresses in stages through declines in mortality and, later, fertility rates. Early in this demographic transition, when mortality has declined but fertility remains high, there are a large number of children and elderly dependents for each person of working age. High fertility can strain low-income families' ability to provide for children. As fertility rates decline, a large Working-age population and fewer dependents should increase savings and investment. This period is known as the "demographic dividend," and it has potential benefits for households and countries alike. Smaller family size can promote increased savings at the household level, which families can choose to invest in the health and education of their children. At the country level, savings give governments an opportunity to educate their youth and stimulate economic development by investing in hospitals and health care workers, schools and well-trained teachers, and communications and transportation networks. However, for this to happen, governments must be prepared to train and expand job opportunities for their growing labor force. In East Asia, governments capitalized on their large populations of young workers with such policies. This contributed to at least one-third of the region's economic growth over the last four decades.

Conclusion

India has accomplished many notable social and economic achievements which are the eradication of widespread famine, a reduction in population growth, some lowering of caste barriers to economic opportunity and the creation of a large pool of technical and scientific talent. While it has also managed to reduce poverty in that period, only since 1975, when growth accelerated, has the decline been fairly steady. The pace, moreover, remains slow and uneven — faster in the southern states than the northern ones, and more likely to empower men than women. In India Government efforts to reduce poverty through direct anti-interventions have yielded mixed results and many of those programs, in fact, have missed their supposed target — the poor — and delivered their benefits to the economically more advantaged. As India moves ahead with the economic liberalization that has yielded a higher platform for growth and therefore the potential for a higher level of welfare, it has an opportunity to reexamine its approach to reduce poverty. In Indian economy for the centrality of growth the last five years have shown the rates of growth that India could achieve with market oriented development

policies and a better integration into the world economy. This is a promising development because the last few decades have shown the extent to which the poor stand to gain from acceleration in growth. The latter widens opportunity, provides the resources needed to invest in human development, and creates the very foundation that will increase returns to human capital — and thus families' willingness to send their children, including girls, to school, have fewer of them, or in multiple other ways, invest in their future.

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