

Section-A

2. The opposite of poverty is not wealth

In 1972, Paris club published a landmark report on 'Limits to Growth'. It critically analysed the limitations of common economic parameters like Gross Domestic Product or its growth numbers. It highlighted the challenges of trickle down approach and opened the floor for debate on growth vs development.

This had wide repercussions for India with huge people living in poverty as an after-effect of exploitative British Raj. Even the policies had to be tweaked to transition to a capability led development model than mere growth of economic pie for redistribution.

This essay will analyse how opposite of poverty cannot be wealth with the help of Indian

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success story and transition in approach towards
inclusive growth, sabka saath sabka vikaas and
the 'triveni' of diversity, demography and development.

We will establish why wealth is not sufficient
for poverty eradication and lessons for world in
general and India in particular.

We begin our analysis by understanding
poverty and its socio-economic effects.

Defining poverty

Since time immemorial, people have tried
to understand the nature of poverty and its
effect on society and polity. Aristotle called
poverty as the parent of crime and revolution.

Even in religion stories of Krishna and Sudama
showcase the tragedy of poor and inequality
in society. In Buddha's life, seeing a poor
destitute man, Siddhartha realized it as sign of
suffering.

Modern day studies have defined poverty

from an economist lens. For example, World Bank defines extreme poverty as living below \$2.15 per capita (PPP terms). It is defined by lack of access to basic goods and services to ^{live a} life of dignity and lack of opportunities.

UNDP and OPHI through their multidimensional approach to poverty define it as basic standards of living, access to education and poverty. Amartya Sen has called for capability driven growth model.

Even Indian poverty studies like Tendulkar Committee, Rangarajan committee had broadened parameters beyond food, clothing and shelter to make headcount estimates. NITI Aayog comprehends state level multi-dimensional poverty under spirit of cooperative and competitive federalism.

At the outset, it's amply clear that poverty is not merely absence of wealth. To further bring the emphasis on why it's so we track the poverty approaches in independent India.

Brief history of poverty alleviation

During freedom struggle, Dadabhai Naoroji provided the first estimates of poverty and gave an economic critique of colonialism through the drain theory. Later on efforts like Bombay Plan from capitalists class tried to create a roadmap for Indian economy.

After independence, leaders emphasized on capital creation under Harry-Danwed savings led contextualized for India by P.C. Mahalanobis. The result was emphasis on wealth creation. It was believed that under downward infiltration theory the benefits could reach the poor and vulnerable sections.

When it was found to be unsuccessful
clarion calls ^{were} given for removal of poverty
like 'Garibi Hatao'. But the approach lacked
an inclusive model and emphasized on merely
beneficiary targeting under redistribution of wealth
collected through taxes. At that time corporate
and personal income taxes for higher slabs were
as high as 90%.

These approaches that saw wealth
creation as panacea for poverty removal had
many challenges like leakages, poor training of
bureaucrats and inefficient redistribution itself. It
excluded the poor from their contribution to
growth agenda and made them passive beneficiaries
of state. It also led to huge inequalities. The
rich became richer and sadly poor became more poor.

Thus trickle down approach was
transformed into inclusive growth approach.

It emphasizes on capability ~~and~~ development, access to education and healthcare, job creation, skill development, financial inclusion etc. This is evident from approaches used by earlier Dandekar and Rath Committee, Alagh Committee, Lakdawala committee to later shift to Rangarajan Committee.

Recent reports highlights huge success made by India. UNDP measures that 415 million people were put out of multi-dimensional poverty since 2004-05 and current incidence is at 16.5%. IMF says that extreme poverty is almost eliminated in India and is at about 1.5%. World bank too notes poverty levels at historic low of 10%. NITI Aayog independent analysis reports it at 15-16%.

Wealth necessary, but not sufficient

Economic Survey in its 2021 report concluded that for India, GDP growth is in convergence with economic development parameters

such as capital formation, food security, access to social services. It said that for reduction of inequality and effective redistribution economic pie has to grow simultaneously, only then its effective share will be enlarged.

Thus, while wealth is not opposite of poverty but it's not anti-thetical as well. Wealth creation needs to be complemented with social overhead capital creation. This was also highlighted by Competitiveness Report for India authored by Prof. Michael Porter looking forward to India @ 47.

While Government on one hand is leading tax reforms (like reduction in corporate taxes, new tax regime for personal income tax), it is also emphasizing on access to education (eg: PM-SHRI, Vidyanjali, eVidya), healthcare (PM-Jay, Ayushman Bharat Digital Yojana) and basic infrastructure (12.5 crore tap connections, 2.5 crore houses, 9.5 crore

Ujjwala connections (road connectivity through Gram Sadak Yojana).

Capital expenditure in budget of FY24 is at historic high of 10 lakh crore which will help crowd-in private sector investment and generate multiplier effects on employment generation and generate equity. For example, WHO credited that Gras Jal in saving 100,000 lives and saving Disability Adjusted Life Years leading to savings of double that of scheme budget.

Jan-Dhan Yojana with cumulative bank accounts more than 49.5 crores (55% women accounts) have led to 2.1 lakh crore savings (Economic Survey 2023 data). PM-Mudra has 69% women beneficiaries, SVANIDHI aims for more 60 lakh loans at end of this fiscal year.

Efforts like Eklanya schools, DAKSH scheme (skill development measures), TRIFED scheme, Swasthya Portal aim to address challenges of tribal population. For People with Disabilities

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marquee initiatives like Opkaraunda scheme, subsidization of equipments, reservation in education and employment opportunities showcase a holistic approach to address challenges of vulnerable. For transgenders, government has made dedicated efforts like SMILE scheme, Gasima Grch, Sweekerhi
Project by IAS Chanchal Rana.

These efforts exemplify the approach of poverty reduction and development of basic human capital to make them capable. It shifts emphasis from appeasement and freebie culture to making them part of journey in our Amit Kaal towards Viksit Bharat in 2047 and beyond.

Having analysed Indian model we now evaluate the lessons for world, especially the Global South.

Window of opportunity

Today, India leads the G20 and is showcasing the progress in women empowerment,

financial inclusion, digital public infrastructure.
When world faces food, fuel and fertilizer
shortages amid crisis of conflicts, climate
change effects, supply chain disruptions, India
can be a voice of global good.

This will help bring focus on
sustainable development model for world
that is inclusive, demand-based, partner led
and not leading to a debt trap. India should
emphasize on reforms of multi-lateral development
banks (MDBs) and debt sustainability so that
individual countries can too lead on inclusive
growth trajectory.

Back at home, we should not be
complacent. UNDP warns against reversal of
trend in poverty reduction due to COVID.
Azim Premji foundation had estimated more
than 20 mn people falling back into poverty.

We should thus continue on our efforts for Antyodaya. As first Prime Minister said that "greatest man of our generation sought to remove tears from every eye while that may be beyond us but as long as there are sufferings our work will not be over".

We should continue emphasis on inclusive growth and reform, perform, transform the poverty outlook towards capicity development and not merely wealth creation.

Section 8

⑦ There is more to life than simply increasing its speed.

Recent newspaper reports, television debates, social media reels are tracing Indian and Russian lunar missions race to the South Pole. The debate merely tracks who will land first or which has faster speed completely ignoring the real reasons we are exploring outerspace and its advantages for further scientific research advancement. There is less emphasis on technical details and margin experiments to be conducted by Vikram and Pragyan but more emphasis on who beats whom.

This is just one of the many examples highlighting the paradox of modern life built on ease, speed and immediate gratification. This essay with help of various examples across

various dimensions of human life establish how there is much more beyond speed to live a life of dignity, happiness and satisfaction.

Here, we don't aim to diminish the importance of speed and efficiency but try to establish equal importance of steadiness and effectiveness.

Healthy competition matters

Human beings are social animals and human brain respond to conditioning measures. Without a competitive spirit there would be no desire to improve oneself or the society.

Healthy competition can nudge the brain towards hard work and perseverance. Without it there would be no thrill or excitement for future. Life would be dull accepting status-quo.

Right amount of adrenaline rush helps face the flight or fight mindset. It challenges people to push their boundaries. Speed is desired for eradicating social ills like racial violence, caste based discrimination, violence against women. Slow reforms are neither effective nor desirable.

Consider new technologies like hyperloop system, bullet trains, levitation technology which aims to transform the face of physical infrastructure. Even in digital infrastructure, new roadmap for 6G Bharat showcase the importance of lightning fast flow of information. Today, speed is not just measured in miles per hour but also gigabits per second (Gbps).

For example, a doctor conducting remote surgery would need internet with ultra reliable low latency, AR/VR requires enhanced mobile broadband connectivity. Satellite communication

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is desirable for both fast & reliable information.

Even in governance, speed of public service delivery enhances doctrine of public trust & contributes to good governance. When earlier subsidies would take ages to reach vulnerable, with direct benefit transfer we can send money within a few clicks.

Thus, speed is good and often desirable but sole emphasis on it shifts focus on other important metrics. We now analyse how there is more to life than speed across various dimensions.

More to life than speed

There is an old saying that "justice hurried is justice buried". It aptly summarizes the importance of metrics like quality, effectiveness and outcome. Today, while there are more than 5 crore cases pending but that does not mean we dispose

them without following due process of law.
Inadvertant delays must be avoided but it needs to complemented with holistic judicial reforms like creating more infrastructure, filling of vacancies, use of technology etc.

In economy, output and outcome debate is today evident in realisation of supply chains. Companies want to adopt China plus one model because they now that reliance on speed & cost alone cannot be economically sustainable. There is emphasis on reliable supply chain partners that follow international laws and a rules based world order.

Similarly, economic growth data that showcase a V-shaped recovery in aggregate terms could actually highlight overshadow slow recovery in some sectors (referred as K-shaped) example slow manufacturing revival, poor rural demand or rising inequalities in society (consider global inequality report.)

In politics, quickness of gathering alliances and coalition partners leads to defections which is not only immoral but also illegal. Speed of politically motivated decisions harm the constitutional morality in long term.

In our social life, sole emphasis on increasing speed erodes social capital. When we are in a hurry, we forget to take stock of important cultures, traditions and practices and replace them with their western equivalents. Modernity suffers at hands of westernity. Consider the pace for English education and loss of our endangered languages.

In our personal and private lives, it holds most significance. Today, there is rising mental health crisis (consider National Mental Health Survey 2016) due to peer pressure

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and societal expectations to do the line and
be a part of rat race. Recent unfortunate
incidents of suicides at IITs show the extent of
human race and its impact on life

Life of dignity and quality is replaced
by dictum of "live a life king-sized". But there
is no limit to what the king desires. There
is hunger for more and more without any
end to cravings. Consider the scams by
Hareshad Mehtma, Satyam or lapses in corporate
governance with aim of seeking more profits.
Happiness and enjoying the work we do are
long lost ideals.

Mahatma Gandhi famously said that
there is enough for everyone's need but not
for everyone's greed. And the blurt of this
sare is visible in environment destruction and
recent crises in Himalayas example, Joshimath.

The speed with which roads are widened, urbanization happening, tourism expanding is only stressing the fragile ecosystem of Himalayas that is already warming at a higher rate than global average (ICIMOD report). Development is not being questioned here but the rate without considering impact assessment is bringing more harm than good.

Having established the importance of ~~imp~~ other metrics across various aspects of life, we now conclude by analyzing how to incorporate them in our life.

Road Ahead

There should be a right balance in life which Aristotle calls "Golden Mean" and Buddha calls "Sanyak Marg". Overemphasis on one thing will harm this balance that we have inherited from mother Earth. Ancient texts like Bhagavad Gita call

for Stith Bagnya and Nishkam Karma as the way of fulfilling one's duties as an offering rather than satisfaction of ego. There is a need to emphasize on our role in society than merely complying with rule of participating in race.

Life is not a mountain to be conquered but the snow-filled backs to be enjoyed. It's the journey that matters and not the end destination.