NCERT QUESTIONS WITH SOLUTIONS

1. Describe how the poverty line is estimated in India.

Ans. The poverty line is estimated based on consumption levels in India. A person has basic need which include minimum level of food, clothing, educational and medical need, etc. These minimum consumptions are then calculated in Rupees and total become the minimum income required to fulfil basic needs. A person is considered poor if their income level falls below the minimum level necessary to fulfil basic needs.

2. Do you think that the present methodology of poverty estimation is appropriate?

Ans. The official definition of poverty line is not appropriate, as it is based on the minimum subsistence level of living rather than a reasonable level of living. It is suggested that the concept of poverty must be broadened so as to include other indicators such as basic education, health, drinking water, sanitation, etc. A large number of people may have been able to feed themselves. But they do not have education, health care, job security, gender equality, etc. Therefore, a proper definition of poverty should not only be given in term of income level but should be based on their factors also.

3. Describe poverty trends in India since 1973.

Ans. Poverty Trends in India: The planning commission of India has made estimations about the incidence of poverty since the early 1970s. These estimates are given in the following table:

Estimates of Poverty in India

Poverty ratio (%)			
Year	Rural	Urban	Combined
1973-74	56.4	49	54.9
1993-94	37.3	32.4	36
1999-00	27.1	23.6	26.1

Number of poor (in millions)		
Rural	Urban	Combined
261	60	321
244	76	320
193	67	260

Economic survey 2002-03, Ministry of Finance, Government of India. Table shows that there is a substantial decline in the poverty ratio in India from about 55 per cent in 1973 to 36 per cent in 1993. This ratio has further come down to about 26 percent in 2000. Although the poverty ratio during 1973-93 declined but the number of poor remained stable at around 320 million during this period of two decades. It may also be noted that poverty ratio always remained higher in rural areas compared to urban areas.

4. Discuss the major reasons for poverty in India.

Ans. Major Reasons for Poverty in India: The major causes/factors responsible for existence of poverty in India are discussed below:

(1) Fast Population Growth Among the Poor: The rapid growth of population, particularly among the poor, is considered one of the major causes behind Indian poverty. Poor people are illiterate and have traditional outlook. Hence, they are either ignorant of birth control measures or not convinced of the need of birth control. Moreover, they consider male child as an asset, that is as a source of income and a source of security during old age.

(2) Low Rate of Economic Development: The actual rate of growth in India has always been below the required level. It has been around 4 per cent since 1951. This has resulted in less job opportunities. This was accompanies by a high growth rate of population. These two combined kept the growth rate of per capita income very low. The failure at both fronts - promotion of economic growth and population control – aggravated the problem of poverty.

(3) Unemployment: Another important factor that can be held responsible for the incidence of high poverty in India is the high degree of unemployment and underemployment. The job seekers are increasing at a higher rate than the increase in the employment opportunities.

(4) Unequal Distribution of Income: Although national income of India has been increasing since 1951, it was not property distributed among different sections of the society. A large proportion of increased income has been pocketed by a few rich. They become richer. Consequently, the majority of people have to live below the poverty line.

(5) Social Factors: Various social factors, viz., caste system, joint family system, religious faiths, law of inheritance, etc., have blocked the path of economic development. For example, because of religious beliefs, people regard poverty as God given. Similarly, joint family system has prevented people from doing hard work and made them dependent.

5. Identify the social and economic groups which are most vulnerable to poverty.

Ans. Social groups vulnerable to poverty:

(i) Scheduled caste households

(ii) Scheduled tribe households

Economic groups vulnerable to poverty

(i) Rural agricultural labour households

(ii) Urban casual labour households.

6. Give an account of inter-state disparities in poverty in India.

Ans. **Inter-state disparities in poverty:** There are wide disparities in poverty across the country. The poverty ratio is not the same in every state. Recent estimates show that in 20 states and union territories, the poverty ratio is less than the national average. Odisha and Bihar continue to be the two poorest states with poverty ratios of 47 and 43 per cent respectively. In comparison, there has been a significant fall in poverty ratio in the states of Kerala, Jammu and Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and West Bengal. States like Punjab and Haryana have continuously succeeded in reducing their poverty ratio to 6.16 per cent and 8.7 per cent respectively. The lowest incidence of poverty is found in Jammu and Kashmir with a poverty ratio of 3.5 per cent.

7. Describe global poverty trends.

Ans. **Global Poverty Trends:** The proportion of people in developing countries living in poverty has declined from 28 per cent in 1990 to 21 per cent in 2001. Although there has been a substantial reduction in global poverty, there are great regional differences visible. Poverty has substantially fallen in China and South-East Asian countries. The number of poor in China has drastically come down from 606 million in 1981 to 212 million in 2001.

But the decline in poverty in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan has not been so rapid. Despite decline in the poverty ratio, the number of poor has declined marginally from 475 million in 1981 to 428 million in 2001. However, in Sub-Saharan Africa, poverty rose from 41 percent to 46 percent during the same period.

8. Describe the current government strategy of poverty alleviation.

Ans. Government strategy towards poverty alleviation:

The current government strategy towards poverty alleviation has broadly been two-dimensional:

(1) Promotion of economic growth and,

(2) Anti-poverty programmes.

(1) Economic Growth: To fight against poverty our government laid emphasis on promotion of economic growth. This strategy is based on the belief that the benefits of economic growth would automatically 'trickle down' to the poor people in form of more employment and more income.

(2) Anti-Poverty Programmes: With a view to launch a direct attack on poverty, our government formulated several schemes to benefit the poor. Important among them are:

(1) Prime Minister Rojgar Yojana

(2) Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana

(3) Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana

(4) Sampoorna Grameen Rojgar Yojana

(5) National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

Through the programmes, the government has tried to help the poor by way of income generation, wage employment and asset building. However, the results of there programmes have not been so satisfactory as were desired.

(i) What do you understand by human poverty?

(ii) Who are the poorest of the poor?

(iii) What are the main features of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005?

9. Answer the following questions briefly:

Ans. **(i) Human Poverty:** Human poverty is a wider concept than poverty. It refers to the lack of human development. It reflects the state of deprivation in the society. It is measured in Human Development index and Human Poverty index.

(ii) The Poorest of the Poor: People from poor families like old people, women and female infants are the poorest of the poor. These people are denied equal access to resources available to the family.

(iii) Main Features of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005:

(i) NREGA provides 100 days assured employment every year to every rural household in 200 districts. Later, the scheme will be extended to 625 districts. One-third of the proposed jobs would be reserved for women.

(ii) The central government will establish a National Employment Guarantee Found. Similarly, state governments will establish State Employment Guarantee Funds for the implementation of the scheme.