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Status of Poverty & Covid -19 Pandemic

Dr. Lina Deka

Assistant Professor

Beltola College

Guwahati-28

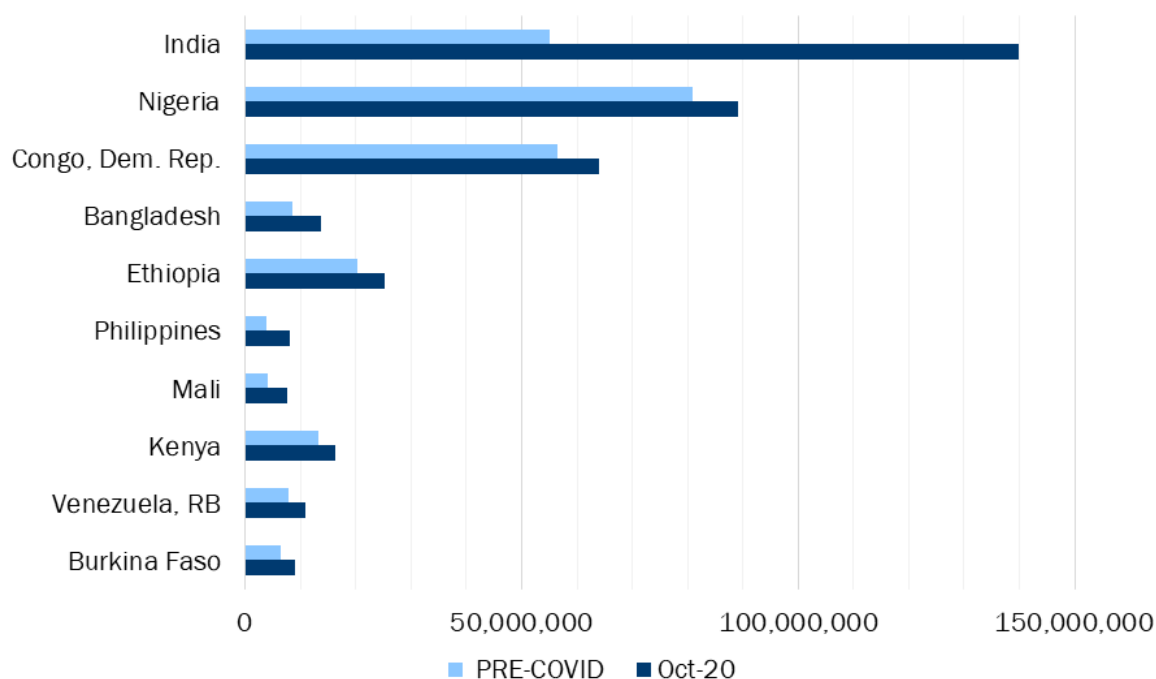
We all are now surrounded by technologies, race in different aspects and issues development etc, but people around us somehow suffering from unsatisfaction, unrest and unhappiness. During Covid pandemic we witnessed increasing number of burial ground and crematorium. After having so many policies and schemes of Government, people are facing poverty. It may or may not be Acute or Absolute Poverty. There is a concept of multidimensional poverty. It complements traditional monetary poverty measures. Different dimension of multi dimensional poverty are , living standards, which includes indicators like, overcrowding, housing, electricity, safe drinking water, crime etc., Health, which includes indicators like, under nutrition, obesity, substance use /abuse, teenage pregnancy etc., education which includes indicators like, school attendance, highest level of education achieved etc., employment, which includes indicators like, unemployment, informal employment, of youth , not in employment education or training etc. Of course we were lacking behind if we see from multi dimensional poverty.

India stands in 66 positions in Multi Dimensional Poverty index out of 109 countries. India has reduced its poverty rate drastically from 55 percent to 28 percent in last ten years. (ophi.uk.org.uk global-mpi-2018). But after covid, scenario of poverty also become different due to unemployment, underemployment, lost in business etc especially in urban areas. Normally these people may or may not ever come into preview of poverty. Some of them were tax payers or may be in well to do position. But Pandemic changed the scenario. The Azim Premji University report said that there has been a rise of 15 percent in Poverty in rural India and a rise of 20 percent in Urban India during the last one pandemic year .

In April and May, the Poorest 20 percent of households lost their entire income and the richer households suffered losses of less than a quarter of their pre-pandemic incomes (Source : Business Today, May, 06, 2021). Therefore we can say a maximum numbers of people suffer economically and it impacts on everyone.

Approximately 150 million additional children are living in Multidimensional Poverty without access to essential services-due to covid-19 pandemic according to the analysis jointly carried out by Save the Children and UNICEF.(Source: UNICEF DATA)

Figure1. Countries with largest likely increases in Extreme Income Poverty Headcounts Compared to baseline, 2020 (Absolute numbers of People)



Source: (IMF World Economic Outlook October 2020 and World Bank Povcal data The impact of COVID-19 on global extreme poverty brookings.edu)

Figure 1 reflects the top 10 countries where extreme poverty is raise the most. Far and away the biggest impact is likely to be felt in India. India is a particular case in having a large number of highly vulnerable people, only recently escaped from poverty. But due to pandemic and several other reason per capita growth rate for 2020 has been revised downwards to about-11 percent this year, one of the deepest recession in the world. India recently gave up its title as the country with the largest number of extreme poor to Nigeria but will reclaim its title this year, adding 85 million people to its poverty in2020.

Covid-19 pandemic created havoc in People's life. People has to face abrupt Lockdown, scarcity of resources, scarcity of means of communication, sufferings of isolation, threat of life, poverty, anxiety, lost of near and dear one, lost of attachment of normal life, diseases , lack of uncountable miseries. Mostly it led to lost of livelihood and lost of source of earnings. Life of millions has become measurable. Poverty is common scenario. Rise of Poverty leads to several socio economic problems. We are witnessing lots of cases of domestic violence (cases may be registered or non registered), malnutrition, lost of job and source of income, debt, scarcity of minimum standard of livelihood, drop out students from educational institution, reducing quality of education, non availability of gadgets or digital equipments of communication, co morbidity, overcrowding in crematorium or burial ground, exhaustive duty of health workers and some other essential services, lost of children interest in education and other outdoor activities, digital addiction, dumbness, depression, lots of psychological issues, suicide etc. Mostly it is an era of tremendous sufferings of Human Being. Impact of covid pandemic is long lasting, consequently sufferings also. Several incidents of covid Pandemic are like:

Lost of parents or guardians leads to life with sufferings and sometimes they have to face Acute poverty or relative poverty. It is a story of Vanisha Pathak, a topper in board exam with 99.8 percent from Bhopal and she shared her story of sufferings. She expressed both her father Jeetendra Pathak and mother Seema Pathak passed away due to Covid in May 2021. Vanisha and her 11 years old brother Vivan are minors and Covid orphans. Since they are under age, all their father's policies and his monthly commission could not be withdrawn as per the rule. With all of the economic and financial income sources blocked, they have no source of income. Thus, all the repayment of the debts can be done only when she turns 18. (Source: timesofindia.indiatimes.com)

Another story of triple suicide case, come to notice where mother and both her daughter found death due to harmful gases. Their father was chartered accountant and both their daughter were well educated, but their father died due to covid, mother was suffering from illness and debt . They cannot resists pressure and take extreme step. In a harrowing incident reported from the capital, a family of three dies within their home in Vasant Vihar after inhaling toxic fumes on May 21. According to the neighbours, the family, a mother and her two daughters, had allegedly been facing financial difficulties. (Source: indiatimes.com)

Estimated of pandemic –associated orphanhood and caregivers deaths using excess mortality and COVID-19 deaths for 21 countries that accounted for 76.4 percent of global Covid-19 deaths up to April 30, 2021 (Argentina, Brazil , Colombia, England and Wales, France, Germany , India , Iran , Italy , Kenya, Malawl, Mexico, Nigeria , Peru, Philippines, Poland, Russia, South Africa, Spain , the USA and Zimbabwe).

Globally, from Jan, 2020. to April 30, 2021, estimate 1134000 children experienced the death of primary care givers, including at least one parent or custodial grand Parent, 1562000 children experienced the death of at least one primary and secondary caregiver. Number of children orphaned exceeded numbers of deaths among those aged 15-50 years. Between two and five times more children had deceased fathers than deceased mothers. (Source: The Lancet, 31 July 2021,)

Number of suicide cases increase to great extent. Assam last year recorded 3,243 suicides, an average of 8.88 daily, which was an increase of 36 percent over the previous year. More than 50 percent of those who took their lives were unemployed and daily wage earners, according to the latest data from the Centre. A total of 974 unemployed people and 789 daily wage earners died by suicide during the pandemic-hit lockdown period accounting for over 54 Percent of the total suicide victims in the state in 2020, the report showed. Out of 3243 suicides, 2337 were male and 906 female. (Source: indiatimes.com).

But scenario is not same everywhere pandemic has become a great opportunity for few. India's richest have more than doubled their fortunes during the Covid-19 crisis that's ravaged the country and worsened the poverty. The nation added 40 billionaires to last 142 year, when a second wave overwhelmed its health infrastructure and pushed crematoriums and burial grounds to breaking point. They have almost \$720 billion in combined fortune, more than the poorest 40 percent of the population, urban unemployment climbed high, richer become richer, inequalities and gap between classes increases record high, food security worsened, malnutrition, cases of suicide, counts of billionaire, trillionaire increases. (Source: Oxfam)

Causes of Inequalities and Poverty:

There are so many reasons to increase economic Disparities. Among them State Policies including the abolition of a wealth tax in 2016 , steep cuts in corporate levies and an increase in indirect taxation are among the factors that helped make the rich richer, while the national minimum wage has remained Rs.178 (\$2.4) a day since 2020. The India supplement of Global report said reduced federal funding to local administration amid growing privatization in the health and education sector have further boosted inequalities.

Several factors contribute to increase in poverty such as increase in population, low productivity in Agriculture, lowest means of communication to distribute produced good, lack of capital, illiteracy about new technologies, wastage during storage, under utilize resources, gap between requirement and availability of goods and services, price rise, job losts and earning sources, shortage of Capital and able entrepreneurship, hindrances in the laws of inheritance, caste system, colonial mentality to exploit labourers, workers and farmers etc.

Government adopt alleviating of poverty schemes like Mhatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Gurantee Act (2005), National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna- Gramin (PMAY-G) , Public Distribution System (PDS), Housing For all, the Atal mission for Urban Rejuvenation and Transformation (AMRUT) , Smart Cities Mission , Digital India, Jan Dhan Yojna , Make in India etc.

In state level also government adopted several measures and schemes to avail assistance to the people. Such as Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma dedicated the Chief Minister Sishu Seva Scheme and handed over the cheques of financial assistance to orphan and destitute children. He utilizes fund donated by people and Corporate houses. Each Child was given a fixed deposit certificate of principal amount of Rs. 781200 , a cheque of Rs. 3500 as the first monthly assistance which will continue till they attain the age of 24 years. On completion of 24 years of age, the principal amount parked as fixed deposit against each beneficiary would be credited to their bank account. Each child was also given laptop. (Source: indiaindian.com).

Conclusion:

To eradicate poverty strong will of Government needed, along with making policies it must give emphasis on implementation of such schemes and policies. Strict labour Laws must follow, Capitalist must spent for eradication of poverty, they must contribute at least 1 percent for the benefit of poor. Taxation loopholes must reform for the benefit of all. Skill based education must introduced at school level, social security number must avail to all, resources must judiciously use for the betterment of all.

The target of the government is to eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere by 2030.

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