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## Social Justice And Poverty Amelioration (A Case Study Of Varanasi District)

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### Abstract

At the time of independence, there was rampant poverty, illiteracy and an underdeveloped economy. To overcome the lacunae inherent in the pattern of our economy and society, Indian constitution makers enunciated the idea of welfare state and government started a number of welfare programs and took measures to make the fruit of development reach to the needy populace of the society. This is case study done in the context of Varanasi district to find out how far our development programs have successful in achieving the target of welfare state. It appears that development programs have made their impact on this agrarian district but some how deviations are taking place. It appears, social justice is being restored as due to their numerical majority, erstwhile deprived classes have been able to organise themselves in the form of pressure groups and are politically well represented.

**Key word-** Beneficiary. Target group. Percolating. welfare state.

### Introduction

Social and economic justice stands for harmony between individual and social whole in such a way that the benefits of development are provided to the deprived sections of community while preserving the interest of individuals. It stands for the primacy of social whole over individual. The idea of social justice requires the sacrifice of certain rights of an individual at the alter of general interest. Idea of social justice aims at the proper reconciliation of the interests of an individual with the overall interest of the community and prevalence of the latter over the former in the event of any conflict. Social justice also constitutes an essential part of the great complex of social change for which something might have to be sacrificed for greater good.<sup>1</sup> Economic justice should be treated as a corollary of social justice. While social justice demands eradication of gigantic evils, most of them (as exploitation of workers by capitalists) find their place in the economic justice. Concept of economic justice means non-discrimination between man and man on the basis of economic values. It also implies adequate payment for work without any discrimination on some artificial ground. It stands for freedom of all in the sphere of production and distribution of goods subject to condition of general welfare. It demands that the state of national economy should be so reshaped that the benefits are made more and more available to the common man. Social justice is a concept, which requires elimination of all kinds of discrimination and privileges based on birth, race, caste and sex. Social rules ought not to be determined by status but by capacity. Social mobility between different types of occupation should replace rigid stratification of roles inherited from the past.

### **EMPIRICAL STUDY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND POVERTY AMELIORATION IN VARANASI DISTRICT**

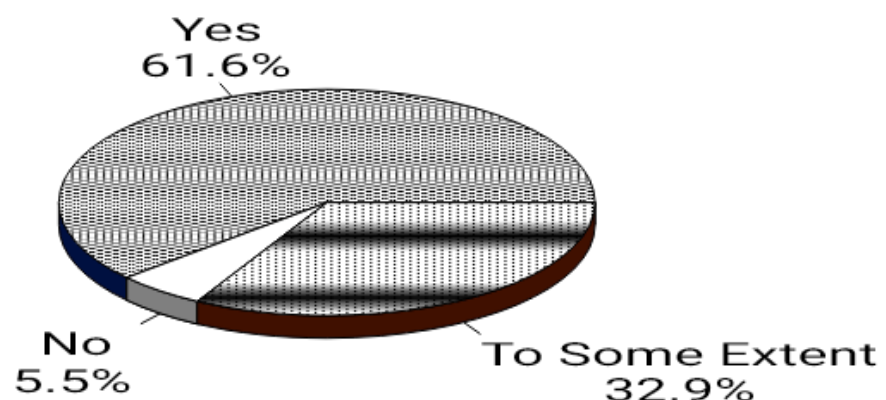
In pursuance of the provisions of constitution, government has launched many programmes for social welfare. A number of development programmes are going in the district of Varanasi too. In this research paper, I have tried to analyse how much have these programmes succeeded in poverty

amelioration and imparting social justice. Development programmes will be meaningful only if the benefits of development programmes reach the target group for which it was devised. Some times the resources of the programme are lost in the channels of development programmes. Target group of development programmes are people who are socially and economically deprived and women and children. These sections of people are the most vulnerable sections of society and hence they are in greater need of development measures. Indian Government has adopted the 'policy of direct attack on poverty' in place trickle down effect. The idea is to gradually empower these people who are lagging in the race of development through development programmes and to bring them to the level of parity with the rest of the people. So, to assess whether the fruits of development programmes are reaching the target group, we asked the people whether the fruits of development programmes are reaching the target group. The response of the people is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1: RESPONSE OF PEOPLE WHETHER THE FRUITS OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IS REACHING THE TARGET GROUP

Sl. No.	Name of Block	Number of Respondents			Total Number of Respondents
		(A) Yes	(B) No	(C) To Some Extent	
1.	Pindra	14	–	6	20
2.	Kashi Vidyapeeth	16	1	7	24
3.	Araziline	16	–	4	20
4.	Cholapur	4	2	14	20
5.	Baragaon	14	1	5	20
6.	Shivpur	18	–	2	20
7.	Chraigaon	4	5	11	20
8.	Harhua	13	–	4	17
TOTAL		99	9	53	161
PERCENT		61.49	5.5	32.91	100.00

FIGURE 1: RESPONSE OF PEOPLE WHETHER THE FRUITS OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IS REACHING THE TARGET GROUP



The analysis of their response shows that 61.4 percent of the respondents said that the benefits of development programmes are reaching the target group while 32.91 percent of the respondents said that it is reaching partially to the target group. Only 5.5 percent of the respondents said that the benefits of development programmes are not reaching the target group. Majority of respondents said that the benefits of development programmes are reaching the target groups. But nearly 1/3<sup>rd</sup> (32.91%) of the respondents said that the benefits of development programmes are reaching partially to the people. It appears that the benefits of development programmes are to some extent either being lost in the channel of development process or it is being partially deviated to other groups due to parochial factors.

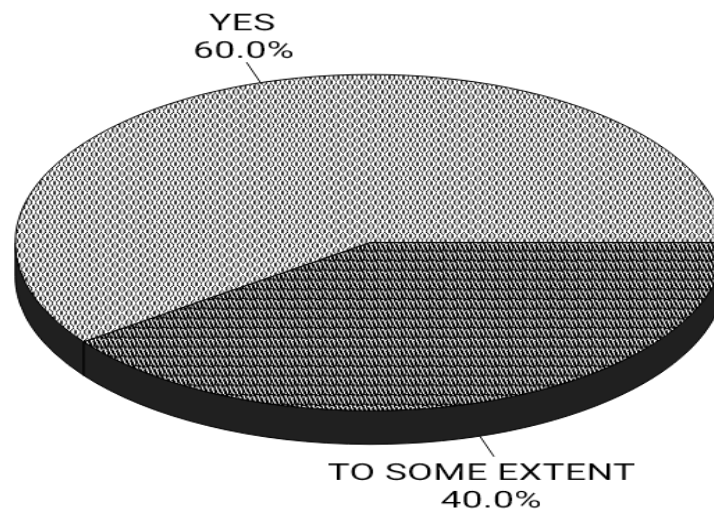
During survey we observed that the beneficiaries are aware of their rights and they do not get the benefit of development programmes deviated to other groups. Besides administration too, is stringent about the fact that the benefits should be provided only to the target group. So, administration itself takes care of the fact that the fruits of development programmes should reach the target group.

In the same context, we asked the administrators, associated with the development programmes, whether the benefits of development programmes are reaching the target group. The response of officers is shown in Table 2 (Figure 2).

TABLE 2: RESPONSE OF THE OFFICERS WHETHER THE BENEFITS OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IS REACHING THE TARGET GROUP

Sl. No.	Officers/ Designation	Response		
		Yes	No	To Some Extent
1.	Additional District Agricultural Officer	3		
2.	District Agricultural Officer			3
3.	Assistant Development Officer, Panchayat	3		
4.	Deputy Chief Medical Officer	3		
5.	District Handicapped Officer			3
6.	Assistant District Panchayati Raj Officer			3
7.	Junior Engineer (Small Irrigation)			3
8.	Junior Engineer (Head Office) Small Irrigation	3		
9.	Assistant Development Officer (Social Welfare)	3		
10.	Assistant Development Officer (Co-operation)	3		
TOTAL		6	4	(40%)
		(60%)		

FIGURE 2: RESPONSE OF THE OFFICERS WHETHER THE BENEFITS OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IS REACHING THE TARGET GROUP



From the analysis of their response, it appears that the administrators have the belief that the benefits of development programmes are reaching the target group either partially or fully.

When we matched the opinion of officers with general people, we found that 61.49 percent of the people said that the benefits of development programmes are reaching the target group and 60 percent of the officers were of similar opinion. 32.91 percent people and 40 percent officers said that benefits of development programmes are reaching the target group partially. It appears that there is a convergence of opinion between the administrators and the people in general. This is the district where the percentage of scheduled castes is 24 of total rural population. Traditionally, it was the most backward sector of the society – economically, socially and academically. But due to sustained effort of government, situation has under-went sea change. Today, even though they have a different locality than that of higher castes, but during the survey of the district, we found out that in place of deprivation, the localities of scheduled castes are in far better condition than the localities of higher castes. They have far better facility of drinking water, sanitation, electricity and education. Due to government policy of reservation in jobs, they are able to get jobs in government departments, which in rural areas are license to social mobility, stigma of untouchability is no longer attached to them. Due to legislations favouring scheduled castes, people of higher castes are themselves afraid of not anyhow offending them lest they have to face punitive measures. Untouchability is a thing of past in the district. Casteism has taken a new turn here. Caste groupings have turned into a sort of pressure groups. Due to reservation of seats for scheduled castes, backward castes and for women in representative bodies, they are politically well represented and hence they are able to avail themselves the benefits of development programmes designed for them.

### BASIS OF SELECTION OF BENEFICIARIES

For fulfilling the aim of development programmes, it is essential that the selection of beneficiaries is done in impartial manner on the basis of real needs. Considerations of castes and community should not play their role. So, we asked the people what is in their opinion the basis of

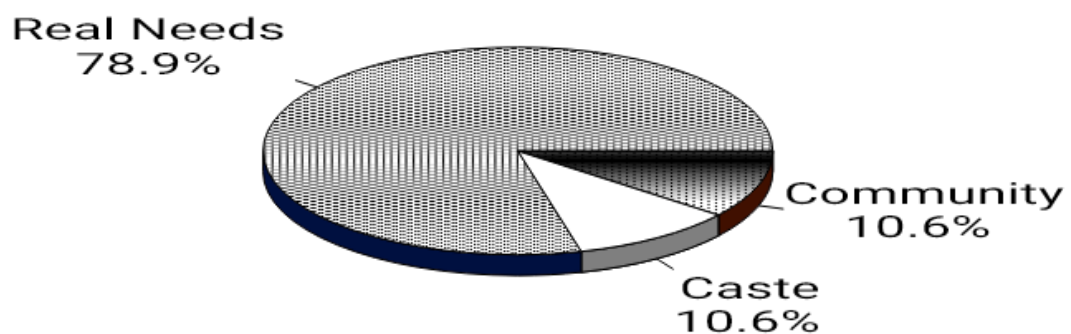
selecting beneficiaries for development programmes. Is it the real need, community or caste? Response of the people is provided in Table 2 (Figure 3).

TABLE 3: RESPONSE OF PEOPLE ABOUT THE BASIS OF SELECTION OF BENEFICIARIES FOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Sl. No.	Name of Block	Number of Respondents			Total Number of Respondents
		(A) Real Needs	(B) Caste	(C) Community	
1.	Pindra	14	–	6	20
2.	Kashi Vidyapeeth	15	1	8	24
3.	Araziline	20	–	–	20
4.	Cholapur	11	8	1	20
5.	Baragaon	18	1	1	20
6.	Shivpur	20	–	–	20
7.	Chraigaon	12	7	1	20
8.	Harhua	17	–	–	17
TOTAL		127	17	17	161
PERCENT		78.88	10.55	10.55	100.00

Q. What is the basis of selecting beneficiaries for development programmes?

FIGURE 3: RESPONSE OF PEOPLE ABOUT THE BASIS OF SELECTION OF BENEFICIARIES FOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES



The analysis of the response of the respondents shows that 78.88 percent people said that the basis of selection of beneficiaries is real need. 10.55 percent of the respondents said that the basis of selection of beneficiaries for development programmes is community and 10.55 percent of the respondents said that it is the caste. From the analysis of their responses, it appears that the selection of the beneficiaries is done from the target group but as the target group is large and the number of the beneficiaries has to be limited, partiality on the basis of caste and community occurs. During survey too, we came to find out that the representatives of local bodies try to provide benefits to their 'kith' and 'kin' and to the people of their own caste group. But this deviation takes place within the target group.

### EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE VILLAGES

We have witnessed a constant migration of people from villages to the cities in search of employment due to 'push factor'. These people are mostly marginal or landless farmers and are mostly

untrained, illiterate or semi-literate. These people are the material out of which slum areas of cities are formed. For development of people, it is essential that these people should be provided employment opportunities in their own vicinity so they are not forced to leave their surrounding and live in an alien environment in semi-human conditions where they are devoid of their basic necessity. Employment provides a person opportunity to raise himself from his eternal deprived conditions. It is means through which a person achieves self-fulfilment and dignity. Increased employment opportunities in rural areas provide the basis of sustained development. To achieve the goal of providing employment opportunity to the people in rural areas, the Government of India is running many programmes. Out of them two programmes going on in the district – Sampoon Gramin Rojgar Yojana and Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana are worth mentioning here:

### Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY)

This is the programme through the government is trying to provide employment opportunities to the families living below the line of poverty in rural areas by providing them assistance for employment generation either in groups or individually. Utilisation of funds under SGSY is given in Table 4.

TABLE 4: UTILISATION OF FUNDS UNDER SGSY<sup>8</sup>

(Amount in Lakh Rs.)

Year	Last Year Balance	Fund Received		Total Available Fund	Expenditure	Balance
		Central	State			
2002- 2003	85.446	46.15	15.38	146.796	67.54	79.436
2003- 2004	79.436	120.73	40.24	240.406	200.72	39.686
2004- 2005	39.686	79.80	26.598	146.084	132.11	13.974

Physical Achievements of the Programme are given in Table 5.

TABLE 5: PHYSICAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF SGSY<sup>9</sup>

(Amount in Lakh Rs.)

Year	Physical Targets	Achievement		
		SHG s	Individuals	Tota l
2002-2003	2200	551	45	596
2003-2004	2200	1254	17	1271
2004-2005	2197	953	171	1124

Table 5 shows that the SGSY programme is still unable to achieve its target. According to the Report of the District Development Authority, it is due to the attitude of bankers who show reluctance right from the opening of account of self-help groups at different stages such as guiding, granting of CCI and sanction of loans as a result of which inordinate delay is experienced and the target becomes difficult to achieve. <sup>2</sup>

Since Rural Development Department as well as bankers are involved in getting this scheme implemented, the annual target given to the rural development department must be equally shared by the bankers also, keeping in view, the incentive of Rs.5080 to be given to the bank for granting CCL and sanctioning disbursement of loan to Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana beneficiary group.

TABLE 6: RESPONSE OF PEOPLE WHETHER EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES HAVE INCREASED IN THEIR VILLAGE DUE TO DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Sl. No.	Name of Block	Number of Respondents			Total Number of Respondents
		(A) Yes	(B) No	(C) To Some Extent	
1.	Pindra	13	–	7	20
2.	Kashi Vidyapeeth	16	1	7	24
3.	Araziline	17	1	2	20
4.	Cholapur	4	6	10	20
5.	Baragaon	12	–	8	20
6.	Shivpur	20	–	–	20
7.	Chraigaon	3	5	12	20
8.	Harhua	10	1	6	17
TOTAL		95	14	52	161
PERCENT		59.00	8.60	32.29	100.00

Q. Has in your village employment opportunities increased due to development programmes?

FIGURE 4: RESPONSE OF PEOPLE WHETHER EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES HAVE INCREASED IN THEIR VILLAGE DUE TO DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

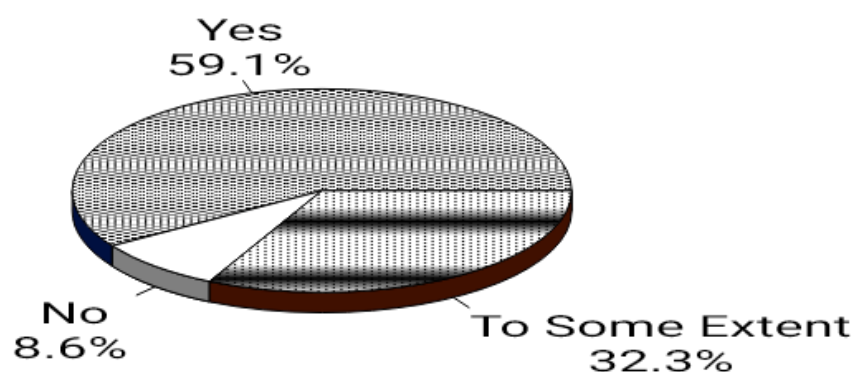


Table 6 (Figure 4) shows that 59 percent of the respondents, said that the employment opportunities have increased in the village due to development programmes. 32.29 percent of the respondents accepted partial increase in employment opportunities due to implementation of development programmes. So, nearly 91.29 percent of the respondents accepted increase in employment opportunities. Merely 8.6 percent of the respondents said that the development programmes have not culminated into increased employment opportunities. So, it appears that due to the development programmes people are having more employment opportunities in the villages.

In survey, we came to find out that the prospect of employment opportunities in the village have increased but owing to the population explosion these are not proving to be sufficient and people of rural areas have to move towards cities in search of employment.

### LITERACY LEVEL IN THE DISTRICT

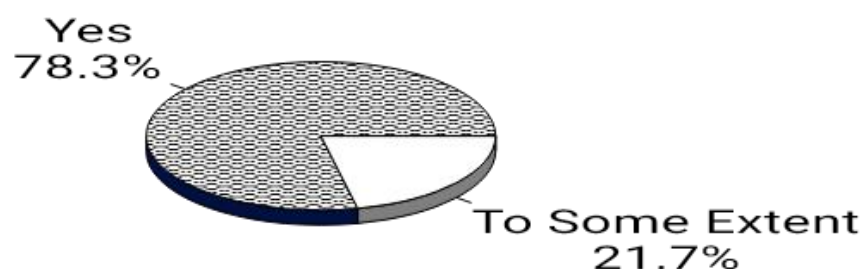
Education is essential for improving the condition of people and for eradicating their poverty. Education is not only required for getting employment but it also creates awareness among people about their problems, hence about their solutions. According to 1991 census, the literacy level of the district is 52.4 percent. We tried to judge the assessment of people about the problem of literacy and we asked the people whether the number of educated people has increased in their village. The response of people is shown through Table 7.

TABLE 7: RESPONSE OF PEOPLE WHETHER THE NUMBER OF EDUCATED PEOPLE HAS INCREASED IN THEIR VILLAGE

Sl. No.	Name of Block	Number of Respondents			Total Number of Respondents
		(A) Yes	(B) No	(C) To Some Extent	
1.	Pindra	12	–	8	20
2.	Kashi Vidyapeeth	21	–	3	24
3.	Araziline	20	–	–	20
4.	Cholapur	15	–	5	20
5.	Baragaon	17	–	3	20
6.	Shivpur	13	–	7	20
7.	Chraigaon	17	–	3	20
8.	Harhua	11	–	6	17
TOTAL		126	–	35	161
PERCENT		78.26	–	21.73	100.00

Table 7 (Figure 5) shows that 78.26 percent of the respondents said that the number of educated people has increased in their village and 21.73 percent of the respondents said that it has increased to some extent. So, it appears in the opinion of the people that the number of educated people has increased.

FIGURE 5: RESPONSE OF PEOPLE WHETHER THE NUMBER OF EDUCATED PEOPLE HAS INCREASED IN THEIR VILLAGE





According to 1981 census 31.8 percent of people were literate in the district. So from 1981 to 1991, there has been 20.6 percent increase in literacy level in the district. This has been really a large increase in the literacy level. But the condition is really deplorable in view of the fact that nearly half of the population of district is still illiterate.<sup>15</sup>

So, literacy level has increased but the level of illiteracy is still very high in the district. Half of the entire district is still illiterate.

Even though, it is a field study, its findings can be used to find solutions of the problems related to social justice and development. A massive literacy drive, promotion of agro based industries, an administration imbued with the spirit of development and a stringent check on corruption is required for the success of development programs and poverty amelioration.

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