



## Poverty and Sustainable Development in India: A Reality

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### Abstract:

Poverty is the much debated issue in India. It has several dimensions. It is theoretically social but functionally political. Poverty is considered as a social menace. However, it is a boon for political coronation of the politicians. The poorer the social section is higher the chances to avail it as an opportunity to build a political career. On this background, the social, economic, cultural, ethnic, gender, distinctions are made of the society in and outside. The Rio Agenda 21 (AG21) 1992 clearly stated the issue of poverty as a threat to sustainable development. It also stresses the link between reduction of poverty and opportunity for sustainable development. Significantly, Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPI) concluded intensive suggestion about how priority to poverty reduction may lead to development. The present paper discusses how poverty and sustainable development are the two sides of coin, how the latter cannot be achieved without having systematic, apolitical efforts to address the issue of poverty.

**Key Words:** Poverty, Sustainability, Rio Agenda, Development

### Introduction

In 1992, the Rio Summit on Environment and Development that gave rise to serious thinking on the international development agenda. The target of the agenda is to be met at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Yet the situation in majority of countries need revised timelines for this development agenda. The agenda still has 'poverty' at its centre even after two decades. Development is universally understood as eradication of poverty, making available good life situations for all. A nation not addressing poverty and environment in its developmental agenda is not the development at all. Therefore, in all development planning, combating poverty remains the top priority. Nevertheless, the development agenda in India though for the last 70 years revolves around poverty, the ground reality of combating it seems not working as expected. Poverty is much debated and *celebrated* (I mean politically) phenomenon. It is a chronic problem involving a large population of the nation. Even so, the annual budget of the nation has a less spending on it in reality. The situation is getting worse. The poor becomes poorer and the rich becomes richer. This prevailing situation in India has contributed to new capitalism. As a result, a large portion of the population remained in poverty even after 70 years of post independence. It is intensively pathetic to see that during these years, the number of people in poverty has not decreased substantially. Now it is a high time to redefine the phenomenon of poverty in the modern times and revise the strategies to tackle it. In a country like India evolving a large population, change will be gradual than radical. This necessitates the will and determination of all the stakeholders to combat poverty with diverse strategies.

### Poverty and Sustainability

The estimates produced by the United Nations on global poverty suggest that 11% of the world population (approximately 700 million people) still live in extreme poverty. As a result, they struggle to fulfill the basic needs like access to potable water, basic health facilities,

