***Poverty in Pakistan***

Poverty is general scarcity or dearth, or the state of one who lacks a certain amount of material possessions or money. It is a multifaceted concept, which includes social, economic political elements. Poverty seems to be chronic or temporary, and most of the time it is closely related to inequality.

According to Peter Townsend, Poverty can be defined as following:

"Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the type of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and the amenities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged or approved in the societies to which they belong. Their resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average family that they are in effect excluded from the ordinary living patterns, customs, and activities”

Vic George writes:

“Poverty consists of a core of basic necessities as well as a list of other necessities that change over time and place”.

Baratz and Grigsby refer to poverty as “a severe lack of physical and mental well-being, closely associated with inadequate economic resources and consumption”.

Over 200 years ago, Adam Smith (father of modern economics) saw in poorness not just a problem of having access to the basic necessities to support one’s life, but also a social handicap. In this sense poverty's about being able to follow the customs of a given society and country, because it’s essential to be part of it.

**Poverty as a social handicap**

Social exclusion, or marginalization, then becomes an essential element for understanding what poverty is.

In many cases indeed, if you don’t have a suit, a nice shirt or any decent outfit, you’re very unlikely to be offered a job and your situation will only get worse.

You now understand that giving a universal definition of poverty is quite impossible as it’s an issue that depends on social norms. Secondly, the question of the definition of poverty refers to the problem of measuring poverty.

But measuring poverty where? In what context?Surely, inner-city poverty is radically different than rural poverty. And yet you're about to find out that governments often don't make the difference. Often on purpose.

**TYPES OF POVERTY:**

These are the major types of poverty:

**1)      General Poverty**

General poverty refers to the existence of poverty in almost all the sectors of economy. As in case of Pakistan, 21.0 % population is much poor.

**2)      Absolute Poverty**

It is meant to represent a specific minimum level of income needed to satisfy the basic physical needs of food, clothing and shelter in order to ensure survival.

**3)      Cyclical Poverty**

Cyclical poverty refers to poverty that may be widespread throughout a population, but its occurrence itself is of limited duration.

**4)      Collective Poverty**

Collective poverty involves a relatively permanent insufficiency of means to make safe basic needs of life.

**5)      Concentrated Collective Poverty**

Cities or regions neglected by industry and in areas where agriculture or industry is inefficient and cannot compete profitably, there are found victims of concentrated collective poverty.

**6)      Case Poverty**

Case poverty refers to the inability of an individual or family to secure basic needs even in social surroundings of general prosperity. This inability is generally related to the lack of some basic quality that would permit the individual to maintain himself.

**Poverty line**

A level of personal or family income below which one is classified as poor according to governmental standards - called also poverty level. In Pakistan poverty line is a US Dollar per day.

**Pakistan the Country:**

Pakistan is an agriculture country blessed with four seasons with the land enriched with natural resources; the land of Baluchistan is full of minerals and resources. Pakistan is the country having more than 97 % Muslims following Islamic rules, Zakat is included in 5 pillars of Islam, which apparently shows that Pakistan have the well distributed wealth, but the ground reality is exactly opposite. The poverty level in Pakistan is increasing day by day and more than 40 % people with in the country are living their lives below the poverty line on average they are earning less than 125 RS, the cost of petrol is increasing day by day which affects the rate of other prices as well.

**Percentage of Poverty in Pakistan:**

In 21st century Pakistan faces serious issue which lead in increasing of Poverty level, issue of 9/11, then Earth quake in 2005 effect million of people, two continuous floods in the year of 2010 and 2011 contribute a lot in increasing poverty in Pakistan. The percentage of population in Pakistan is about 39%.

SDPI’s study on poverty in Pakistan revealed that every third Pakistani is living his life below the poverty line. Baluchistan which is considered as the land of mineral is facing a serious issue of poverty, 52 % of total population in Baluchistan living below the poverty line, 33 % of Sindh population are living below the poverty line followed by KPK having 32 % ratio. Punjab which is considered as the urban area also entails 19 % population which is living below the poverty line.

**Causes of poverty in Pakistan**

Pakistan is a poor country. Its economy is facing fluctuations now a day. At the time of independence Pakistan has very low resources and capital, so the processes of progress were very slow. Unfortunately the politicians of Pakistan were all not well aware of modern global system and the progress processes and the needs of country. Due to bad policies today Pakistan is facing a lot of problems. The continuous failure of policies leads the people of country to miserable conditions. The major problem in the country is poverty which is becoming the cause of crime and social disorder.

It is difficult to point out all causes of poverty in Pakistan but the major causes of are given below:

**Government Policies:**

Government is not well aware of present conditions of country. The policies of government are base on the suggestions of officials which do not have awareness about the problems of a common man. After implementation the policies do not get effective result. After the failure of one policy, government does not consider its failure and announces another policy without studying the aftermaths of last one. Heavy taxes and unemployment crushes the people and they are forced to live below poverty line. The suitable medical facilities are not provided to people and they are forced to get treatment for private clinics which are too costly.

**Corruption:**

Another cause of poverty is corruption. There are two types of corruption. There is not morality and everyone is trying to earn more and more by using fair and unfair means. Officials waste their time has low efficiency. Only one relationship that is exists in society is money. One has to pay a heavy cost to get his right. Law and order conditions are out of control and institutions are failed to provide justice to a common man. Justice can be bought by money only. But government is unable to control such type of things. In this whole scenario some corrupt people has been occupying the resources and common man is living in miserable conditions.

**Division of Agricultural Land:**

Pakistan is an agricultural country. Most of people are farmers by profession. One has land which is fulfilling the needs of his family but he has to divide the land into his children when they got young. After division the land is not sufficient to support a family. Now the families of his children are suffering and spending their lives below poverty line.

**Materialism:**

In our society social bonding are gradually becomes thinner and thinner. A race of material object has been started even no one tried to understand the problems of others. Every one is gradually changing from human to a bioman which only know about his needs and have no concept about the limitations of others. People are not ready to help each other. At last every one has lose his trust on others which effect our social and economic system and it is another cause of poverty.

**Lack of Education:**

The literacy rate of Pakistan is very low. Most of people do not have any concept about the modern earning sources. Most people are unable to adopt technology for their business needs, that’s why business do not meet international standards and results as decrease in revenue which lead the society to poor financial conditions.

**Large Scale Import:**

The import of Pakistan is greater than export. Big revenue is consumed in importing good every year, even raw material has to import for industry. If we decrease import and establish own supply chains from our country natural resources the people will have better opportunities to earn.

**Law and Order:**

There are lot of problems regarding law and order. Terrorist attacks create uncertainty in stock markets and people earning from stock are getting loss due to which the whole country faces uncertain increase in commodity prices.

**Fluctuated Foreign investment:**

Foreign investor comes to local markets. They invest millions of dollars in stock markets and stock market gets rise in index. Then the investor withdraws his money with profit and market suddenly collapses. The after math always is always faced by poor people.

**Privatization:**

Government is unable to manage the departments and country has low reserve assets. So the meet the requirements some companies run by government are sold to foreign investors. The commodities or services provided by the companies are becoming costly. For example if government sold a gas plant then prices for gas in country rises.

**Moral Culture:**

The main reason for poverty is the social dishonesty and irresponsible behavior of people. Every one is trying to get rich by using unfair means. A shop keeper is ready to get whole money from the pocket of customer. People doing jobs are not performing their duties well. In society the man considered brave or respectful who do not pay taxes or continuously violate the laws. This irresponsible behavior continuously increases and produces loss for county.

**Measures to Control Poverty in Pakistan:**

1. Poverty can be removed by breaking the vicious circle of poverty.

2-      Control on inflation is compulsory to eliminate the poverty.

3-      Government should provide more facilities to investors to increase the investment to reduce the unemployment.

4-      Use of modern techniques of production and subsidies in utility charges is necessary.

5-      Development of agriculture and industrial sector will reduce the poverty in Pakistan.

6-      Government should make easy, more and in time availability of various types of credits.

7-      We should save more to reduce the poverty.

8-      Govt. should reduce the rate of tax and increase the rate of capital formation.

9-      Govt. should allocate more funds for education to increase the literacy rate.

10- Proper maintenance of law and order in necessary to remove the poverty.

11- Check on nepotism is necessary to reduce the poverty.