



RETALIATING POVERTY THROUGH SUBJECTIVE WELLBEING:A QUALITATIVE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Milieu of the Problem

Poverty is a general state of life existing in present which lacks certain amount of possession which is insufficient to meet basic need. It is a complicated perception which includes lacking of well-being factors in relation to physical, psychological, social and spiritual elements to participate fully towards social contribution. Though many policies and government laws have been formulated after the agricultural and industrial revolution but still fails to assess the other context of social dimension beyond financial criteria. Today, policy makers should consider well-being factors which can influence poverty in terms of fostering life satisfaction, expressing humanity and encouraging the feel good factor while sustaining life.

Objectives of the Study

The paper is based on literature review method to produce a qualitative comparative analysis between the public policies towards the abatement of poverty and how these policies can be strengthen by taking subjective well-being factors into consideration.

Aim of Study

This, study aims to explore the objective determinants of poverty and subjective judgement of self reported assessment of people's life. The paper also provides a framework by developing theories on fighting back poverty, with the help of subjective well-being. The aim is not only

to get the people out of poverty but also give them a place within the society to participate effectively towards societal well-being.

Implication of the Study

The paper can be used for any academic and professional relevance as it mainly focuses on poverty, poverty retaliating programmes and subjective well-being approach to eradicate poverty. The study can prove beneficial as it provides in-depth analysis of poverty based on the holistic parameters of subjective well-being to present the diverse impact of poverty upon life as a whole.

Key Words Government Policies, Poverty, Subjective Well-Being, Social Impact, Well-Being Parameters,

Conceptualising Poverty

The term poverty comes from the old French term ‘poverty’ which means ‘poor’. In this regard the word; poverty is a challenging concept which generally refers to, not having enough money to fulfil the basic needs as food, clothing and shelter. However, the perception of poverty does not limit itself within this, as the concept very much depend on the ideological and political context within which it is used. Though, no universal characterization is available for the term poverty but the term has been defined as: Poverty is a hunger. Poverty is lack of shelter. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not having access to school and not knowing how to read. Poverty is not having a job, living one day at a time. Poverty is losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water. So poverty is a call to action for the poor and the wealthy alike a call to change the world so that many more may have enough to eat, adequate shelter, access to education and health, protection from violence, and a voice in what happens in their communities (World Bank, 2010).

“Absolute poverty is a condition characterised by severe deprivation of human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter education and information, it depends not only on income but also on access to social services” (Copenhagen Summit, 1995).

“Fundamentally, poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to; not having the land on which to grow one’s food or a job to earn one’s living, not having access to

credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living on marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation” Gordon (2005) & United Nation (June, 1998).

From the past few decades, poverty reduction has become a major goal and global issue though mainly for the developing country. Today essential ideas underlying the adoption of strategies for poverty reduction is to reduce the state of privation and lack of necessities in terms of income, housing tenure, and satisfaction standard of living. Therefore, poverty needs to be understood as being strongly influenced by the resources that people can claim, under what conditions and with what level of choice (Such, 2012). But on the same time the amount of wealth require for survival is not the same in all the places and time periods as each country has their own National Poverty Line.

Policies to Retaliate Poverty

Poverty occurs in both developing countries and developed countries. While poverty is much more widespread in developing countries, both types of countries undertake poverty reduction measures. Such as:

- Poverty alleviation policies involve improving the living conditions of poor people. Providing aid in the field of medical and scientific development is essential in providing better lives such as Green Revolution etc.
- World Bank proposes to provide subsidised fertilizer to the farmers of the poor nation as many of the farmers cannot purchase on market price.
- Increasing Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Remittances flow to speed up the economic expansion of fast growing Asian nation.
- Building quality roads and information network helps market reform which ultimately leads to bring economic freedom by making financial service accessible to the poor.
- The growing economic development has great potential to retaliate poverty by simultaneous increase of employment opportunities and increased skilled labour productivity.
- Raising the farm income is one of the core poverty retaliate weapon as estimate shows that growth in the agricultural productivity of small farmers is effective in benefiting the poorest half of a country’s population as growth generated in non-agricultural sectors. For example, a 2012 study suggested that new varieties of chickpea could benefit Ethiopian farmers in future.

- Improving water management is an effective way to help reduce poverty among farmers. During the Green Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, for example, irrigation was a key factor in unlocking Asia's agricultural potential and reducing poverty.
- Empowering women has one of the significant areas of discussion. World Bank suggested that promoting gender equality through empowerment of women is a qualitatively significant poverty reduction strategy. For example the White Revolution leads to contribution from women in the form of dairy products marketed under the name 'Amul' and small scale industries like 'Lijat Papad' also gave financial freedom to women in India.

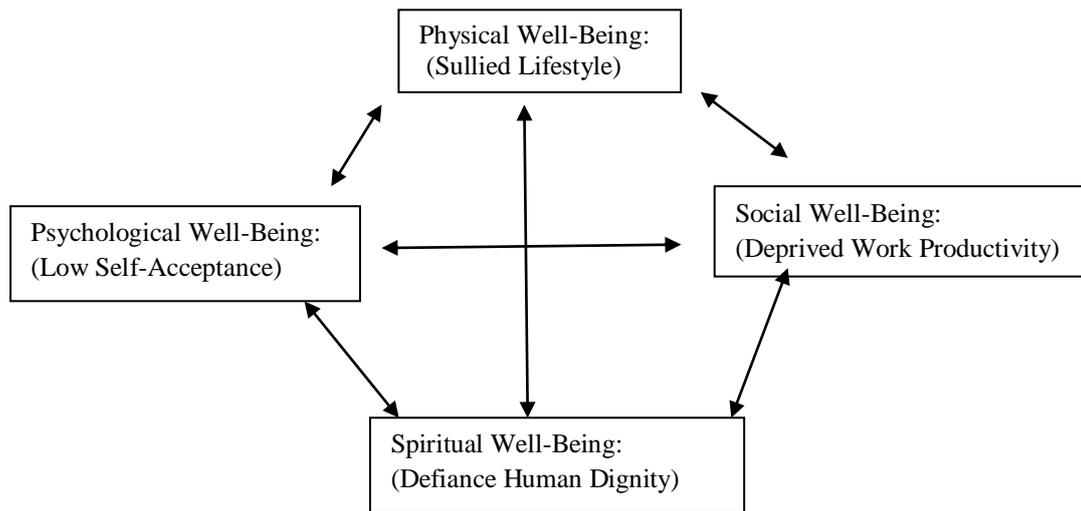
Thus, regarding above policies, other than the psychologist, many utilitarian's such as Jeremy Bentham, James Mill, John Austin etc., supported the subjective well-being measures to study the world. According to utility theory, people are best judged on the overall quality of life and which can be understand by adopting the straightforward strategy of asking to them either single question or group of questions on the level of life satisfaction or happiness based on circumstance and comparison to other person (Roy Choudhury & Barman, 2014).

Poverty and Subjective Well-Being

The above policies to reduce poverty through contributed a lot for poverty reduction, but these policies have number of weakness:

- The traditional policies for retaliating poverty does not provide a basis for alternative measure for calculating other dimension of life (beyond financial increment)
- Assessment criterion is not efficient enough to judge that how increase in income or getting an employment is helpful to reduce well-being deprivation
- Policies fail to address the other poverty context (e.g. social dissonance context)
- Policies made a contradiction about the concept whether people getting out of poverty does also means increasing their subjective well-being and giving them a satisfying social status. *(Source: Cahyat, Gönner, Haug (2007) & Rojas (2007))*

Figure 1 Interactive Model of Poverty and Subjective Well-Being



Thus, in the limelight of subjective well-being it can be said that the poverty is not created by the so called low-income people. They are the victims. The poverty is a vicious cycle created by the designed economic boundaries and social system within the society.

Table 1 Factors of Poverty related to the Parameters of Subjective Well-Being

| |
|---|
| Psychological Well-being |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future Treat (fear for future) • Low Self-Esteem (feeling of worthlessness) • Low Life Satisfaction (ability to cope with daily life) |
| Physical Well-being |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunger (feeling of discomfort caused due to lack of food) • Shelter (establishment providing protection) • Clothing (covering for the body need for warmth) • Illness (period of sickness due to lack of medication) |
| Social Well-Being |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Powerlessness (helpless) • Insecurity (lack of self confidence) • Illiterate (lack of education) • Low Standard of living (marked as an inferior for lower level from the expected standard of society) • Living in Fragile Environment (environment marked with unclean water, no sanitation facilities, houses surrounded with garbage etc.) |
| Spiritual Well-Being |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violation of Human Dignity • Susceptibility to violence (vulnerable to hostility due to the lack of knowledge) • Budding Cynicism (growing suspicion due to ignorance) |

Source: Roy Choudhury & Barman (2014)

Does Economic Development is Identical to Better Subjective Well-Being? The term subjective well-being is used as a synonymous to the word ‘happiness’ and generally within the society the economic development is also used as the synonymous of ‘happiness’. In this regard many argument can be stated to question the existence of clearly define the margin

between the two variables. Many parameters are utilized by the financial institution as GNP (Gross National Product), GDP (Gross Domestic Product), HDI (Human Development Index), Life Expectancy Ratio, Per Capita Income, Mortality Rate etc; to judge the quality of life. Still there is a nagging worry when we calculate the true implementation of these parameters. Even if true implementation is tried much less stringent vision is applied for the elimination of poverty and its supporting factors.

Firstly, per capita income can indicate the wealth in the hands of the people but it does not indicate that they all have the same amount of money and thus, unable to figure out the amount of well-being within a country or even within a state (Abdul Kalam & Rajan, 2002).

Secondly, greater economic well-being does not signify greater amount of well-being as the related subjective well-being can only be achieved through efficient use of the resources. Therefore, an increase in income may lead to little or no increase in the well-being (Rojas, 2012).

Thirdly, economic progress can also lead to social dysfunctional for example due to rapidly changing technology many dysfunctional elements can within the society as skills obsolescence, job insecurity and longer hours of work, which leads to increased stressed and loosing social ties (OECD, 2001).

Fourthly, economic development does not mean achievement of overall life satisfaction. For example in US happiness does not increase despite economic growth. Now it has been realised that though for many decades economic growth being the dominant model now there should be a search for new models of progress. The model which will not only provide means to end but also end with fulfilment (World Economic Forum, 2012).

Fifthly, there are many vital wants which does not require economic growth for its fulfilment as many of which appears social in character than economic. Thus, in recent years some have began to argue against further trying to raise the material standard of living, claiming that such increases will do little to raise well-being. These arguments are based on a key finding in the emerging literature on subjective well-being, called raise well-being, called the “Easterlin paradox,” (Stevenson & Wolfers , 2008).

Sixthly, lone development of material life within the society might be helpful to meet the basic need only but in order to maintain happiness, being more resilient individual within the family and a better member within the society, development of moral life is vital and which can be achieved through higher subjective well-being. Thus, subjective well-being provides a

broad range of existing measures that go beyond gross domestic product (GDP) to offer a more complete and accurate picture of how a society and its economy are faring (Leon & Boris, 2010).

Depending on these symposiums, it can be answered that economic development is not identical to greater subjective well-being. Therefore, in order to retaliate the poverty only economic development alone is not sufficient rather the economic development should go hand in hand with betterment of other domain areas of life.

Subjective Well-Being Approach to Retaliate Poverty The concept of the ‘subjective well-being’ is considered synonyms to the word ‘happiness’ and generally referred to an evaluation of one’s own life considered as a whole. (Sarracino, 2008) thus, well-being is a positive outcome which is meaningful for many people and many sectors of society, because it tells us that people perceive that their lives are going well. The term happiness is also commonly used in regards to subjective well-being and has been defined variously as “satisfaction of desires and goals” (Barman, & Roy Choudhury, 2013).

A number of study have founded that subjective well-being constructs are strongly associated with a range of personality traits. As the study conducted by the Camfield, Laura (2006) in four developing countries of Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Peru and Thailand revealed that the people of Bangladesh are happy when all needs are fulfilled and have achievements, Ethiopian men relate their happiness with good health, Peruvian site the happiness with the time spent with family and Thai people are happy when they have high education and good friendship..This gives a notable difference of culture that is whether the individualist culture of western countries are more fascinated towards subjective well-being rather than the collectivist culture of eastern countries (Stocks (South Africa), April (South Africa), Lynton (China ,2012).

Therefore, subjective well-being approach to retaliate poverty is based on broad category of phenomena that includes people emotional responses, domain satisfactions and global judgements of life satisfaction. Each of the specific construct needs to be understood in their own rights, yet the components often correlate substantially [....]” (Diener, Suh, Luca and Smith, 1999).

- Today’s economic context has radically changed, we are practicing such a economic model where most of the poverty policies and programmes are directed towards increment of per capita income, employment opportunities, extension of property

rights etc; without any basis of knowledge of its actual requirement. But subjective well-being methods are based on survey questions which are declared as an answer as improvement in which sphere will lead to maximum life satisfaction.

- It has been seen that performance of the world economy between 2004 and 2007 may have been achieved at the expense of future. But very soon it became clear that some of the performance was a “mirage”, profit that was based on price that had been inflated by the bubble (Stiglitz, Sen, Fitoussi). But subjective well-being works with the well-being of sustainable development by taking every domain of life rather than making policies on academically defined agents as Human Development Index (HDI), Index of Social Progress, and Measuring of economic welfare Index etc.
- The Great Recession which also referred as lesser depression which occur at December 2007 and lead to sharp down turn of countries economic structure in September 2008 is mainly due to the one headed direction to lessen poverty by blocking money within the country though creation of hedge funds resulting bankruptcy and huge money loss. In this regard subjective well-being approach states that it is better to create a proper measurement on the usage of money on each of the factors contributing to poverty to avoid systematic imbalance. Thus subjective well-being adopts a straight forward strategy of asking questions based on on-going life situation.
- Though financial bodies provide a logical system design to measure subjective social performance of the society as sustainable economic welfare and genuine progress indicators measuring income distribution, net capital growth, resource depletion etc., but the system take the bird eye view picture of the societal structure and does not provide person to person variation and his/her view of the countries situation. Here, subjective well-being believes that the people living in and facing the every aspect and impact of governments’ policies has the lone authority to assess his well-being as being well or not is essentially a subjective experience.
- The coming of various behavioural model, challenges the traditional economic indicators, as subjective well-being approach typically forms the basis for alternative measure for calculating well-being. For instance the economic indicator does not provide the explanation for social dissonance context of poverty, that is, the existence of certain social elements which are known to be immoral or unethical but still these exists as contradictory actions are done by some persons to remain in the power. Such

elements are: racism, caste-related violence, gender biasness, regional hostility leading to state division etc.

- Lastly, subjective well-being approach tries to provide an overview: “*shift emphasis from measuring economic production to measuring people’s well-being*” (Stiglitz, Sen, Fitoussi). As income and consumption calculation of households provide the statistical result in terms of standard of living but the real motive of these behind the consumption goods and services is to increase the current well-being at the expense of its future well-being. Moreover, life satisfaction goes beyond economic perception of the state; rather, it embraces people’s health, everyday activities, environment they are living etc.

Thus, the subjective well-being approach to retaliate poverty aimed at reaching policy makers to provide them a holistic sense of the different domains of life and as well as which of these domain areas needs more attention to foster greater well-being and social progress. The subjective well-being approach takes into account the inter-disciplinary mode of study to understand the complexity of the wellbeing.

Table 2 Review Matrix

| Sl.No. | AUTHOR | CONTEXT | METHODS | CONTENTS |
|--------|--|--|---|--|
| 1. | Carino, J. (2005) “Poverty and Well-Being” | Indigenous people of western countries | Sample of indigenous people living in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and United States are taken & comparison is done with general population of the country based on HDI guideline | Focus is given on the indigenous people residing with different lifestyle and ravages caused by industrial development and globalization effect. |
| 2. | Ravallion, M. (October 2009) “A Comparative Perspective on Poverty Reduction in Brazil, China and India” | Washington, D.C, U.S | Quantitative mode of study is done by collecting the population data base from 1981-2005 of each country and assessment is done on how the policy reform has affected to the poor people. | Comparative study is done on Brazil, China & India to find out the varying degree of reasons for poverty and the methods adopted to reform the policies to reduce poverty. |
| 3. | Tichy, G. (September 2013) “Subjective well-being and socio-ecological transition” | Europe | Various determinants of life satisfaction as- social, economical, environmental, etc., are listed to provide a solution for greater well-being. | Paper tries to lay an analytical foundation for developing new strategy for socio-ecological transition to bridge the gap between policy makers and subjective-well-being |
| 4. | Waldegrave, C; Cameron, P.M. (2010) “The Impact of Poverty on Wellbeing during Midlife” | New Zealand University of Waikato | Survey method is used by collecting the data from 1,958 respondents aged 40-64 years. | Paper explodes the poverty experienced during mid-life. The measures are based on income, wealth including current personal and household income. |
| 5. | Kumari, L. (April 2013) “Poverty Eradication in India : A study of National | India | Summarization is done about the problems created by the poverty and different policies, plans and programs for | Study revolves around the Indian government policies, plans and programs and their effectiveness on the |

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|-----|--|----------------------------------|--|--|
| | policies, plans and Programs” | | poverty eradication based on secondary data collected through the websites, journals and newspapers. | eradication of the poverty and controlling of marginalized people within the society. |
| 6. | Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights | New York | A framework of human rights is discussed and guidelines on equality, human rights, indication on poor are given to reduce poverty from the root. | The importance of human right approach is discussed to reduce the poverty and its inter-related factors. |
| 7. | Foresti, M; Ludi, E with Griffiths, R (2007). “Human Rights and Livelihood Approaches for Poverty Reduction” | Switzerland | A qualitative comparative study on the key factors as SLA’s & HRBAs is done and how the combination of this two factors can contribute reduce poverty | A briefing paper finds the two key factor- Sustainable Livelihood Approaches (SLAs) & Human-Rights Based Approaches (HRBAs) to analyse the reasons for poverty. |
| 8. | Costanza, R; Hart, M; Posner, S; Talberth, J. (January 2009) “Beyond GDP: The Need for New Measures of Progress” | United States, Boston University | Qualitative mood of study is conducted and discussion is presented on various economic indicators as HDI, GDP, with relation to well-being indicators as NGH, Living planet report & Happy planet Index. | Paper focuses to search for better indicators of well-being excluding the GDP as it is used sometimes inappropriately. As GDP can measure economic quantity not Quality. |
| 9. | Wartenberg, J. (May 2011) “Human Well-Being at the Heart of Economics” | United States | Critical review is prepared on the economic model of measuring well-being as many of the well-being measure are absent as reproduction and economic sustainability. | Discussion is done on the 2007 great depression on US and the worst impact on the well-being of the people’s daily life. |
| 10. | New Economic Foundation- NEF (2012) a registered charity. “The Happy Planet Index” | United Kingdom | The report developed the first global measure of sustainable development on the basis of life-expectancy and ecological foot prints for the upcoming future generation. | The report provides a comparison of well-nations with nations having lack of well-being in terms of how well-nations are supporting their inhabitants to live good life. |
| 11. | Conceição, P & Bandura, R, “Measuring Subjective Wellbeing: A Summary Review of the Literature” | United Nations | Qualitative mood of study is conducted where objective and subjective GDP measures on well-being and its flaws are discussed with alternative measures on well-being. | Paper mainly outlines the growing literature of subjective well-being. Focus is mainly on single multi-dimensional in nature of well-being. |
| 12. | UK Department for International Development (April 2012) “Understanding Poverty and Well-Being ” | United Kingdom | Various unresolved challenges and gaps in current knowledge of poverty are highlighted and key future research direction is also stimulated. | Main purpose of the discussion is to focus on further quality research on poverty to help identify the limitation in contemporary research on poverty. |
| 13. | Lao People’s Democratic Republic, “National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy (NGPES)” | Laos | Implementation of the NGPES is one by taking many major cross-sectors as private, government, agriculture & forestry, infrastructure etc; for broad based country development. | A strategic framework is produced for the least-developed countries to develop poverty eradication programmes to enhance growth and reducing poverty by 2020. |
| 14. | IMF (January 2011) & MFEA, Tanzania (July 2010) “National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of | Tanzania, Africa | A series of strategies ranging from sector specific to multi-sartorial strategies are developed into three clusters to fight back the poverty. | Main aim of paper is highlight the commitments of the NSGRP II/ MKUKUTA for overall development of the poor |

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|-----|--|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| | Poverty II / MKUKUTA” | | | people. |
| 15. | Alkire, S & Sarwar, B.M(January 2009) “Multidimensional Measures of Poverty & Well-being” | United Kingdom | Case study method is adopted and 6 countries were taken to understand the multi-dimensional approach to alleviate poverty and increase well-being. | Paper emphasises the importance of multi-dimensional approach for measuring poverty. This takes a broader spectrum to know policies and flaws. |
| 16. | Morduch, J & Haley, B (June 2002) “Analysis of the Effects of Microfinance on Poverty Reduction” | Canada | Qualitative method of study is conducted where various micro-finance programs present worldwide is discussed to understand the effect its effect on varying degree of poverty | Role of microfinance is emphasised to reduce poverty and importance is given on the synergy between microfinance and other poverty eradication programs. |
| 17. | Shaffer, P (2001), “New Thinking on Poverty: Implications for Poverty Reduction Strategies” | United Nations | Co-relational mood of study is conducted by examining the existing policies against poverty and developing a new concept for poverty eradication. | Three main changes are generated as a new thinking on poverty eradication with combination of already existing policies and programs for fighting back poverty. |
| 18. | Bonilla G. A & Gruat, J.V. (2003) “Social Protection: A Life Cycle Continuum Investment for Social Justice, Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development” | Geneva, Switzerland | Qualitative method is adopted to prepare a conference report for ILO on social protection as an integral path to poverty eradication. | Poverty is redefined in terms of social protection v/s ‘no’ social protection and its status in the global era as it’s an important need towards well-being. |
| 19. | UNDP (December 2006) “What is Poverty? Concepts and Measurement” | United Nations | Analytical study is done by dividing the concepts into various clusters and then tested to value the meaning of well-being for people under poverty. | Concept of poverty is analysed in terms of inequality and on various approaches. Research based policies are recommended for its reduction. |
| 20. | Greeley, M (1994) “Measurement of Poverty and Poverty of Measurement” | University of Sussex, United Kingdom | Discussion is proposed by highlighting the income as a core factor for poverty reduction. Income is presented as only source of welfare. | Paper presents the argument against the well-being measure which is confused with poverty reduction measure. |

Conclusion

The paper addresses the subjective well-being approach to retaliate poverty, which can provide a wonderful guideline to fight back the root cause of poverty and as well as the factors contributing to its origin. The paper presents a cause effect cyclic relation between the poverty and self assessed condition of the people’s life within the society with the help of four parameters of the subjective well-being. In order to understand the relation more closely, various literature review on the various context has been illuminated. Though, a thorough analysis of the poverty with a relation to subjective well-being has been discussed but the study is limited only to the qualitative basis. Hence, there could be many other determinants to unfold the vital reasons of the poverty and how it can be retaliate with help of both

government laws and well-being tools. Hence, poverty is a global challenge which demand more holistic thinking beyond the financial and employment terms and therefore, could extend to many other dimensions leading to future research.

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