Causes of Poverty

Poverty means –

1. Hunger and lack of shelter.
2. A situation in which parents are not able to send their children to school.
3. When sick people cannot afford treatment.
4. Lack of clean water and sanitation facilities.
5. Lack of a regular job at a minimum decent level.
6. A sense of helplessness.

Poverty as seen by Social Scientists

They look at it through a variety of indicators. Usually the indicators used relate to the levels of income and consumption. It is also looked through other social indicators like illiteracy level, lack of general resistance due to malnutrition, lack of access to healthcare, lack of job opportunities, and lack of access to safe drinking water. Analysis of poverty on social exclusion and vulnerability is now becoming very common.

Social Exclusion

According to this concept, poverty must be seen in terms of the poor having to live in a poor surrounding with the other poor people, excluded from enjoying social equality of better-off people in better surroundings. Social exclusion can be both a cause as well as a consequence of poverty in the usual sense.

Broadly it is a process through which individuals or groups are excluded from facilities, benefits and opportunities that other enjoy.

Vulnerability

Vulnerability to poverty is a measure which describes the greater probability of certain communities of becoming, or remaining, poor in the coming years. Vulnerability is determined by the options available to different communities for finding an alternative living in terms of assets, education, health, and job opportunities. It is also analyzed on the basis of the greater risks these groups face at the time of natural disasters (earthquakes, tsunami), terrorism etc. Additional analysis is made of their social and economic ability to handle risks.

Poverty Line

A common method used to measure poverty is based on the income or consumption levels. A person is considered poor if his or her income or consumption level falls below a given minimum level necessary to fulfill basic needs. What is necessary to satisfy basic needs is different at different times and in different countries. Therefore, poverty line may vary with time and place. Each country uses an imaginary line that is considered appropriate for its existing level of development and its accepted minimum social norms. For example, a person not having a car in the United States may be considered poor. In India, owning of a car is still considered a luxury.