

# Role of Media in Alleviation of Poverty in India

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## Abstract

The role of media in various sectors of the society has been a matter of debate among intellegenta. Media has played its role in many sectors satisfactorily but its role in alleviation of poverty is debateable. This paper suggests a blue print for the media to tackle this problem.

**Keywords:** Media, Society, Alleviation of poverty, Social sectors.

## 1. Introduction

There has been a debate among the intelligentsia about the role of the media in various sector of the society. The media has rightly played its role too with satisfactory performances. In case of awareness of the values of the democracy specially the voting right, the media has played outstanding role. But certain areas still await the media intervention and alleviation of the poverty of the people of India is one such. Justice Katju, the Chairman of the Press Council of India even visiting his new office even for a day started attack on the media which was criticized by the media world all over the country. N K Singh noted journalist came out with strong words against the statement of the chairman of the Press Council of India. The practice has been since the inception of the media watchdog. Well the battle may be for the supremacy of the two distinguished authorities, but the fact remains that the role of the media is under active consideration by the society and the government together. The Anna movement has seen how the media can create awareness in the public without sponsorship from any quarter. Why then the media is not taking interest in the alleviation of the poverty of the poor.

In a national seminar held at India Islamic Cultural Centre and organized by the Makhanlal Chaturvedi National University of

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Journalism and Communication, Bhopal, about forty journalists of various levels and from various newspapers and television channels held the discussion for two days on the role of the media in alleviation of poverty. There was consensus among the speakers that the media should not consider the money factor while giving the space to the down market stories as the word is coined for the use of the social and the poor related news stories.

Let us find out the blue print for the media. How the media can tackle the problem of poverty alleviation?

**Role of Media:** Basic role of the media is to inform and educate the people through various formats of the programs and products. Unfortunately, the media is too heavily embodied with the assumption that media can solve all the problems of the society. Alleviation of the poverty is not the role of the media at all. It is the media through which people can be informed and educated for the methods necessary for the alleviation of the poverty. It is therefore strongly advised that the journalists should understand clearly that their role is not to remove the problem rather it is to report the situation of the poverty as the case may be and suggest the methodologies. It is also the duty of the journalist not to ignore the hard truth behind the continuous poverty of the society.

**Avoid glorification:** The media in the recent past has played the role of the judiciary by inviting the culprits to their studios and interacting with the people live. In the same way, the media has taken the poverty related stories for the political harvesting. If Rahul Gandhi visits the locality of a poor Jatav community hamlet, the media glorifies it. In such type of reporting the basic aspect of the poverty is eliminated and the visit of the political personality is highlighted. In some stories, if a baby is born out side the hospital, the focus remains on the accusations against the hospital or the local government whereas the focus should have been on the pathetic conditions of the mother to be and the areas from where the lady comes. The camera focuses the dirtiness of the hospital and the poverty of the lady in question. On the national channels, the mind set of the people for the poverty is not shown, rather a bride being taken in a copter is shown as the question of pride. In one way the well to do family is shown that they can afford the use of the copter for their owner but do not show how the entire road of the village could have been built from the saving of the marriage. In this way the poverty of the village and the roots of the poverty is harvested by the media in the name of the programs.

**Knowledge of programs and schemes:** The media persons before filing a report or writing any piece of article about the poverty should have thorough knowledge of the schemes and the programs of various ministries and the departments of the government of India and the states. It has been observed that the media persons do not work on the source and the resources for the consolidation of their stories. The result is that the stories remains inconclusive. Most of the stories on the sensitive matters are written by the new breed journalists who lack study and hard work. Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation has come with a statistical compendium for 2010. This document contains very rich information that most of the journalists may not be aware of. This hundred seventy page document consists of statistical tables on Trends in urbanization in India, access to

housing and basic amenities, trends in urban poverty and unemployment, slums and urban poverty, and the government approach to urban poverty alleviation. Every journalist should consult this document before writing any thing on poverty in India.

**Appointment of rural correspondent:** It is believed that India does not fall within the jurisdiction of the big cities. The real India lies in village. The 60 percent of the population live in villages. According to the reports, 77 percentage of the poor live in villages. According to the statistical compendium 2010 the total number of villages in India is 593732 as per the census of 2001. In Uttar Pradesh alone the number of villages is 97942 and it is the largest number. Most of the journalists are appointed in and around the cities. The media is divided into national and state but there is no media for the rural India. The reports do not reach the head quarter at the block level even one week of the event. The 'HINDU' is doing the job with proper appointment of the rural correspondents. The Rajasthan Patrika has successfully done it in last thirty years. Danik Bhaskar has been doing it now. Jagran and Amar Ujala are popular in Uttar Pradesh because of the rural reporting. English media or the Big media cannot cover the rural stories as these stories are considered down market stories by their learned market managers. Hindi media can do it by appointing rural correspondents at least at the block level. The second reason of this suggestion is that the urban and the metro generation is not aware of the village culture. This sociological imbalance is creating the problems before the readers who buys the newspaper in the morning.

**Follow basic procedure of reporting:** The basic elements of reporting should be applied in reporting the stories of the poverty. The first and foremost element is Commitment. Commitment with what? It is the commitment with the society. It should be taken as a ethical duty of the reporter that he should be concerned with the conditions of the people. In spite of taking it as mere a piece of space, he should consider it as value of his profession. He can add values to his report by being a part of the poor. He should remember the preaching of Gandhi Ji that when one feels what is to be done, he should consider himself as the last man of the last queue. His concern with the society should reflect in his news story. This is commitment.

**Use of Success stories:** The developmental stories, success stories of the upliftment, employment, good work, poverty alleviation, rural development, community programs etc should be covered on an interval basis so that the others can follow these success stories. There is a village called Baghwar in the Narsinghpur district of Madhya Pradesh where an independent social organization has taken the area for a ride in alleviation of the poverty. There has been no election in that village in the last thirty years. The election is declared and there is no election campaign. The village does not allow any body for canvassing for the election. The five seniors will approach the political representative and tell them not to waste their time. Entire village votes for the same candidate as decided by the five seniors. Any body will be named as village head and the council of the five will run the show. Every work is done honestly and there is no corruption. This type of stories should be covered on the first page of the newspaper. In Madhya Pradesh one Satpal Singh Baghel discovered a pesticide from the local Besharm plant. This plant is generally considered useless and is naturally

available near the water and road sides. A poor farmer developed pesticide from this useless plant. Now he is selling pesticide worth almost fifty lakh every year without any fan fare.

### **Conclusion**

There is challenge before the media for playing its role in alleviation of the poverty. It does not require special training or specialization as the people generally consider it. It is just a reporting like other but with more commitments and added values to the reporting. Social knowledge, agriculture based background, open mind, readiness to help, being a part of the society, be on the side of the sufferer and the victim are the added virtues of a good reporter who is entrusted with the job of reporting the poverty alleviation activities.



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