

B.COM II

(Planning and economic development)

Q) What are the main causes of poverty in India?

Poverty is a multifaceted issue that affects millions of people worldwide. Its causes are complex and interconnected, often stemming from a combination of economic, social, political, and environmental factors. Understanding these causes is crucial for developing effective strategies to alleviate poverty and promote sustainable development.

One of the primary causes of poverty is lack of access to education. Education is widely recognized as a key driver of economic growth and social mobility. It equips individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to secure employment, start businesses, and participate fully in society. However, many people living in poverty face barriers to accessing quality education, such as inadequate school infrastructure, high tuition fees, and cultural norms that prioritize boys' education over girls'. Without access to education, individuals are more likely to remain trapped in low-paying jobs or informal employment, perpetuating the cycle of poverty across generations.

Inadequate healthcare is another major contributor to poverty. Poor health not only reduces individuals' quality of life but also limits their ability to work and earn a living. In many developing countries, access to essential healthcare services is limited, particularly in rural areas. This lack of access is often compounded by factors such as insufficient healthcare infrastructure, shortages of medical supplies and trained personnel, and the high cost of treatment. As a result, preventable diseases and health conditions continue to disproportionately affect the poorest communities, further exacerbating their economic hardship.

Unemployment and underemployment are significant drivers of poverty, particularly in economies with high levels of informal employment and limited job opportunities. Many people living in poverty struggle to find stable, well-paying jobs that provide them with a reliable source of income. Structural factors such as technological advancements, globalization, and shifts in labor markets have led to the displacement of traditional industries and the creation of new employment challenges. Additionally, discrimination based on factors such as race, gender, or ethnicity can further hinder individuals' access to employment opportunities, trapping them in poverty.

Economic inequality is a pervasive issue that both reflects and perpetuates poverty. When wealth and resources are concentrated in the hands of a few, it limits opportunities for social mobility and exacerbates disparities in income and wealth distribution. In many countries, the

gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen, driven by factors such as unequal access to education, discriminatory policies, and corruption. Economic inequality not only undermines social cohesion and stability but also stifles economic growth and development by limiting the purchasing power of the majority of the population.

Political instability and conflict are significant drivers of poverty, particularly in regions affected by prolonged violence and insecurity. Armed conflicts, political instability, and governance failures can disrupt economic activities, destroy infrastructure, and displace populations, leading to widespread poverty and humanitarian crises. Conflict-affected countries often struggle to attract investment, rebuild their economies, and provide basic services to their citizens, perpetuating cycles of poverty and instability.

Environmental factors also play a critical role in shaping patterns of poverty. Climate change, natural disasters, deforestation, and soil degradation can devastate livelihoods, destroy crops, and displace communities, particularly in vulnerable regions with limited resources and adaptive capacity. Poor and marginalized populations are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation, as they often lack the resources and infrastructure needed to cope with and recover from these challenges. Furthermore, environmental degradation can exacerbate existing inequalities and contribute to conflicts over scarce resources, further deepening poverty and vulnerability.

Discrimination and social exclusion based on factors such as race, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, or sexual orientation can also perpetuate cycles of poverty and marginalization. Discriminatory practices and attitudes limit individuals' access to education, employment, healthcare, and other essential services, trapping them in situations of economic disadvantage. Addressing systemic discrimination and promoting social inclusion are essential steps towards creating more equitable societies and reducing poverty.

In conclusion, poverty is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon with deep-rooted causes that require comprehensive and coordinated responses. By addressing issues such as lack of access to education and healthcare, unemployment and economic inequality, political instability and conflict, environmental degradation, and discrimination, societies can work towards building more inclusive and sustainable futures for all their citizens.