**Poverty**

*“Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice.”*

*- Nelson Mandela*

*“Education is the key to opportunity. It’s a ticket out of poverty.”
― George H W Bush*

**1. What is Poverty?**

**1.1 Definition of Poverty**

Poverty is defined as the lack of basic necessities to maintain the material well-being of individuals, such as access to food and housing, to ensure their survival.

**1.2 Measurement of Poverty**

According to the World Bank in 2015, the international poverty line was set at $1.90 per day.

**1.3 Facts and Figures**

- 11% of the world’s population live in extreme poverty

- One in five persons in developing countries live on less than US$1.25 per day

- 80% of the people living on less than $1.25 a day are in South Asia and the sub-Saharan Africa regions.

- In 2016, almost 10% of the world’s workers live with their families on less than $1.90 per person per day.

- Can be divided based on percentile of the income distribution of the country – Hong Kong – poverty line

**2. Education Policies as Solutions**

Education policy as a way to solve poverty is highly recommended as many government administrators sees it as a means for individuals to attain employment opportunities with better income. With better education, one would get a better paid job and break the poverty trap and alleviate the financial burden that plagued the family.

**2.1 Examples of Education Policies**

2.1.1 Tanzania Development Vision 2025 [Tanzania]

The main aim of the Tanzania Development Vision 2025 is to modernise Tanzania from a developing to a middle-income country. Education plays a crucial role in transforming the Tanzania into a competitive economy that expands socio-economic opportunities. In particular, strong emphasis is placed on the study of science and technology to support innovation in agro-processing and use of capital equipment for value-added production.

2.1.2 SkillsFuture Singapore [Singapore]

The SkillsFuture Singapore [SSG] is a government agency set up in October 2016 to spearhead a national movement to promote skills upgrading for Singaporeans throughout their lives. By doing so, education is an effective tool to promote social mobility, especially for the disadvantaged groups of the society. For example, the SkillsFuture Advice for Individuals workshops were conducted in October 2017 to provide information about skills training and job opportunities to support the professional development of employees.

Aim – to ensure that workers are trained and educated with the right skills to enable them to find and sustain employment – creating source of income to avoid poverty

**2.2 Strengths of the policies**

- Solve the root cause of poverty which is the lack of income from employment – create a permanent solution to the problem

- Inspire individuals for betterment and improvement in life

**2.3 Weaknesses of the policies**

- Long term solution and may not ratify the imminent impact of poverty on the society

- Lack of investment to provide employment of educated workforce – education solution needs other aspects of development to solve poverty

**3. Economic Policies as Solutions**

Many economists will adopt economic policies like fiscal policies, monetary policies or supply-side management to change the economic framework to ensure employment opportunities and develop welfare schemes for lower income group and under the poverty line. The development of a production and distribution network is of great significance to ensure that the benefits of aids and economic policies reach the mouths and hands of the poor.

Infrastructural development – promote more economic activities – induce higher degree of development for the country to promote employment – solve job shortage

**3.1 Examples of Economic Policies**

3.1.1ComCare Long Term Assistance scheme [Singapore]

The Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) introduced this scheme to provide financial assistance to individuals who are unable to work and support themselves. Financial aid is seen in terms of monthly cash assistance, free medical treatment at polyclinics and access to government-funded social services, like Senior Activity Centres.

3.1.2 Conditional Cash Transfer [Indonesia]

The Conditional Cash Transfer [PKH] was launched in 2007 to alleviate short-term poverty for poor households and raise investments and health. Eligible households will receive cash transfers after meeting specific health and educational requirements, like enrolling their children in schools and ensure at least 85% attendance of school days.

3.2 Strengths of the policies

Direct and immediate relief of the detrimental impact of the policies – financial aids to the poor / the direct solution to poverty with the provision of jobs

3.3 Weaknesses of the policies

- depends on the efficiency of the government, political will of the country

- availability of resources

**4. Social Policies as Solutions**

Social policies by government have to be implemented at two levels; one level will focus on the individuals while the second level will be on the community. The attention of these policies is to aid the individuals, families and the community to resolve personal behavioural and psychological problems, family issues and social and cultural frictions that undermine the members’ capacity to get out of the poverty trap.

**4.1 Examples of Social Policies**

4.1.1 National Strategy and Strategic Action Plan on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction for 2015-2020 [Romania]

With support from the World Bank, the Romanian government introduced a comprehensive anti-poverty package that featured 47 measures, like raising employment rate, reducing early school leaving rate and expanding national healthcare programs to close up the urban-rural poverty gap. For instance, the government introduced the Social Inclusion Income to raise the efficiency of the social assistance programs.

4.1.2 Subsidised Social Health Insurance [Indonesia]

The Indonesian government introduced the Subsidized Social Health Insurance (JKN-PBI) as part of the National Health Insurance Scheme to provide greater access to healthcare services for all, especially the poor and vulnerable households. By doing so, the improvement in access to healthcare will create social benefits that raise the productivity of the population.

4.1.3 BeaconWorks Programme [Singapore]

This programme is supported by the Singapore Children’s Society for households with children that have severe and recurring disciplinary problems. Households that join this programme voluntarily will undergo six-months of counselling and case work.

**4.2 Strengths of the policies**

- Create social stability for the country to introduce other economic and political policies – ensure that there will be no social frictions to undermine the regulatory policies

- Correct individual social and personal behaviors that will stop them from getting out of poverty

**4.3 Weaknesses of the policies**

- Social and cultural variables are entrenched and difficult to eradicate – deeply-rooted into their lives

- Social policies are regarded to intrusion of personal privacy and are too paternalistic

**5. Political Measures as Solutions**

As the cause of poverty is often the result of political unrest and instability arisen out of the failure if the polity, the political measures are critical to ensure effective governance to ensure that the production and distribution system of the country is able to produce the welfare and distribute it well to the people. The political measures should focus on the resolution of political ideological differences.

**5.1 Examples of Political Measures**

5.1.1International Day for the Eradication of Poverty [UN]

The United Nations General Assembly declared 17 October as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. The purpose of this international observance was to raise global awareness on the problems of poverty and encourage governments and non-governmental organisations to take action in eradicating extreme poverty and the protection of human rights.

5.1.2 International Budget Partnership [IBP]

The IBP is an organization that evaluates the government budgets to ensure that there is transparency and accountability for effective governance and poverty reduction. The IBP supports governments to plan and implement budget policies that address the needs of the poor. Also, the IBP ensures that there are proper budget rules and regulations to counter corruption and ensure that there is efficient usage of public resources.

5.1.3 Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs]

The United Nations (UN) have developed 17 global aims, known as the SDGs, to cover social and economic issues, like poverty, hunger, wealth, education and environment. In the context of poverty reduction, the SDGs were developed to end poverty in all forms and dimensions by 2030. This aim is pursued by targeting the most vulnerable groups, expanding access to basic necessities and assisting communities affected by conflicts and climate-related disasters.

5.1.4 Master Plan for the Acceleration and Expansion of Poverty Reduction in Indonesia [2013-2025]

The MP3KI plan is a comprehensive social protection strategy that comprises of various policies to support the poor and vulnerable groups in coping with socio-political, economic and environmental crises. It will address risks to welfare at the individual, household and community levels.

**5.2 Strengths of the policies**

- Set rules and system of governance to implement policies

- Political institutions to implement, monitor and regulate policies

**5.3 Weaknesses of the policies**

**-** High degree of corruption and bureaucratic red-tape

- Lack of political will to implement policies to regulate

**6. Technological advancement as a solution**

Technological solutions are critical in aiding to eradicate poverty as they are the means to effectively implement policies on an efficient note. With technology, there is a more efficient and effective implementation of solutions for poverty and better administration and management on the various matters on poverty as seen from how internet and apps solutions in aiding the efficient utilization of resources deployed for solving poverty. Technologies are also often used as solutions to dampen the detrimental effects of poverty in the areas of health and hygiene and the prevention of epidemic.

**6.1 Examples of Technological Advancements as a solution**

6.1.1Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI)

The GAVI is an international group of partners that includes governments and international organisations, like the World Health Organisation (WHO) and World Bank. The GAVI was established in January 2000 to expand access to resources for immunization and channel them to developing country healthcare systems.

6.1.2 bKash [Bangladesh]

The BRAC Bank launched a mobile financial service in July 2011, known as bKAsh, which provided basic banking services, like withdrawals, deposits and bills payment. The application of technology was beneficial for households, given that more than 70% of the population lived in rural areas, where formal banking services were inaccessible. bKash tapped on the widespread usage of mobile phones to provide convenient and reliable financial services for the people in Bangladesh, especially the low-income masses to improve their economic conditions.

**6.2 Strengths of the Solution**

- Improve the health and medical conditions of the poor, alleviate their problems during this stage of poverty

- Help to raise the efficiency of the management of poverty

**6.3 Weaknesses of the Solution**

- Costly and developing nation cannot afford

- The technology is often used as a political tool to undermine the poor.