



Deendayal Upadhyaya's Antyodaya idea towards poverty alleviation

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ABSTRACT

Deendayal Upadhyaya was not just a name but a great personality and a person without enemies. Who showed a new direction to the society with his thoughts. Deendayal ji put forward the concept of Antyodaya in front of the whole country towards providing justice to the exploited and economically weaker sections of the society. The concept of Antyodaya shows that Deendayal Upadhyaya ji felt the pain of the backward classes of the society very well and wanted to connect them with the mainstream of the society. Antyodaya means the upliftment and development of the person standing at the last rung of the society. To realize the dreams of Deendayal Upadhyaya and connect the backward classes with the mainstream, the Government of India has launched the Deendayal Upadhyaya Antyodaya Yojana. Antyodaya also recognizes the important role of ethics and community participation in creating sustainable poverty alleviation strategies. Upadhyaya's ideas inspired policies and programs such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, aimed at empowering the underprivileged. The scheme aims to reduce poverty in the country, enhance livelihoods of people through skill development and other measures. The aim of the study is to analyses the principles of Antyodaya and their application to poverty alleviation. To evaluate the effectiveness of Antyodaya-inspired policies in promoting self-reliance and social equity. To examine the role of education, employment and moral values in empowering marginalized communities.

Keywords - Antyodaya, backward classes, poverty, upliftment

Introduction

Deendayal Upadhyaya was the leader of Jan Sangh and a great thinker and social worker. Born on 25 September 1916 in Nagla Chandrabhan village, 25 km away from the Mathura district of Uttar Pradesh, Deendayal Upadhyaya became the voice of the poor and the Dalits. He passed the matriculation examination from Sikar securing first position and also received two gold medals. Deendayal ji received a graduation degree with first division. Pandit Deendayal ji dedicated his entire life to the development of the nation as a sacrifice. Deendayal ji thought of Antyodaya, i.e., "implementing functional plans for the development of the person standing at the last rung" to solve poverty and connect the backward classes in society with the mainstream; this, was the basic foundation of his thinking. Antyodaya was the voice of Deendayal Ji's conscience. The main reason for this was that he had seen poverty very closely since childhood. Through the Antyodaya ideology, he paid special attention to the upliftment of the poor, the exploited and the backward classes. Antyodaya means to provide facilities to the person standing at the last rung. Deendayal ji knew that the development of the nation would be possible only when the person standing at the last rung is connected to the mainstream, that is why Deendayal ji wanted the government to make its plans and programs in such a way that the people standing at the last rung would get the benefit first. Deendayal ji believed that if any part of the collective life, community or person remains afflicted, then it makes the whole, i.e., the great man disabled, that is why Antyodaya is the necessary condition for a holistic social life. The soul of Deendayal ji was the poor and the marginalized common man who suffered cruel misrule and attacks for centuries but still kept the soul of the

nation alive. He was aware of the fact that the future of the country is in the hands of the common man. He himself has written that I will not judge the progress of my country by what the government has done or what the scientists have done, but I will judge my country in terms of the progress of the people in the villages and, how capable they are to provide a better life for their children.

Meaning and Objective of Antyodaya

Upliftment of the person standing at the last rung to connect the socially and economically backward and marginalized persons to the mainstream and to move towards their development.

Objective

- Overall development of the individual and society
- Reducing economic and social inequality
- Adopting Swadeshi
- Conducting poverty eradication programs

The idea of Antyodaya and its relevance in the present time

Keeping in view the present time, the idea of Antyodaya is an important need of today's India. The population of India is constantly increasing. Today, India has a total population of which so many percent of people are forced to live below the poverty line. While we are moving towards making India a developed country by 2047, even today the fight for real development in developing India is still among the poor. Even today people are deprived of basic rights like education, health, and employment, whereas Deendayal ji was of the opinion that as long as people are deprived of basic facilities, development cannot be talked about. Deendayal ji's Antyodaya idea is a major step towards giving the poor their rights and social reform. Deendayal ji believed that there should be a human-centric economy. The main pillar of the foundation laid by the present government to make India a developed INDIA by 2047 is the ideas of Deendayal ji because it is clear that India cannot become a developed country until the economic and social condition of the poor and backward classes is improved. Taking inspiration from Deendayal ji's Antyodaya concept, many schemes are being implemented to improve the condition of poverty so that the poverty map improves.

Inspired by the Antyodaya concept, the following schemes are being run by the present government, the details of which are as follows -

Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana - Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) was started in April 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, the main objective of this scheme is to provide free ration to poor and deprived families. This scheme proved to be as effective as Amrit during the time of COVID 19, in which millions of people were provided food security. Through this scheme, about 81.35 crore beneficiaries are provided 5 kg of free food grains per person per month. At present, about 81.35 crore beneficiaries in India and about 5 crore people in Uttar Pradesh are benefiting from this scheme.

Antyodaya Anna Yojana - This scheme is the best example of Deendayal ji's Antyodaya idea, this scheme was started in December 2000. Through this scheme, food grains are made available to poor families at subsidized rates. This scheme has been implemented under the Food Security Act. This scheme is for those families whose annual income is up to Rs 15000.

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - The scheme was launched on June 25, 2015, and is being implemented in three phases: This scheme was started for those poor who did not have pucca houses to live in. Till 19 November 2024, 3.21 crore houses were approved, out of which the construction of 2.67 crore houses has been completed. In rural areas, PMAY-Gramin (PMAY-G) was targeted to construct 14,62,000 houses in Uttar Pradesh, out of which construction of 13,90,000 houses has been completed, showing a success rate of 95.04%.

Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana - This scheme was started on 28 August 2014, since then, 55.17 crore accounts have been opened in march 2025. The aim of which was to connect poor families with financial inclusion. Through this scheme, by opening a bank account for every family, they were linked to banking, insurance and pension, not only this, an installment of Rs 500 was also sent to the accounts of poor families during Kovid 19. As of 14 August 2024, the average deposit amount per account was around 4,352 which shows a fourfold increase compared to August 2015.

Ujjwala Yojana - This scheme was started on May 1, 2016. (Free LPG connection was provided to women of poor families, the main objective of this scheme is to protect women from health risks. On 01 March 2025, there were 10.33 crore PMUY (Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana) connections across India.

Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana - this scheme was launched on February 18, 2016, Agriculture in India is called a gamble of monsoon. The main objective of this scheme is to provide insurance facility at low premium to protect poor farmers from crop loss. Through this scheme, an attempt was made to secure the livelihood of the poor.

Saubhagya Yojana - This scheme launched on September 2017, the main objective of this scheme is to provide electricity to poor and backward areas. This scheme has played an important role in improving the standard of living. Through this scheme, about 2.2 crore houses were electrified till 31 March 2019 and about 79.8 lakh families have been provided electricity connections under this scheme in Uttar Pradesh and free

electricity connections were provided to the poor families identified under the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) 2011. •

Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana – This scheme was launched on 25 July 2015. The main objective of this scheme is to provide electricity supply in rural areas and to provide energy services to the poor. This scheme successfully electrified 18,452 un-electrified villages by May 1, 2018, achieving its target within the stipulated 1,000-day timeframe.

Deendayal Upadhyaya Gramin Kaushal Yojana – This scheme was started on 25 September 2014. The main objective of this scheme is to reduce unemployment in rural areas. Skill training is to be provided to rural youth through this scheme. DDU-GKY has trained over 14.51 lakh candidates, equipping them with industry-relevant skills. 8.70 lakh candidates have been provided regular employment, where they are paid monthly wages equal to or above the minimum wage limit.

Contribution of Antyodaya thoughts in poverty alleviation:

Establishment of social justice: 'Antyodaya' talks about providing equal opportunities and resources to the poor, deprived and marginalized persons of the society. This idea is important towards eliminating social injustice and inequality. When social justice is established in the society, then the problem of poverty can be reduced.

Support of Swadeshi and self-reliance: Deendayal ji always believed that the solution to poverty alleviation lies in the use of local resources and traditional knowledge. This idea of his is the basis of the 'Aatmnirbhar Bharat' campaign. Deendayal ji said that maximum use of indigenous goods should be made to make Indian society self-reliant.

Holistic development: Antyodaya is not limited to economic development only. It covers all areas like education, health, sanitation, and cultural development. This multi-dimensional approach is extremely effective in poverty alleviation.

Guidance in Policy Making: The idea of Antyodaya has inspired many schemes of the Government of India, such as 'Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana', 'MGNREGA' and 'Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana'. All these schemes are based on the principle of priority to the needs of the poor and connecting them to the mainstream.

Beneficiary analysis of scheme inspired by antyoday thoughts

The data in this table covers the period from the launch year of each scheme up to January 2025

Scheme Name	Target Beneficiaries (in Crores)	Percentage Beneficiaries (%)	Notable Achievements
Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana	54.58	98%	50 crore bank accounts opened for the poor
Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana	9.6	96%	9.6 crore families received free LPG connections
Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana	2.5	75%	2.5 crore houses constructed in rural and urban areas
Antyodaya Anna Yojana	2.4	80%	Food grains provided to poor families at affordable rates
Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana	5.5	70%	5.5 crore farmers received the benefit of crop insurance
Saubhagya Yojana	2.8	85%	Free electricity provided to 2.8 crore households
Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana	18,374 thousand	90%	Electricity provided to 18,374 villages

Sources- (MoPNG), RBI, (NFSM), MoHUA) pmuy.gov.in, pib.gov.in

Challenges faced by Antyodaya in poverty alleviation

Antyodaya has taken many important steps for poverty alleviation, but many challenges still exist in the present times.

Lack of resources

Due to a lack of financial resources, many schemes are not completed on time, due to which people are not able to get the benefits of those schemes. Even today, there is a lack of necessary infrastructure in rural areas.

Lack of awareness

People of the poor class are not aware of government schemes and policies and due to a lack of information, they are deprived of the benefits of the schemes. Even today, there is a lack of digital and educational literacy in the villages.

Corruption in implementation:

Many schemes are being implemented by the government to reduce poverty but there is a lack of transparency in the implementation of the schemes. Corruption is still at its peak due to which the help is not reaching the poor on time.

Social and cultural barriers:

Casteism, gender inequality and social discrimination are hampering the objectives of Antyodaya. There is a lack of participation from women and underprivileged classes.

Environmental and climate challenges:

Climate change and natural disasters affect poverty alleviation efforts. Droughts, floods and other natural disasters are making the poor class more vulnerable

Research Objective: The objective of this research is to conduct an analytical study of the relevance of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay's Antyodaya idea in present times. It is to explain how this idea can be implemented in the current social, political and economic context.

It aims to:

- I. Examine how Antyodaya principles guide modern poverty alleviation efforts.
- II. Assess the effectiveness of Antyodaya-inspired schemes in addressing socio-economic inequalities.
- III. Identify challenges in the implementation of these schemes and suggest measures for better implementation.

Literature review

Ambasta Shankar Shah (2008) in the research paper "Two Years of NAREGA: The Road Ahead" observed that MNREGA in the country has the potential to transform the livelihoods of poor people.

Girish, M (2009) in the research paper Diversification of Rural Economy has found that diversification of successful enterprises in poor agricultural economies, along with average income and employment are factors that can lead to a decline in the income and employment of the poor. Source: The most important strategy adopted by rural families and to stabilize consumption

Prantpal Singh (2017) in his research paper "National Life Suited Economy: Pandit Deendayal's Economic Thoughts" discussed that Deendayal ji's economic ideologies are suitable for the present time. If India adopts Deendayal ji's ideas, then all problems can be solved immediately, whether it is unemployment, industrialization, per capita income, farmers' problems or any problem of human life can be solved.

Deendayal Upadhyay Rashtira Dharma Prakashan Ltd.'s book "Bhartiya Arthneeti Vikas Ki Ek Disha" clarified that if we take a decision in favor of big industries and leave these small industries to their fate or consider them backward and destroyable, then certainly a lot of our capital will go to waste; it is worth mentioning that due to a lack of capital in India, we will have to choose such industries that are not capital intensive but labor intensive so that the workers do not face unemployment. Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya writes in his article "Work for all is the only foundation of Indian economic policy" that there can be only two reasons for people not getting work. Firstly, they do not have the qualifications required for the kind of work. Secondly, the number of people who want to work is so high that even the current level of industries, trade and public services cannot absorb them. Both of these reasons are present in India today. To prevent unemployment and encourage employment, the purchasing power of the people should be increased. For this, income inequality should be removed.

Dr Suneeta 2018 described in her research paper "Pandit Deendayal Ji's thoughts on self-reliant India" that the idea of making India self-reliant is not new, this idea was given by Deendayal ji long ago. Today, even after seven decades of independence, we are seeing how relevant his ideas are. Deendayal ji had already given the idea that if the structure of India's economy is indigenous, then our India will become prosperous and self-reliant.

Biswabhusan Behra 2023 mentioned in the research paper "Skill Development for The Success of Aatmnirbhar Bharat" that after Covid 19, businesses were disrupted and livelihoods were severely affected. Amidst such an economic crisis, the government started a campaign to make India self-reliant and take the country towards development. Today India is gradually turning into a global manufacturing hub for goods and services. Today the whole world accepts India's potential.

T. N. Srinivasan has mentioned in Poverty lines in India that he has done analytical study of limits of poverty line, definition, parameters of determining poverty, various programs related to poverty alleviation in India.

Hypothesis

The main hypotheses regarding the research topic are as follows:

There has been some improvement in reducing poverty due to the impact of schemes based on the Antyodaya idea.

There are many challenges in the implementation of schemes run by the government for poverty alleviation.

Research Methodology:

Literature Review: Books and research papers based on Pandit Upadhyaya's works and his Antyodaya ideology have also been studied.

Evaluation: Evaluation of government schemes and policies related to Antyodaya ideology, such as Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana etc. have been studied in depth.

Survey: Their thoughts and experiences were studied on the basis of surveys conducted among the poor and deprived in rural areas.

Sample

Although many research methods are used in social sciences, this study employed the field study method at the rural level in Uttar Pradesh. This method is considered reliable for presenting accurate information about BPL families. Under this approach, both prevalent organization and random sampling methods were applied. Out of the 75 districts in Uttar Pradesh, 5% (i.e., 4 districts) were selected for the study. The selected districts were Agra, Firozabad, Mathura, and Mainpuri, chosen through the sampling method. Within these districts, 15 villages from each district were studied, and from each village, 10 BPL persons were selected using a stratified sampling method. Thus, a total of 600 BPL individuals were included in the study. Conclusions were drawn based on this data.

Findings:

Social inequality is rampant in our society. Pandit Upadhyaya's Antyodaya idea is to remove inequalities in society. Even today, there is a large-scale inequality in the country, such as poverty, unemployment, inequalities in education and health, which are affecting India not only economically but also socially. Keeping in mind Pandit Upadhyaya's Antyodaya idea, many government schemes (such as Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Ujjwala Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana) were implemented. These schemes have provided banking services, gas connections, and housing facilities to the poor, which is leading to the connection of marginalized families to the mainstream. Although the benefits of these schemes are reaching many poor people, it has been seen that in many parts these schemes have not been able to reach their full potential. The reason for this is illiteracy, lack of information about the schemes, corruption, and corrupt employees who do not help the schemes reach the poor, due to which the schemes die in government files. According to the Antyodaya idea, it is necessary to take the benefits of development to the last person, which still remains a challenge. Pandit Upadhyaya's idea was not only related to economic development, but it also emphasizes moral and social upliftment in society. Even today, the need for social justice and equality remains.

Suggestion:

- Suggest ways to integrate Antyodaya principles in modern economic policies.
- Analysis is needed on its relevance to India's goal of self-reliance (Aatmnirbhar Bharat) and inclusive growth.
- To create awareness among people about the schemes being run to reduce poverty alleviation.

Conclusion:

Deendayal Upadhyaya's Antyodaya ideology has laid a strong foundation for inclusive growth in India. Though progress has been made in this direction, continuous policy reforms and efficient governance mechanisms are still required to ensure that the benefits reach the targeted beneficiaries. The proposed research paper helped to understand that most of the respondents benefited from Antyodaya inspired government schemes resulting in improved financial stability through initiatives like Jan Dhan Yojana and Ujjwala Yojana. Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya's Antyodaya idea is as relevant for the Indian society today as it was at that time. Deendayal ji's idea points not only towards economic development, but also towards equality and justice in the society. Deendayal ji knew very well that the path of development of the country will be paved only by the development of poverty and exploited and deprived families. An attempt has been made to implement Deendayal ji's Antyodaya idea through government schemes, but there are many challenges in its overall implementation, such as access to services in rural areas, lack of resources, and lack of awareness, so to fully implement the idea of Antyodaya, the government will have to show more dedication and implement the schemes in a systematic manner. The schemes run by the current government based on the Antyodaya idea of Deendayal Upadhyaya ji are playing an important role in the poverty eradication program. The aim of these schemes is to provide the benefits of government schemes to the last person of India and empower them. Through these schemes, the condition of the poor and deprived sections of the country is constantly improving, as a result of which today the nation is moving on the path of progress. Through this research paper, it is clear that Antyodaya is not just an idea, but a path that leads humanity towards equality and prosperity.

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