

Anugrah Narayan Sinha Memorial Lecture

On

Meaning and Measures of Poverty with Particular Reference to Urban Poor

Speaker: Prof S R Hashim

President, India Water Partnership and Chairman, Indian Association of Social Science
Institutions, New Delhi

Venue: A.N. Sinha Institute of Social Studies, Patna

Date: June 18, 2013

On the occasion of 125th Birth Anniversary of Dr. Anugrah Narayan Sinha popularly known as ‘babu saheb’ A.N. Sinha Institute of Social Studies organized the Anugraha Narayan Sinha Memorial Lecture themed “Meaning and Measures of Poverty with particular reference to Urban Poor” on June 18.

The Background

On the occasion of 125th Birth Anniversary of Dr. Anugraha Narayan Sinha, A N Sinha Institute of Social Studies, Patna organized Anugraha Narayan Sinha Memorial Lecture themed “Meaning and Measures of Poverty with particular reference to Urban Poor” on June, 18th 2013 at ANSISS. The occasion was graced by Dr. D Y Patil, Honorable Governor, Governor, Bihar as the Chief Guest and Prof S R Hasim, president, India Water Partnership and Chairman, Indian Association of Social Science Institutions, New Delhi, as the Guest Speaker. Sri D N Sahaya chairman of the Institute presided over the function.

Welcome: Dr. D. M. Diwakar, Director, A. N. Sinha Institute of Social Studies

The event unfolded with the National Anthem, following which Prof. D M Diwakar, Director, ANSISS, welcomed the Guests and extended warm gratitude to the Chief Guest, Dr. D. Y. Patil, Honorable Governor of Bihar and the guest speaker Honorable Dr. S. R. Hashim for gracing the special occasion. Prof. Diwakar also highlighted the importance of the theme which used to be a great concern for Dr. Sinha as well.

Formal Inauguration and Chief Guest's Speech: Dr. D Y Patil, Honorable Governor, Bihar

The programme was inaugurated with lighting of the lamp and launching of ANSISS' Logo by Dr. Patil along with other panelists. Following the inauguration, the honorable chief guest, Dr. D.Y. Patil, gave his speech which began with tribute to the great Son of Bihar – as he called Late Shri Anugrah Narayan Sinha. Dr. Patil recalled the contribution of Shri Sinha in building up the state of Bihar and his contributions to the country, in his roles as a freedom fighter, a statesman and as an accomplished educationist.

Chief Person's Speech: Shri D. N. Sahay, Chairman, A. N. Sinha Institute of Social Studies

Followed by the brief speech by Dr. D. Y. Patil, the theme of the memorial lecture was introduced by Dr. D.N.Sahay. Dr. Sahay highlighted the importance of theme of the lecture, as being an issue of special concern for late Dr. A N Sinha and of general concern for the society as a whand and also concerns of all us precisely with the widening gap between rich and poor with faster pace after globalization and liberalization.

Presiding over the function Shri D. N. Sahay, Former governor and Chairman of the Institute said that the issue of poverty reduction has always dominated the discourse on economic planning. Dr. Sinha stated that one of the major causes of urban poverty was identified as deruralisation (migration of rural people to urban areas). He further observed that urban poverty was more prevalent among minorities and schedule castes. He emphasised to bring urban poor under organised sector so that they can get better benefit of government's socio-economic programmes. He suggested that measures should be taken to check de-ruralisation by providing better facilities at the rural level. Dr. Sinha also noted that poverty has equally taken in its fold the urban areas emerging out of growing urbanization and its fall outs. The rising trend of migration of population from rural and urban areas has compounded urban poverty. He suggested that what is called for to contain urban poverty was restructuring and strengthening of urban local bodies and a strategy to bring up basic amenities in rural areas to neutralize de-ruralisation fall outs.

Memorial Lecture: Prof. S. R. Hashim, president, India Water Partnership and Chairman, Indian Association of Social Science Institutions, New Delhi

Prof. S. R. Hasim started the lecture by paying tribute to Dr. A. N. Sinha and throwing light on his glorious past. As the chairman of the Task Force on Urban Poverty, Planning Commission of India, Prof. Hashim primarily focused his lecture on detailing out the methodology for identification of families living below poverty line in urban areas. In the process, he emphasised that poverty has always been a matter of concern nationally and internationally. As early as in 1876, shri Dada bhai Naroji presented a paper on poverty. Subsequently, various bodies have been created in India to identify and define poverty. The latest being the Tendulkar Committee set up for the same purpose, in 2009.

Prof. Hashim discussed the problem faced in identifying the poor, as things change with time due to which definition of what is essential today may not be the same as it was earlier. For example cost of housing and transport in urban areas has changed today. What was considered as luxury earlier has become necessity today. Therefore, he argued that the methodology should be revised at every 10 years' interval or so. He also said that it is not enough just to know who the poor are and where they live but it is also important to know the forms of vulnerabilities they face.

Prof. Hashmi, discussed the three stage methodology for the identification of urban poor, which are as follows:

- Automatic Exclusion(On the basis of type of dwelling and possession of assets)
- Automatic Inclusion (On the basis of households facing any of the listed vulnerabilities- social, residential and occupational)
- Ranking the households on the basis of an index score. Scoring Index with an overall cap of 12 points is constructed in which a maximum of 5 points is to be given to each of the social and residential vulnerabilities and a maximum of 2 points is to be given to occupational vulnerability.

Prof. Hashim, concluded with the suggestion that the identification of poor should be a participatory exercise. He shared that the method under discussion and related findings are to be published on the Planning Commission website, for everyone to observe and share feedback. Finally, he suggested that there should be a grievance redressal mechanism to address the feedback and concerns.

After Prof. Hashim finished his lecture, the floor was opened for brief questions and comments. Following a short discussion, the programme was concluded with the Vote of Thanks given by Prof. Nil Ratan, ANSISS.