

## **Social Stratification and Benefit Distribution From an Anti-Poverty Programme in India**

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Anti-poverty programmes were initiated in India in the 1970s, as the growth-oriented strategy of the 1960s failed to benefit the poorer sections of the society. Although now the anti-poverty programmes have been in operation for nearly two decades (1970s and 1980s), they have failed to benefit the poorest section of the society (Bandopadhyay, 1986 : 25-33), for whom these programmes are primarily meant. While many explanations are available for the observed trend, the present paper would examine the influence of social stratification dimensions on benefit distribution from anti-poverty programmes. Within the premises of a Multidimensional Conceptual Model of Social Stratification, put forward by Barnered Barber (1957), it has been assumed here that various dimensions of social stratification, which are interlinked, influence benefit distribution from anti-poverty programmes: Here, we have developed a conceptual frame for analysing the influence of interrelated dimensions of social stratification on benefit distribution from an anti-poverty programmes. The conceptual frame, which is based on studies on Indian society, is presented below.

Several studies have indicated interdependence among dimensions of social stratification. For instance, the most important feature of caste system in India is that, it traditionally defined one's occupation (Srinivas, 1966 : 3). Caste also influences one's land holding (Bailey, 1958 : 48-9) as well as education (Srinivas, 1966 : 90). It has been shown that in rural India, caste influences