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Priming Sustainable Livelihoods Policies and Strategies:

What is poverty and how is destitution eliminated –
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Abstract

All strategies of poverty reduction rest on either explicit or implicit answers to two types of questions: what is poverty and how is poverty reduced? In answering the first question, the paper distinguishes between two different models of deprivation: **Physiological Deprivation Model** focuses on the non-fulfilment of basic material or biological needs including inadequate nutrition, health, education, shelter... and **Social Deprivation Model** uses a wider conception of deprivation which may include vulnerability, lack of autonomy, powerlessness, lack of self-respect/dignity, etc. How is poverty reduced? The answer has three parts: (1) distinguishing between seven underlying forces of social change, or forms of 'capital', which form the basis of different strategies of poverty reduction; (2) making a distinction between five approaches of poverty reduction (PR) on the basis of the underlying conception of deprivation and forms of capital which inform them; (3) outline a range of poverty interventions corresponding to the poverty reduction approaches and discuss how two cross-cutting themes, gender and participation, relate to the analysis of 'capital' and approaches to PR.

Section II

Conceptions of Deprivation: What is Poverty?

All strategies of poverty reduction rest on either explicit or implicit answers to two types of questions: 1) What is poverty?; 2) How is poverty reduced? The present Section addresses the first question, while Section 2 addresses the second. In the developing world, answers to the first question are based on two different models of deprivation. The first, the physiological deprivation model, focuses on the non-fulfilment of basic material or biological needs including inadequate nutrition, health, education, shelter, etc. The second, the social deprivation model, uses a wider conception of deprivation which may include vulnerability, lack of autonomy, powerlessness, lack of self-respect/dignity, etc. The present section reviews these two models of deprivation. Figure 1 provides a schematic overview.



Figure 1 - Conception of Deprivation: What is poverty?

Section 1.1 Physiological Deprivations

The physiological deprivation model is prominent in two different approaches to poverty in the developing world: the Income/Consumption (I/C) Poverty approach and *some versions* of the Basic Human Needs (BHN) Approach

Section 1.1.1 The Income/Consumption (I/C) Approach¹

A person is poor in any period if, and only if, her or his access to economic resources is insufficient... [to] acquire enough commodities to meet basic material needs adequately (Lipton 1997, 127). The **I/C approach to poverty** is used extensively in applied welfare economics. The approach combines two distinct elements: first, well-being is conceived as preference fulfilment and represented in terms of 'equivalent' income or consumption (money metric utility); second, an income/consumption poverty line is drawn which represents a need adequacy level. The 'poor' are those whose income or consumption falls below this poverty line. Poverty may be conceived of as non-fulfilment of 'basic' preferences.

The physiological deprivation model underlies the specification of the poverty level. While there are different ways to derive this poverty line, two techniques are in widespread use. The first, the food energy method, estimates a food energy minimum required to satisfy dietary energy (caloric) requirements and then determines the level of income/consumption at which this minimum is *typically* met. The second, the food-share method, estimates the minimum cost of a food basket which satisfies the food energy minimum and multiplies this by the non-food share in total consumption of a sub-group definitionally classified as poor (e.g. the bottom 20% of the distribution). While both of these approaches allow for more than simply dietary energy needs (food consumption), they are anchored on the physiological deprivation model.

Section 1.1.2 The Basic Human Need (BHN) Approach²

Basic needs may be interpreted in terms of minimum specified quantities of such things as food, clothing, shelter, water and sanitation that are necessary to prevent ill health, under-nourishment and the like.³ The BHN approach reached the height of its popularity in the 1970s. While there are a number of different versions of the BHN approach, a prominent variant affords primacy to basic physiological deprivation. Deprivation is conceived of as inadequate fulfilment of a number of different basic needs relating to nutrition, health, education, shelter, water, sanitation, etc. The BHN approach differed from the I/C approach to poverty in three ways: first, it usually specifies a complete basket of basic need goods/services (food, health, education, water, sanitation, etc.) or related achievements (nutrition, life expectancy, mortality, etc.) rather than relying on the indirect methods of the FEM and FSM approaches to determine non-food needs; second, it represents relevant aspects of well-being in terms of the different need goods/services or achievements (or in some cases a composite indicator) but not in terms of equivalent income/consumption; third, it sets an adequacy level for each of the different need goods/services instead of specifying an income/consumption poverty line based on dietary energy adequacy.

Section 1.2 Social Deprivations

The social deprivation model challenges the physiological deprivation model on two different levels: first, it rejects the representation of relevant aspects of well-being in terms of equivalent

¹ See, inter alia, Lanjouw (1997) Lipton (1997) and Revaillon (1994).

² See, inter alia, Gasper (1006b) and Streeten (1981; 1984),

³ Streeten P. et. al. 1981. *First Things First. Meeting Basic Human Needs in the Developing Countries*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

income/consumption (I/C approach) or basic need goods/services and achievements (BHN approach); second, it rejects the specification of a need adequacy levels in terms of basic physiological deprivation in both I/C and BHN approaches. In practice, these two critiques coalesce because reliance on non-physiological components of well-being often precludes exclusive reliance on a physiologically-based need adequacy level. Of the many different formulations of the social deprivation model, three are particularly relevant to the developing world.

Section 1.2.1 Human Poverty Approach

It is in the deprivation of the lives that people can lead that poverty manifests itself. Poverty can involve not only the lack of the necessities of material well-being, but the denial of opportunities for living a tolerable life. Life can be prematurely shortened. It can be made difficult, painful or hazardous... deprived of knowledge and communication... robbed of dignity, confidence and self-respect... All are aspects of poverty that limit and blight the lives of many millions in the world today. The Human Poverty approach has been advanced recently by UNDP in its Human Development Reports. The approach draws heavily on the conceptual framework provided by Amartya Sen. Sen conceptualises poverty or deprivation in terms of the absence of certain basic capabilities to function.⁴ Sen's underlying idea is that poverty should include both what we can or cannot do (capabilities), the commodity requirements of these capabilities which differ interpersonally and over time, and what we are or are not doing (functionings). UNDP uses this conceptual framework and proceeds to specify some of the basic capabilities in question. It includes the capability to 'lead a long, healthy, creative life and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity self-respect and the respect of others'.⁵

Section 1.2.2 Social Exclusion Approach⁶

The Social Exclusion approach has recently been propounded by the International Institute for Labour Studies at the ILO. As a conceptualisation of poverty or deprivation, it comes very close to the 'relative deprivation' conception of poverty expounded, *inter alia*, by British sociologist Peter Townsend.⁷ The underlying idea is that poverty or deprivation is best regarded as lack of resources required to participate in activities and enjoy living standards which are customary or widely accepted in society. The Social Exclusion approach connects poverty closely with issues of citizenship and social integration and their associated resource requirements.

Section 1.2.3 Participatory Approach:⁸ ... deprivation and well-being as perceived by poor people... question the degree of primacy often attributed to income-poverty... Income matters, but so too do other aspects of well-being and the quality of life - health, security, self-respect, justice, access to goods and services, family and social life...⁹ (Chambers 1995,29) The Participatory approach is really not a way of conceptualising poverty/deprivation as it is a means of determining who should do the conceptualising. It argues that conceptualisations of poverty and deprivation must *follow* an interactive process involving Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA) facilitator and local people engaged as participants in dialogue. It is an example of the social deprivation model, however, because local definitions of deprivation often go beyond physiological deprivation and sometimes afford greater weight to social than physiological elements of deprivation. Elements of deprivation which often figure prominently in the PPA approach in lack of dignity, self-respect, security, justice, etc.

⁴ Concise expositions of this schema are provided in Sen (1987, 1993)

⁵ UNDP 1997. *Human Development Report 1997*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁶ See the series of articles in Rodgers et.al. (1995) and de Haan (1997)

⁷ See, in particular, Townsend (1979, 1985)

⁸ See, *inter alia*, Chambers (1983, 1995), IIED (1992).

⁹ Chambers R. 1995. 'Poverty and Livelihoods: Whose Reality Counts?' *IDS Discussion Paper No. 347*. January.

Section II

Conceptions of Social Change: How is Poverty Reduced?

All strategies of poverty reduction are based on underlying conceptions of poverty-relevant social change. Different strategies tend to focus on different processes of social change and the underlying forces which impel them. The section distinguishes between conceptions of social change on the basis of the underlying forces, or forms of 'capital', which inform them. Seven poverty-relevant forms of capital are discussed: human, economic, cultural, social, political, coercive and environmental. It further distinguishes between five approaches to poverty reduction based on the underlying conception of deprivation and the forms of capital on which they draw. It outlines a range of poverty interventions corresponding to the poverty reduction approaches reviewed and discusses how two cross-cutting themes, gender and participation, relate to the analysis presented in earlier at the end of this section presents a schematic overview of the relationships between conceptions of deprivation, forces of social change, approaches to poverty reduction and poverty interventions.

Section 2.1 Forces of Social Change: Forms of 'Capital'¹⁰

It is useful to distinguish different strategies of poverty reduction on the basis of the underlying forces of policy-relevant social change which inform them. One way of conceptualising forces of social change is in terms of different forms of 'capital'¹¹ The term 'capital' is being used in the broadest sense as resources or assets which may be utilised to achieve social objectives, however deemed. For the purposes of conceptualising poverty-relevant social change, seven forms of capital are particularly relevant:

- 1) **Human Capital** refers to individual characteristics or attributes which are central for the achievement of human goals. A short list would include satisfactory levels of physical and cognitive development due to adequate health, nutrition and education.
- 2) **Economic Capital** corresponds broadly to those factors of production (land, labour, capital) which generate primary income¹² as well as economic assets (livestock, jewellery, etc.).
- 3) **Cultural' Capital** includes those norms, beliefs and values which assign roles, confer status and determine entitlements and obligations of different social groups (based on gender, caste, age, ethnicity, etc.).
- 4) **Social Capital**¹³ refers to those social organisations, relationships and networks which facilitate co-ordination and management of extra-market and collective tasks and which provide critical support in times of crisis. Social capital relates closely to concepts of trust and reciprocity.
- 5) **Political Capital** comprises the network of informal and formal political alliances which provide access to resources and confer decision-making authority.
- 6) **Coercive Capital** which includes sources of violence, intimidation, force, etc., is a means of enforcing social norms and maintaining (at times, repressive) social relationships.
- 7) **Environmental Capital** refers to the quality and quantity of the stock of available natural resources, including common property resources, and to the knowledge/skills required for natural resource management and conservation.

Changes in anyone of the above forms of capital interact in complex ways with other forms of capital to constitute poverty-relevant social change. In many cases, changes in forms of capital are mutually supportive and promote the same social objective. For example, social mobilisation by scheduled caste members (social capital) to extricate themselves from repressive patron-client relationships may in turn have positive implications for cultural capital (status, roles) and coercive capital (fear, intimidation).

¹⁰ The analysis of processes of social change in terms of forms of 'capital' is found in Bebbington (1999), Bevan and Ssewaya (1995), Bevan and Fullerton Joireman (1997) and Bourdieu (1986).

¹¹ Similar analyses are provided in Moser (1998), UNDP (1997) and the some of the 'entitlements' literature which uses the terminology of assets instead of capital (Gaspar 1992; Swift, 1989).

¹² Primary income refers to income generated directly through the production and exchange of goods and services (Stewart 1985). It is transmitted through *markets*, in particular labour and product markets. It is distinguished from secondary income which refers to the distribution of income after taxation and benefits through public or private *transfers*. These include, *inter alia*, subsidised goods (food) and services (health, education), remittances, pension receipts, etc.

¹³ Social capital has become a vogue concept and spawned a huge literature. See Woolcock (1998) for an overview and, *inter alia*, Narayan (1999), for its relevance to poverty.

Furthermore, there may be mutual reinforcing links between the different forms of capital and different underlying conceptions of well-being. For example, a positive change in economic capital (income) may effect a positive change in cultural capital (status) and political capital (decision-making authority). In cases such as these, analyses based on different forms of capital may very well lead to similar policy prescriptions (e.g. Grameen Bank-type social organisation for credit access). There are cases, however, where the analyses either conflict or diverge, with implications for policy prescription. Three scenarios present themselves.

- First, changes in forms of capital may have conflicting effects on each other and on different aspects of well-being. Thus, increases in economic capital (income) and corresponding declines in physiological deprivation may come at the expense of dignity, self-respect and social capital, if employment is particularly degrading or humiliating and if it undercuts existing social organisations or the capacity to organise (e.g. by reinforcing patron-client relationships.).¹⁴
- Second, different emphasis may be placed on the relative importance of different forms of capital in promoting a given social objective even if they move in the same direction. Thus, the relative importance afforded say, economic (income) or human (nutrition) capital in promoting nutritional improvements may very well determine the types of intervention deemed appropriate.¹⁵
- Third, different types of capital and different aspects of wellbeing may be unrelated. Thus, changes in cultural and social capital for the sake of ending practices such as slavery, rape, violence, etc. *may* bear little relation to changes in economic capital and economic aspects of well-being.

In all three of these cases, policy prescriptions derived from analyses of different forms of capital would differ.

Section 2.2 Approaches to Poverty Reduction

Section 2.2.1 Direct Transfer (Safety Net) Approach: The Direct Transfer or Safety Net Approach to poverty reduction doesn't rely on the above analyses of forms of capital. It is included, however, because of its importance as an anti-poverty strategy. This approach aims to transfer cash or in-kind income to the poor by providing subsidised goods and services or employment guarantees. As such, its primary benefit is realised directly by the transfer and not mediated by the above forms of capital (although second-order effects may work through these forms of capital if say, nutrition subsidies build human capital which increases productivity, etc.). This approach is situated within the purview of the physiological deprivation model. The objective of increasing (or smoothing) income levels of the poor and/or supplying basic goods and services (health, nutrition, etc.) is intended to facilitate basic preference fulfilment and/or basic need satisfaction.

Section 2.2.2 Human Capital Approach¹⁶: The Human Capital approach to poverty reduction focuses on the links between investment in education, health and nutrition and the primary incomes of the poor. Emphasis is placed on the interrelationships between these variables as well as their relative importance in explaining changes in productivity. The human capital approach is the straightforward application of the analysis of human capital-based analysis of social change. This approach is closely related to the physiological deprivation model insofar as the primary objective is to increase basic preference fulfilment by, increasing primary incomes. A secondary objective is to increase basic need satisfaction directly by social service provision.

¹⁴ One example: J odha (1988) who analysed data on income and quality of life indicators in two villages in Rajasthan, India in 1963-66 and 1982-84. He found that while villagers had become more 'income poor' over this time period, their overall quality of life had improved. Improvements were of five types: reduced reliance on traditional patrons and landlords; reduced dependence on low pay-off jobs; improved mobility and liquidity position; acquisition of consumer durables.

¹⁵ This issue has come to the fore in the context of debates about calorie income elasticities. Some recent evidence has revised downwards conventional estimates of changes in caloric intake associated with an extra unit of income. One potential policy implication is that direct nutrition intervention may be preferable to income generation schemes as a means of improving nutritional outcomes (see, Alderman (1993) and Deaton (1997, Ch. 4) for reviews.).

¹⁶ See Behrman (1990), Jimenez (1985) and Strauss and Thomas (1998) for reviews.

Section 2.2.3 Production Function Approach¹⁷: The Production Function approach to poverty reduction focuses on those mechanisms which increase the primary income of the poor. Emphasis is placed on factors which increase the level or price of output and/or the returns received by poor producers. The analysis is based on the idea of a production function whereby output is a function of factors of production (land, labour and capital¹⁸) and technology. Increasing output entails increasing the volume, distribution, productivity or changing the relative prices of factor inputs. The Production Function approach is based *primarily* on the analysis of economic capital, and secondarily on human and (perhaps) social capital. It evinces a close affinity to the Income/Consumption variant of the physiological deprivation model, in so far as the primarily objective is to increase basic preference fulfilment by increasing primary incomes.

Section 2.2.4 Governance Approach:¹⁹ The governance approach to poverty reduction has been defined in many different ways. It has been deemed in technocrat terms to refer to public sector management issues (e.g. civil service reform), in public policy terms to refer to publicly-supplied prerequisites of market liberalisation (private property, enforceable contracts, etc.), etc. The present definition is concerned with different issues. In its present use, governance embodies three basic principles: *inclusiveness, lawfulness and accountability.*

- *Inclusiveness* requires that governing structures, either formal or informal, be representative of, or give voice to, a wide range of diverse interests, including those of the poor. It presupposes that deprivation and impoverishment are due to exclusion from effective decision-making authority and seeks to redress this by *empowering* groups which have been historically disenfranchised. As such, inclusiveness relates closely to issues of empowerment (conscientisation and social mobilisation), participatory democracy, civil society organisation (including the role of NGOs and the media), and decentralisation of authority. Inclusiveness bears a close relationship to social, political and cultural capital and to aspects of well-being related to agency, self-determination, dignity, self-respect and social integration.
- *Lawfulness* requires that governing structures abide by the rule of law and serve as guarantors of lawful civil conduct. It grounds deprivation and impoverishment in the perverse functioning of the legal system which either fails to protect, discriminates against or remains inaccessible to poor groups (see Box 1). Lawfulness relates closely to issues of justice, conflict resolution, criminality, peace and security, social violence (including domestic violence), human rights, etc. Lawfulness bears a close relationship to coercive, social and political capital and to aspects of well-being related to personal security.
- *Accountability* requires that governing structures remain answerable for their actions and open to sanction (including dismissal) if they violate say, principles of inclusiveness and lawfulness. It grounds poverty and deprivation in the culture of impunity which effectively precludes poor groups from holding authority figures to account. Accountability relates closely to issues of corruption, transparency, free elections, access to information, etc. Accountability bears a close relationship to social and political capital and to aspects of well-being related to agency.

Box 1 -Lawlessness and Poverty: The relationship between lawlessness and poverty has been understated in the poverty literature. One recent exception is Anderson (1999) who outlines a number of mechanisms by which lawlessness and poverty reinforce one another:

- Violence by police, prison officers and other law officials has its greatest impact upon the poor, leading to death, injury, permanent disability mental illness.
- Corruption disproportionately harms the poor who are less able to afford premiums demanded for service provision.

¹⁷ Ray (1998, Chs. 11-14) provides a good overview.

¹⁸ For the present purposes, capital is comprised of physical capital and financial capital (credit). Credit is not an input in production but it is often included as an operational part of the production function approach.

¹⁹ See, *inter alia*, Goudie 1998, Moore and Putzel 1999, Schneider 1999, World Bank 1994.

- Human rights abuses, official harassment, police abuse, etc. may disproportionately affect the poor who are less likely to have recourse to legal remedies
- The poor are more vulnerable to arbitrary treatment, intimidation and humiliation by public officials.
- The poor are at greater risk of losing their property to public or private theft.

Significantly, personal insecurity due to lawlessness (violence, domestic violence, crime, official harassment) is consistently an element of deprivation which figure prominently in participatory poverty assessments (PPAs). Recent reviews of PPA results conducted by the World Bank (Narayan et. al. 1999) and by independent researchers (Brock, 1 have affirmed the critical important of lawlessness both as constituent of deprivation and cause of impoverishment or inability to escape poverty.

Section 2.2.5 Sustainable Livelihood Approach

The approach situates poverty reduction within the framework of security of livelihoods, or sustainable livelihoods.²⁰ The 'livelihood' aspect draws on an analysis of assets which parallels the above analysis of capital. Livelihoods depend on four categories of assets:

- Stores:** tangible assets including food stocks, gold, jewellery? savings (economic capital);
- Resources:** tangible assets (economic and environmental capital);
- Claims:** intangible assets consisting of legitimate social demands or appeals for material, moral or other support (cultural and social capital);
- Access:** intangible asset referring to the capability to use a resource, store or service for one's benefit (political and coercive capital).

The 'sustainability' aspect adds a temporal dimension by examining whether a livelihood maintains or degrades the local resource base (environmental sustainability) and whether it is vulnerable to shocks and stresses (social sustainability). The SL approach directs attention to the interrelations between poverty reduction, environmental stress and external shocks (famine, war, etc.). The particular importance placed on the objectives of establishing security and promoting self-determination establishes the link with the social deprivation model.

Section 2.3 Typology of Poverty Interventions

The present section presents a range of possible poverty interventions which correspond to the poverty approaches discussed in the preceding section. To illustrate differences between approaches, the examples of poverty intervention presented below differ. It should be emphasised that this *need not* be the case. As discussed in Section 2.1, if the different forms of capital and corresponding poverty approaches are complementary, then the ensuing interventions may very well comprise elements of each. There may be cases however, where different interventions follow from different poverty approaches, such as those reviewed below. One final point should be emphasised. Many, though not all, of the interventions discussed here deal with micro-level interventions. This should not be taken to imply that macroeconomic policies are unimportant determinants of primary income of the poor. On the contrary, macroeconomic policy is important and universally regarded as such.²¹

Section 2.3.1 Direct Transfer (Safety Net) Interventions²²

The three main categories of direct transfers / safety nets are: in-kind transfers; cash transfers and public employment schemes. In-kind transfers are of four types: price subsidies, quantity rationing schemes, food stamps and nutrition interventions often targeted to the poor by food type (coarse grains, roots) or by characteristics of the recipient (geographic, gender, etc.). Cash transfer measures with a poverty focus include social assistance, such as old-age, widow or disability pension schemes,

²⁰ See, *inter alia*, Chambers and Conway (1992); Chambers 1995; Hoon et. al (1997); Swift (1989).

²¹ See Shaffer (1998a) for a review of select macro-meso-micro transmission mechanisms which link macroeconomic policy and incomes of the poor and presents a number of stylised facts about the relationship between economic growth and poverty reduction.

²² See, *inter alia*, Gaiha (1994), Lipton (1996), Subbarao et. al. (1998) and the World Bank Web Page on safety nets www.worldbank.org/poverty/safety.

and family assistance programs. Public works schemes serve the function of creating or maintaining basic infrastructure (roads, irrigation, health, education, etc.) by providing employment for those facing chronic or seasonal underemployment or unemployment (see Box 2)

Box 2 - Public Works: Rules for Success in Poverty Alleviation²³

Public works programmes have been widely used to reduce transient and chronic poverty and have significantly increased in scale over the past decade. Important programmes have been established in Bolivia, Honduras, Cape Verde, Botswana, Bangladesh and India. A number of the more important rules for success culled from the empirical record include:

- Design Employment for Low Opportunity Cost: Ensure availability during the slack season.
- Use self-Targeting: avoid administrative costs, leakages and political manoeuvrings.
- Use pro-Poor Rules: quick payment, nearness, crèches, training of payments, etc.
- Minimise Transaction Costs of Participation: including transport, Bribes, registration, etc.
- Ensure that Low Labour Demand Causes Poverty: surplus labour is a *sine qua non*.
- Subsidise Coverage, Not Wage Rates: to ensure sustainability and self-targeting.
- Encourage Grassroots Pressure Groups: to monitor the scheme and prevent corruption.

Section 2.3.2 Human Capital Interventions:²⁴ Major social sector expenditure items are education and health with smaller allocations to nutrition and water/sanitation. Poverty-focused education interventions have concentrated on rural-based primary education, basic literacy programmes, overcoming gender biases in education access, etc. Pro-poor health interventions have emphasised rural primary health care on a community-based rehabilitation (CBR) model, access to pre and post natal care, immunisation programmes, population and family planning programmes, etc. Pro-poor nutrition interventions have focused on oral rehydration therapy, de-worming, nutrition surveillance and growth monitoring. Poverty-focused water and sanitation interventions include urban slum improvements (water lines, drainage and waste disposal systems) and community-managed rural water supply provision (hand pumps). In most cases, poverty-focused social expenditure involves some sort of targeting mechanism (e.g. geographic) with a view to facilitate disproportionate benefits for the poor.

Box 3 - Political Economy of Poverty Targeting²⁵

Are targeted poverty reduction interventions preferable to universal programs? The answer depends on a host of factors including disincentive effects as well as administrative, leakage and political costs associated with targeting. Of late, political-economy considerations have received increased attention. Analysts of very different political persuasion (e.g. public choice theorists and Marxists) have argued that targeted interventions are unlikely to work because they will not generate or maintain the requisite political support from powerful social groups who do not reap direct benefits from them. This argument, while plausible in many cases, is overstated. It does not hold in situations where:

- powerful social groups view poverty targeting to be in their own interest;
- the state is ideologically committed to poverty reduction. The relative costs and benefits of targeting, then, cannot be determined in the abstract and must rely on careful analysis case by case

Section 2.3.3 Production-Function Interventions

Poverty interventions centre on changing factor inputs (land, labour, physical capital and financial capital) to increase the level or price of output of the poor. Table 1 lists six ways that these three inputs may contribute to raising output: 1) increasing input volume; 2) improving factor distribution holding volume constant; 3) increasing factor productivity; 4) pro-poor increases in factor productivity; 5) reducing price of inputs bought by the poor; 6) increasing the price of outputs produced intensively with inputs used by the poor. The resulting poverty interventions presented in Table 1 are summarily discussed below.

²³ This discussion is an adapted version of Lipton (1996).

²⁴ See, *inter alia*, UNICEF (1991), WB (1990,1992).

²⁵ See, in particular, Besley and Kanbur (1993), Gelbach and Pritchett (1997), Moore (1999) and van de Walle (1998).

- 1) **Land:** Rural land-based poverty interventions include: settlement schemes, land reform, land tenure reform, technological change (high yielding varieties), subsidised input packages (fertiliser, seeds) and increased producer prices. The corresponding urban interventions include: land title reform (including squatters rights); urban boundary expansion; multi-story construction and site and service programmes.
- 2) **Labour:** Labour-based poverty interventions include: increasing employment information; increasing participation rates (crèches, population policy); eliminating barriers to entry (anti-discrimination legislation); improving workplace health and safety; developing labour-using techniques of production; supporting small and medium enterprise (SME) development, esp. in rural non-farm and urban informal sectors. More direct labour market interventions include minimum wage legislation and child labour legislation.
- 3) **Physical Capital:** Physical capital-based poverty interventions in rural areas include provision of: irrigation, all-weather roads, tubewells; small asset subsidies and marketing support for micro-enterprises. The urban variants place particular emphasis on support for SMEs either by reducing state corruption and red-tape or by active support (subsidised consulting).
- 4) **Credit (Financial Capital):** The principal credit-based poverty interventions support increased credit provision to the poor groups in any of the following ways: by promoting Grameen-bank type initiatives; by developing pro-poor banking within the existing banking system; by providing credit as part of SME support.

Box 4 - Credit: Rules for Success in Poverty Alleviation²⁶

Provision of micro credit has recently received considerable attention as a means of reducing poverty. The renewed emphasis on credit has been spurred by exceptionally high repayment rates achieved by a number of development finance institutions, notably the Grameen Bank. Recently, some of the allegedly beneficial consequences of microfinance provision for women and the hard-core have been questioned (Hulme and Mosley, 1996), as have some claims of financial sustainability, targeting accuracy and income/consumption gains due to participation (Morduch, 1999). Nevertheless, micro-credit is widely heralded as an effective means of poverty alleviation. A number of the more important rules for success in credit provision culled from the empirical record include:

- Respect Fungibility: allow multiple uses of loans.
- Use Indirect Targeting: avoid administrative costs, leakages and political manoeuvrings.
- Seek Alternatives to Physical Collateral: e.g. group leading/peer monitoring
- Minimise Transaction Costs of Participation: e.g. paperwork, bribes, repeated visits, etc.
- Avoid Lending Monopolies: avoid regressive credit rationing and reduced credit supply.
- Ensure that extra Credit is Productive: i.e. opportunities for income generation exist.
- Subsidise Administration, not Interest: avoid reduced credit supply (by alternative lenders), expropriation of credit by wealthy borrowers, negative real interest rates, etc.

Section 2.2.4 Governance Interventions

i. Promoting Inclusiveness

As discussed in the preceding section, inclusiveness presupposes that deprivation and impoverishment are due to exclusion from effective decision-making authority and seeks to redress this by *empowering* groups which have been historically disenfranchised. Empowerment is central and subsumes issues of participatory democracy and civil society organisation/mobilisation (including the role of NGOs and the media).

Empowerment interventions subdivide into those which address *internal* and *external* sources of power.²⁷ The internal dimension of power consists of internalised beliefs, norms and values which serve to maintain subordination within a social hierarchy. *Internal empowerment* is a process of questioning the validity of existing norms and beliefs and of raising awareness of possibilities hitherto considered unthinkable. There are a range of potential interventions aimed at conscientisation which depend on the nature of the power relations in question. (see Box 5 below).

Box 5 - Internal Empowerment through Education²⁸

²⁶ Most of this discussion is adapted from Lipton (1996).

²⁷ See, *inter alia*, Kaheer (1994), Rowlands (1997) and G. Sen (1997).

²⁸ This example is from G. Sen (1997).

The Mahila Samakhyā programme launched in 1986 is India's National Policy on Education. The express intent of the programme is to raise awareness among women of their position in a gender-based social hierarchy. The aim is for women to demand literacy on their own as their social awareness increases. The process involves mobilising women in groups at the village level to collectively demand access to services and resources. Apparently, the program has been successful at raising the esteem and self-confidence of women with beneficial spin-offs. In the words of a programme worker: 'women are increasingly confident of tackling their issues independently ... a woman whose husband was chronic drinker, has sold virtually everything in the house to buy drink... She mobilised the entire village, and picketed the four liquor shops in the village. They said that they would not allow a single drop of liquor to be sold in that village.'

Box 6 - External Empowerment through political organisation²⁹

External empowerment is a process of gaining control over important aspects of one's life usually through collective processes of organisation and mobilisation.³⁰ External empowerment directs attention to the objective of building social and political capital through collective organisation and mobilisation. External empowerment may serve a range of ends including access to credit, land or health, protection of rights of women/caste members, liberation of slaves and indentured labour, etc. Complementary poverty interventions include support for those grassroots and local CBOs which focus on improving living conditions of marginalised groups.

Nijeri Kori is a Bangladeshi NGO which has had success in building the social and political capital of the poor. It argues that the exclusion of the poor from access to public entitlements (unclaimed land, public works schemes) is a function of their lack of political power. It emphasises development of organisational capacity through activities which include training in human and skill development, legal-assistance and collective mobilisation. Mobilisation efforts by Nijeri Kori Groups have been directed at raising the agricultural wage, resisting the expropriation of unclaimed lands by powerful landlords, joint occupation and cultivation of such lands, publicising government corruption, etc.

Decentralisation has figured prominently in recent years as one means of promoting inclusiveness by bringing decision-making structures closer to local people.³¹ Some proponents of decentralisation argue that the process may serve to reduce poverty insofar as local governing structures are more likely to be responsive to the needs of their poor constituents. There are at least three different variants of decentralisation which aim to achieve this objective:

- **decentralisation**, or the shifting of functions within the federal government hierarchy to field offices.
- **delegation**, or the transfer of state functions to non-state or quasi-state actors
- **devolution**, or the transfer of state functions to sub-national governments

Recent evidence, however, suggests that decentralisation does not necessarily benefit the poor. The alleged link between increased local governance and pro-poor outcomes is mediated by a number of variables, many of which are absent in unsuccessful experiences of decentralisation. (see Box 7 below).

ii. Promoting Lawfulness³²

As discussed in the preceding section, lawlessness figures prominently in the lives of poor people as a constituent of deprivation and a source of impoverishment or inability to escape poverty. A short-list of potential mechanisms to address problems of lawlessness may include:

- Legal/Judicial Reform (e.g. eliminating anti-poor laws, reducing legal technicalities, etc.) Improving Access to Legal Information and Legal Literacy (e.g. support for legal advocacy NGOs)
- Police Reform (e.g. community policing and training)
- Conflict Mediation and Resolution (e.g. support for community based projects cross-cutting protagonists)
- Human Rights Legislation/Support
- Domestic Violence Education/Awareness Campaigns.

Box 7 - Is Decentralisation Pro-Poor?³³

A recent evaluation of twelve cases of decentralisation in Asian, Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa examined the effects of decentralisation on representation/participation of the poor and on social and economic outcomes. It found only one unambiguous success (west Bengal, India), and six unambiguous failures (Ghana, Cote

²⁹ This example is from Kabeer (1994).

³⁰ See *inter alia*, Esmān and Uphoff (1985), Riddell and Robinson (1995), Uphoff (1988).

³¹ See, *inter alia*, Crook and Sverrisson (1999), OECD/DAC (1997), Moore and Putzel (1999) and UNDP (1998).

³² See, *inter alia*, Anderson (1999), Messick (1999), Narayan et. al. (1999), OECD/DAC (1997).

³³ This example is based on Crook and Sverrisson (1999).

D'Ivoire, Bangladesh, Kenya, Nigeria, Mexico). On the basis of this analysis, the authors identified three main factors which accounted for the difference in performance:

- **Political Economy Issues:** Successful decentralisation required the confluence of central and local level commitment to pro-poor reform, out of ideological commitment or for political gain, including the willingness to challenge local elites seeking to capture program benefits. Where decentralisation is a conduit for political patronage from central authorities and/or where local elites are insulated from the demands of the poor, outcomes are unlikely to be pro-poor.
- **Financial/Administrative Support:** Necessary inputs for successful decentralisation included adequate financing from central authorities, targeted central poverty programs or social funds and administrative capacity to take on newly acquired responsibilities.
- **Time Commitment:** Successful decentralisation requires long-term support as benefits take time to materialise. The successful West Bengal example has evolved over a twenty-year period.

iii. Promoting Accountability

Accountability is a means of ensuring, *inter alia*, that governing institutions uphold the principles of inclusiveness and lawfulness. A short-list of potential mechanisms to promote accountability may include:

- Electoral Reform (support for free elections)
- Legal Reform (enforcement of anti -corruption laws)
- Access to Information Promotion (support for the press, media, NGOs, and other social organisations who investigate and publicise corruption)
- Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
- Social Audit (See Box 8 below).

Box 8 - Promoting Accountability through Social Audits³⁴

Environmental Sustainability: The Maxdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS), or Association for the Empowerment of Workers and Farmers, in the Indian state of Rajasthan has pioneered a process to call local officials to accounts for their actions. The MKSS has convened a number of *jan sunwais*, or public meetings, during which official expenditure records from local authorities are read aloud to assembled villagers and local officials. Villagers are urged to highlight discrepancies between the official record and their own experiences as labourers in public works schemes, as consumers at local ration shops, or applicants for means tested poverty benefits. This form of 'social audit' has been effective in exposing significant sums earmarked for the poor which have been misappropriated by corrupt officials. The MKSS is an example of the potential for access to information coupled with social mobilisation as a tool for ensuring public accountability.

Section 2.2.5 Sustainable Livelihood Interventions

Environmental Sustainability: Practical emphasis is placed on understanding the complex, diverse and risk-prone (CDR) agricultural practices of farmers and tailoring interventions to respect their wide range of ongoing productive activities (including aquaculture, agro-forestry, compo sting, inter-cropping, home gardening, etc.). Simplifying high-input packages are rejected in favour of multiple, diversifying interventions. Further, attention is directed to local systems of natural resource management, in particular management of common property resources, with emphasis on access for the poor (see Box 9, below). The relationship between population growth and environmental sustainability and derivative implications for environmental and population policy are central to the analysis.

Box 9 - Environmental Sustainability in the Forest Region of Guinea³⁵

³⁴ This example is based on Jenkins and Goetz (1999a, 1999b).

For the last forty years, environmental policy in Guinea has been based on the view of progressive degradation of forested area due, *inter alia*, to population pressures, poverty-induced cultivation practices, breakdown of traditional systems of authority and resource control, etc. Recent studies of livelihood patterns in the Forest Region, drawing on village experience, oral histories, archival and air photographs, have raised considerable doubt about the 'degradation thesis'. A mounting body of evidence suggests that local techniques of natural resource management have actually increased the forest cover in the region. Local management or processes involving soil, fire, grazing, grass and tree species, has served to increase the extent of 'forest islands' surrounding villages and woody cover between islands. The operational implication is that detailed analyses are essential precursors for sound policy interventions (including poverty interventions): 'environmental and sustainable agriculture policies designed without appreciation of local management skills both overlooked actual local problems and possibilities and risk undermining the very practices which have enhanced tree cover and agricultural productivity.'

Social Sustainability: Social sustainability directs attention to the effects of changes in coercive and environmental capital (external shocks) and capacity of groups to cope with them. As with the social deprivation model, particular importance is placed on issues of security/vulnerability. The operational response to 'coercive shocks' (wars, civil violence, persecutions) includes strategies of conflict resolution and rehabilitation, peace-building, maintenance of law and order, etc. The operational response to 'environmental shocks' (droughts, floods, famines) includes strategies linking relief and development, developing early famine warning systems, food storage facilities, drought resistant crops, insurance schemes etc. Development of coping capacity focuses operational attention on issues of community organisation and rights of access to productive resources.

Section 2.4 Cross Cutting Themes – Gender and participation: 'Participation' is another cross-cutting theme which appears in at least four ways in the preceding analysis. Determination of the relevant conception of deprivation may be participatory if it involves substantive and active input from those who stand to be affected by the definition. Of the approaches discussed in Section 1, only Participatory Poverty Assessments are participatory *in this sense*.³⁶ Different types of social capital may have intrinsically participatory elements. Thus, a constituent element of social capital is the participation of individuals in groups or associations to pursue collective ends. Participation may figure intrinsically in different approaches to poverty reduction. For example, empowerment *is* a process of effecting social participation. Participation may figure in differing degrees in all poverty interventions depending on the extent that they involve popular input in their conceptualisation, design, implementation, and monitoring. Gender is a theme which crosscuts the analyses presented in Sections 1 and 2. There are at least four ways in which gender bears on issues discussed:

- Conceptions of deprivation (Section 1) may be gendered in so far as men and women are differentially afflicted by different forms of deprivation. Females may not face greater consumption poverty than males but they may be 'worse-off' if other aspects of deprivation are taken into account. The discussion in Box 10 below provides an example.
- Men and women may stand in different relationships to different forms of capital. Thus, women may be restricted from ownership or inheritance of land (economic capital), they may be assigned inferior status which is internalised (cultural capital) or, in a more positive light, they may be better organised (social capital).

In light of point #2, changes in forms of capital may have differential effects on men and women. Thus, the effects of increased credit provision, higher producer prices will depend on the nature of gendered social relationships including the gender division of labour, the gender allocation of goods

³⁵ This example is from Fairhead and Leach (Nd) and Leach and Fairhead (1994).

³⁶ There is a tradition within the income/consumption approach of asking respondents what constitutes adequate consumption, which is subsequently used in the specification of the poverty line (Hagenaars 1986, Pradhan and Ravallion 1998). This is only participatory in a very limited sense, in that the underlying conception of deprivation, non-fulfilment of basic preferences, is predetermined. The participatory import only relates to the basket of basic preference goods in question. Further, it only involves responses to questionnaires and not active engagement in dialogue.

within household, the gendered distribution of decision-making authority, etc. In light of the first three points, policy interventions are likely to differ across gender lines. If conceptions of poverty and processes of social change are gendered so too will be poverty interventions.

Box 10 - Gendered Conceptions of Deprivation in the Republic of Guinea

Are women worse-off than men if deprivation extends beyond consumption poverty? Shaffer (1998b) addressed this question drawing on household survey and participatory poverty assessment data from the Republic of Guinea. National household survey data reveal that women are not more likely than men to be consumption poor or to suffer greater consumption poverty. This result holds after analysing poverty incidence, intensity and severity of female-headed households, the representation of women and females in poor households and the intra-household distribution of food and health care (proxied by data on nutritional outcomes, mortality and the aggregate female-male ratio). Sensitivity analysis using different adult equivalence scales and different poverty lines (stochastic dominance tests) affirms the result. Participatory Poverty Assessment data in the village of Kamatiguia reveal that women are 'worse off' than men when deprivation includes, *inter alia*, excessive work load and reduced decision-making authority. In the well-being ranking exercises, groups of both men and women separately ranked all but two married village women below all married village men in terms of their own criteria of well-being and deprivation.

Section III: Conclusion

All strategies of poverty reduction rest on either explicit or implicit answers to two types of questions: 1) What is poverty?; 2) How is poverty reduced? *What is Poverty?* As discussed in Section 1, and schematically depicted in Figure 1, the answer depends on the underlying conception of deprivation. For the physiological deprivation model the poor are those: 1) lacking in fulfilment of basic preferences (Income/Consumption approach) or 2) lacking in access to basic need goods and services (Basic Human Needs approach). For the social deprivation model the poor are those: 1) lacking in certain basic capabilities to function (Human Poverty approach); 2) excluded from participation in customary activities of the community (Social Exclusion approach) or 3) lacking in dignity, self-respect, security, etc. (Participatory approach). *How is poverty reduced?* As discussed in Section 2, and schematically depicted in Figure 2, the answer depends on the underlying analysis of forces of social change and the approaches to poverty reduction and corresponding interventions which flow from that analysis. The five aforementioned different approaches to poverty reduction (Direct Transfer, Human Capital, Production Function, Governance and Sustainable Livelihood Approaches) rely primarily on different forms of capital (human, economic, cultural, social, political, coercive and environmental), stand in different relationships to the physiological or social models of deprivation and prescribe different types of intervention to reduce poverty.

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