

War on poverty: role of the privileged people – s.c. aggarwal

[People](#)



War on Poverty: Role of the Privileged People S C Aggarwal Delhi: Shipra Publications, 2007, pp. 135, Rs. 350. 00, ISBN 978-81-7541-378-8 S. C.

Aggarwal's book – War on Poverty: Role of the Privileged People, takes a very informal and straightforward approach in explaining the prevalence and significance of poverty in India. Even though the issue is widely discussed amongst leaders and the normal public alike, there is little change in the conditions of the poor over the past few decades.

The author takes a very structured approach in explaining the situation of poverty in India, starting from the very basics, by providing important facts and some frank admissions by well-known government authorities, economists and personalities. Being an IRS officer himself, he goes on to admit that there have been flaws in Government policies in the past and suggests that the misguidance can be corrected if help is received in the future.

He presents the reasons for the prevalence of poverty in India and highlights the negligence of ancestral villages by people and the lack of new programmes by economists as the main contributing factors for the same. The author has done a great job in giving various methods to remove poverty in a very simplistic manner, enabling its understanding even by the layman. Pointers to multiple approaches to people from varied professions, asking for their support in the rise of the poor and the eventual growth of the economy are some of the prime take-aways from this book.

Appeals to people from all strata in the society have been made, personally requesting each of them for help in improving the conditions of one or two villages, especially their ancestral village. Prominent film makers, editors,
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interviewers, television programmers, TV channel owners, accountants, teachers, etc. are some of the people that the author has reached out to, suggesting ways in which each of them can contribute towards the removal of poverty. S. C.

Aggarwal's central idea is based on the effort that these intellectuals must strive to deliver in order to remove poverty from their respective native villages. He suggests that only a truly determined effort from their side, irrespective of their occupations, will be sufficient to remove poverty and improve the conditions of more than one third of the impoverished segment of our population. Various schemes and plans have been extensively discussed for each of them, enlightening them on how they may contribute towards this cause.

Several queries have been raised to economists and intellectuals, making them realize their responsibilities towards the poor, through a series of questions which are directly related to their line of work. These questions force them to think, and hence take action towards poverty removal. Improving the condition of the schools which made them what they are, providing basic low cost health facilities in order to provide the spread of diseases, educating the public about healthy living are some of the issues addressed to all individuals.

For a start, each individual may solve one or two problems of his village, or help improve the conditions of buildings and roads in the village. The discussion on how we may make our village problem-free, with a focus to starting personalised schemes for the welfare of the people, and the resulting benefits of the same provokes a thought in the minds of the reader.

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In addition to the overly simplistic methods suggested which will help achieve a GDP greater than 7%, the author has also kept in mind the situation encountered in taxing unaccounted income in the book.

This issue of blackmoney, which is one of the key reasons for increase in poverty, has been intelligently dealt with, by providing practical solutions that will instigate people to declare the same during taxation. This will not only allow for increased taxes leading to increased income to be directly used in poverty eradication, but will also lead to lower number of loans and reduction of dishonesty by people when declaring taxes.

Also, providing benefits to tax payers or those with no interest payable, to those using their own funds to buy cars/property, alongside introducing added taxes for poverty removal on each individual's income or purchase/sale of shares, are some of the measures suggested that may help better manage the problem of poverty. These methods will lead to a positive outlook in the minds of the people, encouraging them to contribute more than what they are already contributing towards poverty removal. Another useful tip is the setting up of Poverty eradication banks and poverty eradication funds by the Government and prominent editors respectively.

In short, equal participation of people from all walks of life in the fight against poverty is the only way our country will be able to establish itself a global leader. S. C. Aggarwal concludes the book with a humble prayer to all, comparing poverty to various metaphors, in order to realize the various ways in which each one of us interprets poverty. People are requested to give a helping hand to their fellow country-men, and to lift them from their dire

states in society, to that that will help them procure the basic amenities of life for themselves and their families.

One must take up the responsibility of their own villages, by trying to connect to the emotions that each individual has towards the place of his birth, where he/she grew up or where his/her parents resided/ are still residing. The author suggests that their responsibility does not end at removing poverty only from their respective villages. Rather, one must spread this idea to other people, at least three more, so that they may eradicate poverty from their own villages, along with spreading this idea as well.

However, the basic problem that may be encountered in order to administer these ideas is that it is dependent of too many people, and hence it may be difficult to track the progress of every individual towards his village. Also, the methods suggested in the book seem a little farfetched, and hence will require patience for their achievement. All in all, the book is a good read for people wanting to do something for their societies by enriching us with the basics that each of us must contribute for its development.