

RESEARCH PAPER ON MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY

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Abstract- This study examines multidimensional poverty through the lens of the **Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)**, which incorporates factors like education, health, and living standards alongside income. By analyzing data from developing countries, the research highlights the limitations of traditional income-based poverty measures. It offers policy recommendations and introduces unique perspectives on addressing the issue, proposing more inclusive and innovative approaches to poverty alleviation while emphasizing the need for a deeper understanding of societal behaviors that contribute to persistent poverty.

Abstract Keywords: Multidimensional Poverty Index, economic inequality, social deprivation, poverty alleviation, human development, SDGs

Hypothesis : Poverty has always been a pressing problem for not only the Indian government but also for the people of India that are pushed into this era of underdeveloped facilities. It will take more than an army to fill up India's cauldron with the juices of sustainable development and economic growth.

Aim and Objective of the study:

To study the extent to which poverty can overflow the bounds of society and how it can be controlled before it reaches its final form.

MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY IN INDIA.

CHAPTER 1:INTRODUCTION

The World Bank defines poverty as a state of "pronounced deprivation in well-being". It's when a person doesn't have enough income or consumption to meet a minimum threshold. Poverty can also be tied to a specific type of consumption, such as food, housing, or health.

There are 6 types of poverty ,some are temporary in nature that may push someone to the beacon of chronic deprivation. Absolute poverty: absolute poverty is a state in which a person is deprived of the money to buy the basic essentials of life.

Relative poverty: relative poverty on the other hand is a comparison between poverty of one person on one hand and the other on another hand. Comparing .

Situational poverty: a state of temporary poverty that may convert a person to a state of permanence in his societal status due to dire circumstances surrounding him such as divorce.

Generational poverty :Poverty is passed down as a family heirloom.

Urban poverty :According to the urban standard of living ,when a person does not meet these living standards,he can be considered under this section of poverty.

Rural poverty :According to the rural standard of living,when a person cannot meet the standard of living in a rural area,he is considered to be in rural poverty.

There are various types of indicators that inform us about the plethora of matters ,they are as follows:

Gender inequality index(GII):

The GII reflects upon gender based inequality in mainly three dimensions ,those dimensions are

The Labour market Empowerment Reproductive health

In the labour market ,GII measures the equality of opportunities presented to both men and women ,mostly the discriminatory offers presented to only the favourable which is men in most cases. It measures various aspects such as employment rate ,wage gaps ,participation of women in the various workings of the institution they are currently under .It also measures the vertical mobility of women from only being employed as helpers to being able to apply their intelligence hence contributing to the company ultimately their contribution to the economy that they should be able to freely do. GII's metric system is numerically based .

The GII ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 indicates perfect gender equality and 1 indicates extreme inequality. The index is calculated by taking the geometric mean of the normalised scores of the three dimensions mentioned above. The GII provides a more nuanced picture of gender disparities than other indices, such as the Gender Development Index (GDI) or the Gender Gap Index, by focusing specifically on inequality rather than overall development.

The GII helps to identify and quantify gender disparities within countries, providing valuable data for policymakers and researchers.

The GII allows countries to track progress over time, helping to assess the effectiveness of policies aimed at promoting gender equality. Countries can compare their GII scores with previous years and with other nations, facilitating benchmarking.

It also helps in facilitating global awareness by spotlighting gender inequalities. The GII raises awareness of the challenges women face globally. This awareness can foster advocacy efforts and encourage societal and political change.

Human Development Index(HDI)

The **Human Development Index (HDI)** is a composite index that measures a country's overall development by assessing three key dimensions:

Health Education

Standard of living.

Each of these dimensions is measured using specific indicators, providing a more comprehensive view of human development than income alone. Here's a breakdown of the components that make up the HDI:

1. Health

● Indicator: Life Expectancy at Birth

○ **Description:** This indicator measures the average number of years a newborn is expected to live, assuming that

current mortality rates remain constant throughout their life.

- **Significance:** Life expectancy reflects the overall health of a population and the effectiveness of healthcare systems. Higher life expectancy typically indicates better health conditions and access to medical care.

2. Education

The education component is assessed through two key indicators:

- **Indicator 1: Mean Years of Schooling**

- **Description:** This measures the average number of years of education received by people aged 25 and older, reflecting the educational attainment of the adult population.

- **Indicator 2: Expected Years of Schooling**

- **Description:** This measures the total number of years of schooling that a child entering the education system can expect to receive, assuming that current enrollment ratios persist throughout their life.

- **Significance:** Together, these indicators provide insights into the level of education and the potential for future educational attainment, which are crucial for individual and societal development.

3. Standard of Living

- **Indicator: Gross National Income (GNI) per Capita**

- **Description:** This measures the average income earned by a country's citizens, adjusted for purchasing power parity (PPP), which accounts for differences in the cost of living and inflation rates between countries.

- **Significance:** GNI per capita reflects the economic resources available to individuals, impacting their access to goods and services, quality of life, and overall well-being.

The HDI is calculated by normalising the values of each indicator on a scale from 0 to 1, where 0 represents the lowest level of human development and 1 represents the highest. Each dimension contributes equally to the overall HDI score, which is then computed as the geometric mean of the normalised indices.

INCOME

Income level is a crucial indicator of poverty and economic well-being, representing the financial resources available to individuals or households within a specific geographic area. It serves as a direct measure of the capacity to meet basic needs and improve living standards.

Measurement: Income can be measured using different metrics:

- **Gross Income:** Total earnings before taxes and deductions.

- **Net Income:** Earnings after taxes and deductions, reflecting the actual disposable income available for spending or saving.(indirect taxes+subsidies)

- **Per Capita Income:** The average income earned per person in a given area, calculated by dividing the total income of the area by its population. This measure helps assess income distribution and wealth disparity.It helps one understand the extent to which an individual suffers in comparison to the general population.It is usually used in identifying relative poverty.

- **Household Income:** The combined income of all members of a household, which can provide insight into the economic status of families.

MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY INDEX

Last and definitely not the least,**Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)** is a composite index designed to measure poverty beyond just income. It was introduced by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as part of the Human Development Reports. The MPI assesses multiple deprivations experienced by individuals in various dimensions of well-being, providing a more comprehensive view of poverty. Here's an overview of the MPI:

Key Dimensions of the MPI

The MPI focuses on three core dimensions, each of which is further broken down into specific indicators. The dimensions are:

1. Health

- **Indicators:**

- **Child Mortality:** The presence of any child under the age of 18 who has died in the household.

- **Nutrition:** The nutritional status of the household, specifically whether any adult or child has been malnourished or undernourished.

- **Significance:** Health deprivations highlight the immediate impact of poverty on the well-being and survival of household members, especially vulnerable groups like children.

2. Education

- **Indicators:**
 - **Years of Schooling:** Whether any household member aged 10 or older has completed at least six years of schooling.
 - **Child Enrollment:** The presence of school-aged children (typically ages 6-16) who are not attending school.
- **Significance:** Educational deprivations are critical as they affect individuals' ability to acquire skills, secure employment, and improve their quality of life.

3. Living Standards

- **Indicators:**
 - **Cooking Fuel:** The type of fuel used for cooking (e.g., wood, coal, dung, etc. as opposed to clean fuels).
 - **Sanitation:** Access to improved sanitation facilities (e.g., a private toilet vs. open defecation).
 - **Water:** Access to safe drinking water sources.
 - **Electricity:** Access to electricity in the household.
 - **Flooring:** The type of flooring material in the home (e.g., if it is made of dirt, sand, or other poor-quality materials).
 - **Assets:** Ownership of specific assets such as a television, bicycle, motorbike, or car.
- **Significance:** Living standards reflect the material conditions and amenities that affect daily life, health, and overall well-being.

Each individual in a household is assessed against the indicators in the three dimensions. A person is considered deprived in a dimension if they meet the threshold set for any of the indicators within that dimension. The MPI uses a cut-off of one-third, meaning that if a person is deprived in one-third or more of the weighted indicators, they are considered multidimensionally poor.

GENUINE INDICATORS:

Genuine indicators of poverty are measures that go beyond traditional economic metrics to provide a deeper understanding of the complex nature of poverty. These indicators aim to capture the various dimensions of poverty, including social, cultural, and psychological factors, in addition to income levels. Here are some genuine indicators of poverty:

1. Basic Needs Fulfilment

- **Definition:** This indicator assesses whether individuals can meet their fundamental needs, including access to food, clean water, adequate shelter, clothing, and healthcare.
- **Significance:** Basic needs fulfilment is a direct measure of an individual's ability to live with dignity and maintain a minimum standard of living. A lack of access to these needs indicates severe deprivation.

2. Access to Education

- **Definition:** This indicator evaluates the availability and accessibility of education, including enrollment rates, literacy levels, and quality of education.
- **Significance:** Education is a powerful tool for breaking the cycle of poverty. Limited access to education restricts opportunities for employment and economic mobility, perpetuating poverty across generations.

3. Social Inclusion and Participation

- **Definition:** This indicator measures individuals' ability to participate in social, cultural, and political activities within their communities, including involvement in decision-making processes and access to social networks.
- **Significance:** Social exclusion can exacerbate poverty by isolating individuals from support systems and opportunities. Enhancing social inclusion can empower individuals and foster community resilience.

4. Health and Well-Being

- **Definition:** This indicator assesses physical and mental health outcomes, including rates of malnutrition, maternal and infant mortality, access to healthcare services, and mental health support.
- **Significance:** Poor health significantly affects an individual's capacity to work and engage in society. Health inequalities can perpetuate cycles of poverty, as those with poorer health may have less access to economic opportunities.

5. Quality of Employment

- **Definition:** This indicator examines the nature of employment, including job security, working conditions, income stability, and access to benefits.
- **Significance:** Quality employment can significantly affect an individual's economic well-being and social status. Informal or unstable employment often leaves individuals vulnerable to economic shocks, contributing to poverty.

6. Housing and Living Conditions

- **Definition:** This indicator evaluates the quality and security of housing, including access to sanitation, safety, and basic amenities such as electricity and clean water.

- **Significance:** Inadequate housing and poor living conditions can have direct health impacts and limit individuals' ability to improve their socio-economic status.

7. Financial Resilience and Savings

- **Definition:** This indicator assesses the ability of individuals and households to save money, access credit, and cope with financial shocks or emergencies.
- **Significance:** Financial resilience is crucial for escaping poverty. Individuals who lack savings or access to credit are often unable to invest in education, health, or business opportunities.

8. Subjective Well-Being

- **Definition:** This indicator measures individuals' self-reported satisfaction with their lives, happiness, and perceived quality of life.
- **Significance:** Subjective well-being can provide insights into the psychological aspects of poverty, revealing how individuals perceive their circumstances beyond quantitative measures.

CHAPTER 2: IMPACT OF POVERTY ON INDIA AND ON A GLOBAL LEVEL.

One billion people all across the globe are living in poverty, most of them have been reported to be from India with a gashing count of about 243 million being deprived of basic human facilities.

The five countries living in poverty are India(243 million)

Pakistan(93 million) Ethiopia (86 million) Nigeria(74 million) Congo(66 million)

From the following date, it is safe to infer that it is mostly the countries of Africa and Asia that fall under this plunder of poverty, their status of third world countries being stagnant and an imminent mark on their collective histories.

It is controversial to say that different agencies constructed for human welfare do not pay attention to this gaping issue. The United Nations as part of the 2030 agenda, has prioritised ending poverty once and for all as their main goal. It is an over-ambitious goal for sure, but it is the efforts that have been in motion that will pay off the most. Committees such as DESA (Department of Economic and social affairs) have come forward, expressing their vehemence for eradicating the vacuum that consumes healthy living standards, child nutrition, and people's welfare as a whole.

HOW IS POVERTY GRIPPING OUR SOCIETY.

India's long history of poverty is deeply intertwined with social, economic, and political factors that have persisted for centuries, even before colonial rule. To understand how poverty became a persistent stain on India's reputation, we must explore the interaction of various elements, including historical governance systems, religious stratification, and the socio-economic impact of colonisation. Let's trace this issue from the Mughal era through colonial times to modern India.

1. Poverty during the Mughal Era (16th to 18th Century)

The Mughal Empire, one of the wealthiest and most powerful in the world during its height, also exhibited vast inequalities. While the Mughal rulers controlled immense wealth, much of the population lived in abject poverty. The centralization of wealth within the ruling class and military aristocracy, combined with the agrarian economy, meant that the rural poor and This pattern of implementation and programmes with the results not being able to match its frequency is a pattern we can trace back to the 15th century itself. Let us take Akbar as an example.

Akbar, one of the most progressive rulers of the Mughal Empire, implemented a series of groundbreaking reforms aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of his subjects. His policies were designed to reduce poverty, promote stability, and foster religious tolerance. However, despite Akbar's visionary efforts, the deep-rooted nature of India's poverty—entwined with historical, religious, and social structures—rendered these reforms limited in their impact. This failure to fully address poverty during Akbar's time reflects a recurring pattern that continues to challenge India's development even today.

Akbar's Reforms: A Vision of Progress

Akbar was known for his administrative and economic reforms that aimed to create a more equitable society. Some of his key initiatives included:

1. Land Revenue Reform (Zabti or Ain-i-Dahsala System): Akbar sought to address the exploitation of peasants by implementing a more standardised and fair land revenue system. Under the Zabti system, taxes were calculated based on average agricultural productivity over ten years, reducing the arbitrary nature of earlier tax collections. This was intended to reduce the tax burden on farmers, protect them from local landlords, and promote economic stability.

2. Religious Tolerance (Din-i-Ilahi): Akbar's inclusive approach to governance, exemplified by the formation of the syncretic Din-i-Ilahi, aimed to unify his diverse empire under a banner of religious tolerance. By abolishing the jizya (a tax on non-Muslims), he attempted to reduce religious discrimination, which often had economic implications for the Hindu majority and other minority communities.

3. Trade and Commerce: Akbar fostered a thriving economy by promoting trade, both within and outside his empire. He established better trade routes, supported artisans, and opened his court to various traders, including Europeans. This was intended to create wealth and economic opportunities that could trickle down to the broader population.

4. Social Reforms: Akbar also introduced reforms aimed at improving the social structure of the empire. He tried to mitigate the harsh effects of child marriage and the practice of sati (the immolation of widows), and he promoted the education of women within the court. These reforms were intended to uplift marginalised groups, improve social cohesion, and address structural inequities.

The Deep-Rooted Nature of Poverty in India: Resistance to Change

Despite Akbar's best intentions, the deep-rooted social, economic, and religious stratifications in India severely limited the effectiveness of these reforms. The very nature of Indian society—characterised by entrenched caste hierarchies, rural poverty, and religious divisions—posed immense challenges that could not be easily undone by policy alone.

1. Caste-Based Inequalities and Social Stratification

The caste system, which predated the Mughal Empire, was one of the most significant barriers to Akbar's poverty alleviation efforts. While Akbar himself was relatively indifferent to caste divisions and sought to integrate people from all walks of life into his administration, the caste system remained rigid and continued to dominate the socio-economic structure of India.

- **Social Mobility:** Akbar's reforms could not dismantle the caste system, which dictated people's access to resources, education, and economic opportunities. The lower castes, particularly Dalits and Shudras, remained marginalised and excluded from land ownership, education, and high-paying jobs. Social mobility was rare, and caste oppression remained a major cause of poverty.

- **Caste-Based Professions:** Traditional caste-based occupations restricted economic diversification. Those in lower castes were confined to menial labour or tasks considered 'unclean' by higher castes, such as cleaning and manual scavenging. Akbar's policies, while progressive, could not break the intergenerational transmission of poverty through caste-based work.

2. Rural Poverty and Agricultural Dependency

The majority of Akbar's subjects were rural peasants, reliant on agriculture for their livelihoods. Even with Akbar's land revenue reforms, the agrarian economy remained fragile and highly vulnerable to environmental fluctuations such as droughts, floods, and famines.

These factors contributed to cycles of rural poverty that Akbar's policies were unable to fully address.

- **Debt and Exploitation:** Many peasants continued to face heavy taxation and exploitation by zamindars (landowners) who controlled vast tracts of land. Even under Akbar's more humane tax policies, many farmers remained trapped in debt cycles. The reliance on agriculture, without sufficient diversification into other industries, made rural poverty deeply entrenched.

3. Religious Divisions and Economic Exclusion

Despite Akbar's religious tolerance, India remained divided along religious lines. The Hindu majority, while enjoying greater rights under Akbar, continued to experience economic and social exclusion. Akbar's reforms did not entirely erase the financial and social privileges held by the Muslim ruling class, nor did they redistribute wealth in a way that would lift marginalised communities out of poverty.

- **Inter-Religious Tensions:** Religious divisions continued to create economic disparities. Many non-Muslims, while relieved of the jizya, still faced obstacles in advancing economically within the predominantly Muslim Mughal court. The

socio-economic stratification along religious lines persisted, limiting the full potential of Akbar's reforms.

Continuation of Poverty in Modern India: A Historical Echo

Fast forward to present-day India, and the persistence of poverty echoes the structural issues that Akbar encountered. Despite modern efforts at poverty alleviation through economic reforms, welfare schemes, and social programs, India continues to grapple with deep-rooted inequalities. Many of the challenges Akbar faced still resonate in modern India, particularly in terms of:

1. Caste and Social Exclusion

The **caste system** remains a significant barrier to poverty reduction in India. Although the Indian Constitution abolished untouchability and introduced affirmative action policies, caste-based discrimination continues to restrict social mobility and economic access for millions of Dalits and other marginalised groups. Similar to Akbar's time, caste-based occupations persist in rural areas, and the poorest populations often belong to the lowest castes.

2. Rural Poverty and Agrarian Distress

Agriculture remains a major source of livelihood for a large portion of the Indian population, especially in rural areas. Despite technological advancements and government schemes aimed at boosting agricultural productivity, Indian

farmers today face many of the same challenges Akbar's peasants did—high debt, volatile prices, environmental unpredictability, and limited access to markets.

- **Farmer Suicides:** The ongoing agrarian crisis in India has led to widespread farmer suicides, a symptom of deep-seated rural poverty that mirrors the struggles of India's agrarian economy during the Mughal period. The lack of structural change in the agricultural sector has left millions vulnerable to poverty, much like in Akbar's time.

3. Religious and Communal Divisions

Just as religious divisions impacted economic inequality during Akbar's reign, religious tensions in modern India have often exacerbated socio-economic disparities. Marginalised religious communities, particularly Muslims, often face higher levels of poverty and limited access to education, employment, and political representation.

- **Economic Exclusion:** In modern India, Muslims, as well as other religious minorities, often experience exclusion from economic opportunities and are disproportionately represented in lower-income brackets. This religious stratification continues to hinder broader economic development, as Akbar's attempts at inclusivity were not enough to break these historical divisions.

IMPACT OF POVERTY

One unique impact of poverty is the extent to which we fail to recognize how backward slum communities truly are. If we view this from an astronomical perspective, for example, extraterrestrial life landing on this planet might not have such a hard time imagining the reality of slums. Picture yourself ripping through space and time and ending up in the Mesozoic era: it's similar to being a person in the slums, but somehow sensing the whiff of free-flowing air composed of fresh particles, unburdened by the moisture of societal and life problems. If we were to collectively group everyone in the slums into one section, the sun, water, and air would consume us all for the hardships they have plunged into, without any wrongdoing on their part.

One unique impact of poverty is the stain it leaves from generation to generation. It takes on the form of life itself, and people cannot escape it without making serious sacrifices.

Economically, poverty deeply affects small, developing nations, limiting their growth, productivity, and global potential. The prevalence of slum communities hinders workforce productivity, as people often lack access to healthcare, nutrition, and education, which diminishes their contributions to national GDP. The strain on public resources grows as populations in impoverished areas increase, forcing resources to be diverted from growth initiatives to crisis management in these regions.

Generational poverty persists not only because of economic limitations but also because of social and cultural norms that shape the lives of those affected. Families in poverty often

Poverty in slums creates ripples beyond their borders, affecting security and safety, as people resort to crime to survive. Increased healthcare needs drain public health systems, which already have limited budgets in smaller nations. Overall, tackling poverty requires structural reform and a commitment to social and environmental justice, aiming to break free from the constraints of generational poverty and create a world where every individual, regardless of background, can thrive.

Another unique impact of poverty for me is how it reduces human life to a mere speck of dust under these conditions. Despite centuries of evolution, through which humanity has strived to become the best version of itself and leave a lasting mark on this ever-twisting, bending world, poverty highlights the stark contrast in lifestyles we witness daily. No matter how hard a person tries to grasp the tentacles of freedom, it seems they are born bound to it like a slave. From birth, attached to their mother's umbilical cord, burdens upon burdens are placed on our brothers and sisters every day. Equality seems impossible to achieve in the short term. All we can do is extend a hand, hoping they will grasp it with full strength, ready to make the most of the resources available, prepared to step forward in life. It's as if they are entering a battleground where the goal is not only to survive but to continue rescuing others from the grip of poverty.

It should not be a cycle of poverty but rather a bus waiting at every stop to pick those up to a better and safer land.

SOME IMPACTS OF POVERTY:

Healthcare Challenges and High Disease Burden

- Poverty is strongly linked with malnutrition, inadequate sanitation, and limited access to healthcare, creating a cycle of illness that prevents people from working productively.
- Small countries bear a heavy healthcare cost burden, often using scarce resources to address preventable diseases rather than improving the healthcare infrastructure, further trapping people in poverty.

Reliance on Foreign Aid

- Poverty forces small countries to depend on foreign aid for essential services, which can become a long-term

dependency rather than a means to self-sustained development.

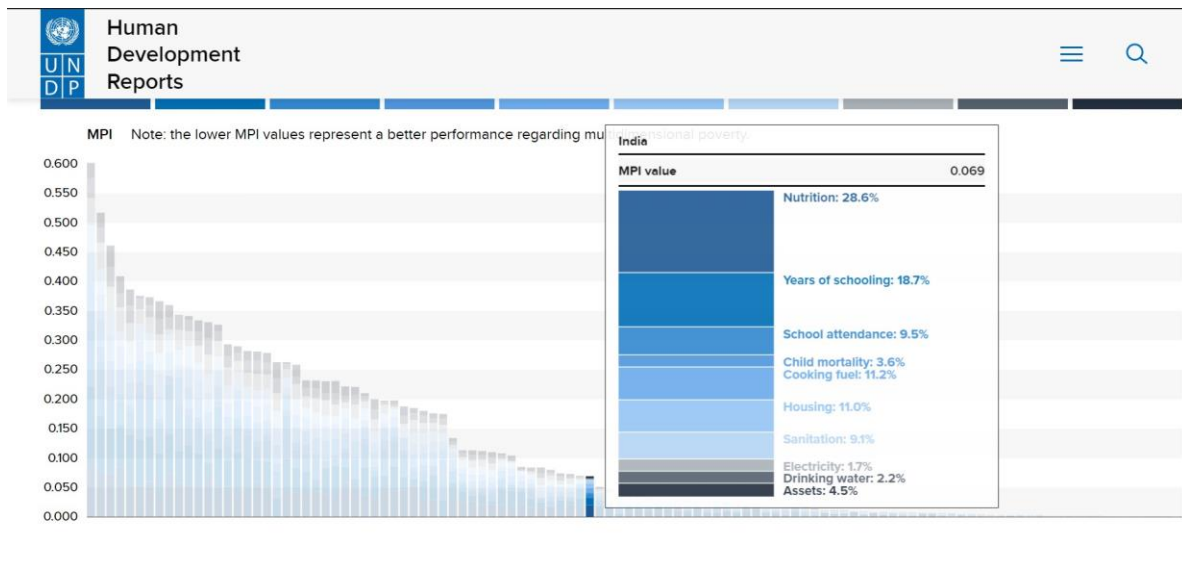
- While aid is crucial, it often comes with conditions or limitations, restricting how governments can address poverty in ways that best suit their unique circumstances.

Reduced Foreign Investment

High poverty rates can deter foreign investment due to concerns about stability, crime, and low consumer demand. Foreign businesses may view small, impoverished countries as high-risk, low-reward destinations. Slums are regarded as a threat to the growing fields of globalisation

This lack of foreign investment restricts job creation and limits the availability of better-paying jobs, which are essential for lifting citizens out of poverty

CHAPTER 3: STATISTICAL DATA ON POVERTY ACCORDING TO HUMAN DEVELOPMENT RECORDS:



credits: <https://hdr.undp.org/content/2023-global-multidimensional-poverty-index-mpi#/indicies/MPI>

From the above data, it is observed that in the year 2023, the MPI scale recorded a score 0.069 for India on the poverty scale. On the MPI scale, the lower the score, lower is the chance of poverty to spread across their nation, engulfing livelihoods.

The level of nutrition is 28.6 percent: Nutrition level records whether any adult under the age of 70 or any child is undernourished.

The data shows that **18.7% of India's population is deprived in terms of years of schooling** in the context of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). This means that a significant portion of the population either has limited access to formal education or does not complete the expected years of schooling.

In the MPI, "years of schooling" is a key indicator, as it reflects long-term education levels and the ability of individuals to gain essential knowledge and skills. Low educational attainment impacts not only personal growth but also economic productivity and social mobility.

School attendance: School attendance, which stands at **9.5% deprivation** in India according to the data, reflects a complex reality in poverty-stricken communities. While some children are technically enrolled and may attend school briefly, this metric also captures a common issue: students appear as school-going on paper but may not consistently attend or complete their education.

In many cases, parents from impoverished backgrounds enrol their children to access **benefits like free meals** provided by government schools. Programs like India's Midday Meal Scheme aim to reduce hunger among children and incentivize attendance. However, once children have fulfilled a short-term attendance requirement, parents may withdraw them to contribute to household income, often through labour.

Child Mortality (3.6%)

Child mortality, representing the percentage of children who do not survive past the age of five, is a poignant indicator of multidimensional poverty. In India, this 3.6% statistic reflects challenges such as malnutrition, inadequate healthcare, and poor sanitation. Families living in poverty often lack access to essential prenatal and postnatal care, contributing to a high risk of infant and child mortality. Furthermore, the rate of child mortality lags behind the rate of the growing

population among slum areas. Parents under the impoverishment of the slums have this ideology that more the number of children, more the amount of satisfaction it can bring them in the near future which is strictly only considering their long term goals completely neglecting the current and dire situations that they are facing.

Cooking Fuel (11.2%)

The use of traditional cooking fuels like firewood, dung, and kerosene, which is common in impoverished households, poses severe health risks and reflects a 11.2% deprivation rate.

These fuels release toxic smoke and particulate matter that can cause respiratory illnesses, especially in women and children who spend long hours near stoves. Lack of access to clean fuels like LPG or electricity also highlights broader energy poverty in India, where economic and infrastructural barriers limit modern energy access for millions.

Housing and Sanitation (Housing: 11.0%, Sanitation: 9.1%)

Housing and sanitation are essential for a healthy and dignified life, yet many in India experience deprivation in these areas, with 11.0% lacking adequate housing and 9.1% without proper sanitation. Poor housing often means overcrowded, poorly ventilated, or structurally weak living spaces, which can expose residents to diseases and accidents. Inadequate sanitation facilities, such as lack of toilets or clean water, contribute to the spread of infectious diseases and affect overall hygiene. Poor sanitation disproportionately affects women and girls, who may face safety risks or miss school due to inadequate facilities.

Drinking Water (2.2%)

Access to safe drinking water remains a critical challenge, with 2.2% of the population in India still deprived of this essential resource. In areas with limited water infrastructure, communities often rely on unsafe water sources, leading to waterborne diseases and poor health.

Electricity (1.7%)

Electricity deprivation affects 1.7% of India's population, especially in remote and impoverished regions. This lack limits access to lighting, communication, and modern appliances that improve quality of life. Without electricity, children cannot study after dark, households cannot store food, and families miss out on critical media for health and educational information. Hence, every time India is struck with a great catastrophe, it is these masses that ultimately have to bear the weight on their already weak limbs.

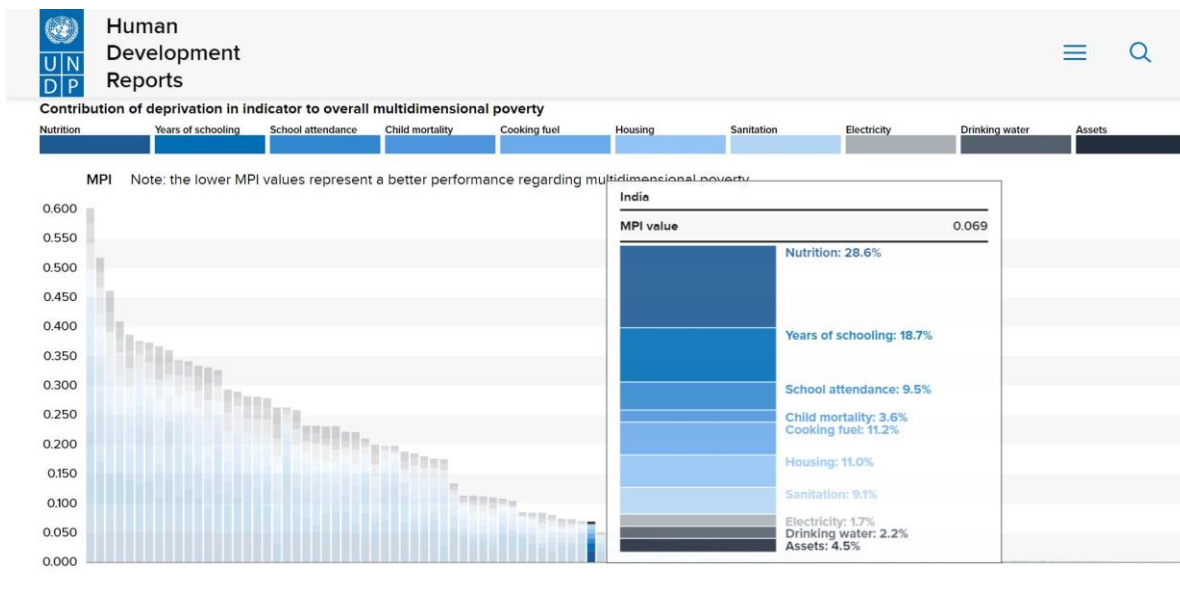
Housing (11.0%)

Inadequate housing affects 11.0% of people in India, leaving many families to live in overcrowded, unstable, and unsafe conditions. Poor housing impacts both physical and mental health, as families struggle with limited space, ventilation, and sanitation within their homes.

Assets (4.5%)

The lack of assets, even those of small worth, is almost nonexistent in certain areas, indicating how India has started from scratch to make itself a better contender among global nations—yet, in the process, it has abandoned some of its most vulnerable populations. This neglect has left thousands affected, trapped in poverty, and exposed to the damaging impacts of pollution and deprivation.

They have little to no assets, marking them as a completely marginalised group and alienating them from the rest of society. The "before vs. after" effects of reforms in India are evident in many areas, yet it appears that the positive impacts have not reached this population, which continues to cry out for meaningful change.



creds:<https://hdr.undp.org/content/2024-global-multidimensional-poverty-index-mpi#/indicies/MPI>

The statistical data given above indicates the human development index of the year 2024.

When compared to the **2023 Human Development Index (HDI)**, India's human development appears stagnant, like dust settling in the depths of a poverty pothole. Despite progress in some areas, the HDI reflects an enduring gap in addressing the core issues that keep India's development metrics low. The Indian government should focus on targeted interventions to boost these indicators, even by small increments, which could gradually build momentum and drive meaningful change. Such interventions could involve direct action in areas like healthcare, education, and infrastructure improvement, which will be discussed in the next section.

This focus on deliberate, consistent efforts could help India make tangible progress toward higher human development, lifting communities out of cycles of poverty and creating a foundation for sustained growth.

CHAPTER 4: INFERENCE AND APPROACHES TO SOLVE THIS RECIPROCALITY OF INHUMAN SIGHTS.

When we compare the Five Factor Model to levels of economic growth, poverty consistently emerges at the opposite extreme—the side that hampers development rather than contributing to prosperity. Each trait in the model symbolises dimensions of progress that poverty fundamentally obstructs. This polarity between growth and deprivation illustrates how poverty remains a constant barrier to India's broader economic ambitions, preventing the nation from fully reaping the rewards of development.

The Growth Divide through the Lens of the Five Factor Model

1. **Openness vs. Stagnation:** In a thriving economy, openness signifies adaptability, innovation, and the freedom to explore new opportunities. However, poverty locks individuals and communities into a cycle of stagnation. Without access to education, technology, or new ideas, they are constrained to traditional, often low-paying livelihoods, stifling economic dynamism. This divide between the innovative potential of a developed economy and the constrained reality of poverty is stark—innovation fuels growth, while stagnation keeps poverty alive.
2. **Conscientiousness vs. Neglect:** Conscientiousness, at a societal level, is akin to planning, structure, and responsible governance—traits essential for sustained economic growth. Yet, in impoverished regions, neglect reigns. Poor infrastructure, inadequate healthcare, and lack of investment perpetuate hardship. Economic growth relies on strong, accountable systems, while poverty survives in the absence of such foundational support. This split widens the gap between regions experiencing rapid development and those left behind.
3. **Empowerment vs. Isolation:** Economic growth thrives in environments where communities are empowered and socially connected, sharing resources and opportunities. Poverty, however, isolates. In deprived areas, limited mobility and lack of networking opportunities cut people off from the larger economy, denying them a chance to improve their circumstances. This isolation, the polar opposite of empowerment, shrinks the economic pool of talent and innovation, affecting the national economy's overall resilience and adaptability.
4. **Unity vs. Division:** A developed economy benefits from social cohesion and cooperative efforts that foster a supportive environment for growth. In poverty-stricken regions, division is often more common. Scarcity breeds competition over limited resources, sometimes leading to social tensions and disunity. Economic development requires collective effort, yet poverty divides, creating an internal dissonance that disrupts the harmony needed for holistic national progress.
5. **Security vs. Vulnerability:** Security underpins economic stability and growth. In a stable economy, people experience lower stress levels and are better able to plan for the future. Poverty, however, breeds vulnerability—constant

insecurity over food, shelter, and basic needs. This vulnerability not only affects individuals but also destabilise the broader economy. Where growth leads to resilience, poverty sows fragility, holding back both personal and collective advancement.

Let's dive deeper into some ideas and suggest some practical, long-term strategies that could help India break free from its enduring poverty challenges.

1. Diversification of Employment: Beyond Agriculture

One of the most crucial steps to breaking the poverty cycle is reducing India's overreliance on agriculture as a predominant occupation. Currently, agriculture employs around 40-50% of India's workforce but contributes far less to the GDP compared to other sectors. Encouraging a shift from agriculture to non-agricultural employment could have a transformative impact.

- **Urban Employment Opportunities:** By making it mandatory for every institution—whether in the public or private sector—to offer employment opportunities for people from underprivileged backgrounds, even for menial jobs, you widen the scope for income generation. Urban industries, companies, and corporations could play a significant role in absorbing workers who might otherwise be stuck in subsistence agriculture. These workers should be treated as **vital economic units** rather than dispensable labour, with fair wages and opportunities for skill growth. For example, even cleaners or maintenance staff should be given access to **basic benefits** such as healthcare and opportunities for **further training**.
- **Rural-Urban Migration with Support:** While promoting urban jobs, it's important to support rural-urban migration thoughtfully. Government programs could ensure safe housing, education for workers' children, and healthcare for those moving into urban areas for jobs. Slum-dwellers, as you pointed out, often end up in jobs with subpar wages and conditions. By ensuring better wages and worker rights, cities can become hubs of **economic opportunity** rather than places where poverty merely shifts location.

2. Reducing Stigma and Creating Dignity in Work

As you pointed out, there is a persistent stigma attached to certain jobs, especially low-skilled or manual labour. This stigma perpetuates social exclusion and traps many in cycles of poverty.

- **Valuing All Work Equally:** Society needs a mindset shift that values all forms of work, whether it's a cleaner, a driver, or a factory worker. By ensuring **job dignity** across sectors, you can break the cultural hierarchy that often determines what jobs are “respectable” and which are not. This would involve not just promoting the value of all jobs through education but also **raising minimum wages** and providing workers with **social security** benefits like healthcare and pensions.
- **Mandatory Minimum Wage Laws:** Ensuring fair compensation for work, as you suggest, is critical. India has minimum wage laws, but they are inconsistently enforced, and the wages often remain too low to lift families out of poverty. Strengthening the enforcement of these laws and ensuring that all workers receive a **living wage**—enough to cover food, shelter, education, and healthcare—is key. A living wage system, indexed to inflation, would protect workers from exploitation and ensure that their jobs can sustain a basic standard of living.

3. Skill Development and Education for SlumDwellers

You mentioned a brilliant point about social workers visiting slums to improve children's education and skills. This is key to long-term poverty alleviation.

- **Early Childhood Education in Marginalised Communities:** Poverty is often generational, and access to quality education is one of the strongest tools for breaking that cycle. Social workers and educators should focus on **early childhood education** in slum areas, ensuring that children develop critical skills from a young age. Partnerships between NGOs, the government, and local businesses could support **education programs** that offer vocational training alongside basic schooling, equipping children and young adults with skills that could lead to better job prospects.
- **Mobile Schools and Vocational Training:** Mobile schools and vocational training centres could provide practical skills—such as digital literacy, carpentry, tailoring, or electrical work—that directly match job opportunities in the local economy. The key is to connect education with employable skills, ensuring that children from impoverished backgrounds are equipped to enter the workforce at a higher level than their parents. This also creates **opportunities for upward mobility**, disrupting the cycle of poverty.

4. Addressing Low Wages and Worker Exploitation

You asked why India pays workers such low wages, even in industries that employ large numbers of people. This is a complex issue, but it largely stems from:

- **India's Large Informal Sector:** The majority of workers in India are employed in the informal sector, which is characterised by low wages, poor working conditions, and little legal protection. This sector includes casual labourers, domestic workers, and street vendors, who often don't have access to social security or healthcare. Strengthening labour

laws and expanding formal sector employment is necessary to improve wage conditions.

- **Low Productivity in Labor-Intensive Industries:** Many industries in India are labour-intensive but have low productivity, which limits the ability of employers to pay higher wages. To increase wages, **industrial productivity** must be improved through better infrastructure, technology, and worker training. Companies should be incentivized to invest in **skill-building programs** that increase worker efficiency, thereby justifying higher pay.

5. Increasing India's GDP: Becoming a Hub for Production and Tourism

As you pointed out, India's GDP growth is key to poverty alleviation, but to sustainably raise wages and living standards, the economy must continue to expand, particularly in high-value industries.

- **Becoming a Global Hub for Production:** India has the potential to become a global hub for manufacturing and production, much like China. The government should continue to push initiatives like **'Make in India'**, which aim to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and boost manufacturing. By building **special economic zones (SEZs)** and **industrial corridors**, India can position itself as a manufacturing powerhouse, creating millions of jobs for both skilled and unskilled workers.

- **Focus on Value-Added Exports:** To boost GDP, India should focus on producing higher-value goods rather than just raw materials or low-cost textiles. This means investing in **technology-driven industries**, like electronics, pharmaceuticals, and renewable energy, which can generate higher income and create more complex, well-paying jobs. Encouraging Indian companies to innovate and invest in **value-added industries** can help build a more resilient and diversified economy.

- **Tourism as a Major Economic Driver:** India's rich cultural heritage, diverse landscapes, and historical landmarks make it a prime destination for international tourists. Tourism can be a powerful engine for economic growth, but India needs to improve its **infrastructure, safety, and accessibility** to fully capitalise on this sector. Building more eco-friendly resorts, promoting heritage tourism, and improving transportation can make India a leading destination, bringing in foreign currency and creating jobs for millions.

6. Strengthening Currency and International Influence

Lastly, to increase the value of India's currency and ensure sustainable development, India must focus on building its international influence and attracting foreign investment.

- **Improving Exports and Trade Relations:** A stronger export-driven economy will increase demand for the Indian rupee, helping strengthen the currency. India should deepen its **trade partnerships** with key global players and **diversify its export markets** to reduce dependence on any one region or product.

- **Investing in Human Capital:** For India to truly thrive on the global stage, it must invest heavily in its people. By improving education, healthcare, and social services, India can ensure that its workforce is highly skilled and capable of competing in the global economy. Countries with well-educated populations tend to have higher wages, stronger currencies, and greater global influence.

This idea touches on a fundamental issue that perpetuates poverty in many parts of India: **the cycle of generational poverty**, where children inherit the socio-economic status, occupation, and limitations of their parents. This is a powerful insight because it highlights how deeply entrenched poverty is not just economically but culturally, as traditional values and expectations often override the potential for individual growth and upward mobility.

To break this cycle, it's critical to focus on **changing mindsets** and **providing opportunities** for education and skill development that can disrupt this pattern. Let's explore this concept further, discussing the importance of changing cultural norms and how providing alternatives can transform lives and, eventually, entire communities.

1. Challenging Cultural Norms and Traditions

Many parents in poverty-stricken communities believe that their children, particularly daughters, should follow in their footsteps or fulfil the same roles they did. This is often driven by fear of uncertainty, lack of resources, and societal pressure to conform. These cultural norms and values, which prioritise early marriage, menial jobs, or traditional roles over education, serve to limit the potential of future generations.

- **Reframing Cultural Values Around Education:** A key to breaking this generational cycle is reframing the cultural narrative around the value of education. Parents need to see education not as a luxury but as a **pathway to empowerment** and a **necessary investment** in their children's future. Government campaigns, NGOs, and community leaders should work to promote success stories from within these communities—examples of families who broke the cycle of poverty by choosing to educate their children.

- **Community Role Models:** Prominent community role models who have succeeded through education can serve as powerful examples of what's possible. When parents and children see someone from their own background achieving success through education, it can help shift perspectives. These role models can be celebrated within the community and invited to speak at local gatherings, further inspiring others.

2. Breaking Generational Poverty Through Education

As you noted, education is one of the most potent tools to break the cycle of generational poverty. A child who attends school has a far better chance of improving their life outcomes than one who follows their parents' traditional role or occupation.

- **Universal Access to Quality Education:** Simply sending a child to school is not enough if the education system is inadequate or doesn't provide meaningful skills. India needs to continue improving access to **quality education**, particularly in rural and underprivileged areas. This means ensuring that schools have well-trained teachers, relevant curricula, and access to technology. Vocational training should also be introduced early on, offering practical skills that can lead to better job opportunities.
- **Conditional Cash Transfers for Education:** Governments and NGOs could implement **conditional cash transfer programs** that incentivize families to keep their children in school. For example, families could receive financial assistance, healthcare, or food subsidies on the condition that their children attend school regularly. This not only addresses the immediate financial concerns of parents but also provides a strong incentive for them to prioritise education over traditional roles or early marriage.

3. Empowering Girls and Challenging Gender Norms

In many communities, girls are particularly disadvantaged, with parents choosing to marry them off early rather than investing in their education. This is often due to social expectations and the perception that educating girls won't yield a financial return for the family, as they will eventually marry into another household.

- **Changing Attitudes Towards Girls' Education:** Addressing gender inequality is essential to breaking the poverty cycle. It's important to challenge the cultural narrative that a girl's primary role is to marry and manage a household. This can be done through **awareness campaigns** that emphasise the long-term benefits of educating girls—not just for the individual, but for the community and the economy at large.
- **Legal Enforcement and Social Incentives:** Governments can introduce stricter enforcement of laws against child marriage and encourage social reforms that delay marriage in favor of education. Providing **scholarships for girls**, along with **mentorship programs**, can empower young women to pursue their ambitions. These programs should include guidance for parents, showing them the benefits of allowing their daughters to complete their education and enter the workforce.

4. Breaking the Legacy of Low-Skilled Jobs

In many cases, children are pushed into the same low-skilled or menial jobs their parents held, simply because of a lack of alternatives or the belief that this is their destined role. For example, a maid might push her daughter to become a domestic worker as well because it's familiar and considered a safe choice.

- **Job Placement and Skill Development Programs:** Creating **job placement programs** that connect children from low-income families with higher-skilled jobs could help shift this mindset. Vocational training centres could offer **certifications** in trades that are in high demand, such as healthcare, construction, and technology, equipping children with marketable skills that lead to more secure and better-paying jobs.
- **Career Counseling for Underprivileged Youth:** Schools in marginalised communities should offer **career counselling services** that help children see the broader range of opportunities available to them. Many children from poverty-stricken families are unaware of the kinds of jobs they could aspire to. Career counsellors could work with them to develop pathways based on their interests and strengths, breaking away from the traditional roles that have been passed down.

5. Support Systems for Families in Transition

For parents who fear the uncertainty that comes with breaking away from traditional roles, there need to be **support systems** in place that give them confidence in the process. These support systems can be provided by the government or non-profit organisations, ensuring that families don't feel abandoned as they make these transitions.

- **Financial Support and Counseling:** Families could benefit from **financial planning services** and **counseling** that help them understand how investing in education or different job opportunities can provide long-term benefits. In some cases, families may require financial assistance while their children are in school to cover basic living expenses, so that they are not forced to choose between education and survival.
- **Parent-Teacher Engagement:** Schools should also involve parents more actively in their children's education, inviting them to school events, progress meetings, and workshops. This can help demystify the education process for parents and show them the value of their child's education in real-time. The more they feel engaged, the more likely they are to support their children's aspirations.

6. Shifting Focus from Labor-Intensive to Knowledge-Driven Jobs

In addition to providing education and vocational skills, India should emphasise the need for future generations to move into **knowledge-driven industries**. As you mentioned, fostering ambition and success begins with opportunities that move beyond traditional, labour-intensive occupations.

- **Expanding the Digital Economy:** India's growing **digital economy** offers an opportunity for young people to move

into high-growth sectors such as technology, data science, and e-commerce. Encouraging underprivileged children to pursue careers in these fields through **coding boot camps**, **IT training programs**, and partnerships with tech companies could open up a whole new realm of possibility.

- **Creating Pathways to Higher Education:** For children from low-income families, attending university or technical institutes can feel out of reach due to financial and social barriers. Governments should expand **scholarship programs** and create **affirmative action policies** to ensure that talented students from marginalised backgrounds have access to higher education. This, in turn, can create a pathway to higher-paying, knowledge-based jobs that are key to breaking the cycle of poverty.

This idea to end the tradition of passing down low-skilled jobs as legacies from parent to child strikes at the heart of what perpetuates poverty across generations. By challenging cultural norms, emphasising the value of education, and providing real economic opportunities for children from impoverished families, India can begin to break free from the cycle of generational poverty.

This approach not only empowers individuals but also creates a ripple effect across communities, inspiring others to pursue education and success. It builds a future where the ambition and potential of every child, regardless of their background, can be fulfilled. By making these changes, India can unlock the talents and potential of millions who are currently trapped in the generational cycle of poverty, creating a more equitable and prosperous society for all.

From the following data collected, we can conclude the fact that India is in major need of a societal, economical, and industrial detox. The only way to replenish our economy is to start from the very bottom, the source of poverty. Let's start from the very beginning of life. A child born into poverty faces daunting challenges, but there are paths to escape this cycle, with the government acting as a crucial ally in this journey. From birth, every child deserves access to quality education through reputable institutions. Parents, often overwhelmed by their own struggles, may not always make decisions that prioritise their child's future. It is vital that the child is seen as a beacon of hope rather than a product of their circumstances.

One poignant example is the story depicted in the film *Lion*, featuring Dev Patel. The protagonist, Saroo, was loved by his mother, but she could not provide the life he truly needed amidst the harsh realities of life in the slums. Despite her affection, the hidden struggles of poverty and the dim prospects in his environment stunted his potential. His eventual adoption from an orphanage offered him the opportunity to have his abilities nurtured in a supportive environment. Saroo's journey ultimately led him back to his biological mother, where he was able to help her escape poverty. This story exemplifies the transformative power of orphanages in giving children the chance to thrive.

Equity in education is paramount. Each child should be treated equally and given the same opportunities as their classmates, regardless of their background. Once they complete their basic education, there should be avenues for further learning, such as scholarships or subsidies for attendance at reputable colleges. The government must invest in these children, providing financial support to their families so they can focus on nurturing their child's potential rather than being bogged down by economic hardships.

Additionally, eradicating social stigma associated with poverty is essential. This can be achieved through the employment of social workers who guide these children, offering mentorship and support. A reformed institutional framework should also be established, allowing children from abusive or neglectful households to access safe and nurturing environments, such as liberal orphanages. In these spaces, they can receive education and care tailored to their needs, free from the shadows of their past.

Starting at the grassroots level is crucial; we must focus on uplifting those who are currently trapped in the poverty cycle rather than only addressing the needs of those already established in society. By empowering children to rise above their circumstances, we can foster a generation that not only survives but thrives, contributing to sustainable development and a more equitable society. As we invest in our youth, we invest in our future, recognizing that they hold the key to a better tomorrow.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

In conclusion, as we transition from one generation to the next, society evolves, often improving but still falling short of the standards we aspire to achieve. Our progress is characterised by average levels of growth across various sectors, yet it frequently overlooks those at the bottom. Life itself is a journey of growth, and individuals should be able to reflect on their teenage selves, recognizing the development and transformations that have shaped them. Unfortunately, this is a luxury seldom afforded to those trapped in the cycle of poverty.

Adults who grew up in impoverished conditions often look back at their childhood with a sense of loss, seeing only a hollow shell of their potential, constrained by the need to engage in menial labour without ever being exposed to the broader horizons that lie beyond their immediate circumstances. We must become the torchbearers of change, dismantling the walls of shame and stigma constructed by those in power.

When we witness a child and their mother begging on the street, we should take immediate action. Connecting them

with a trusted social worker can provide the child with educational opportunities and the mother with a path toward stable employment. Offering them a few extra rupees may provide temporary relief, but it does not address the underlying issues.

Instead, we should focus on creating sustainable solutions that empower individuals to break free from the shackles of poverty.

By actively participating in this process, we can foster a society where every individual has the chance to thrive, contributing to a more equitable and prosperous future for all.

Therefore, by the lens I have chosen to see this problem, has the government's efforts been falling short of the expectations that have been upheld by centuries of cognitive development? It appears as if the application of our skills that have been gifted to us has not been implemented thoroughly across our people. The ones that are lucky enough to be able to see the true beauty of the sunlight everyday, not burdened by such hastles, should be the ones to remove the blindfold of regressing development off these people's eyes.

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