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Regional Variations in Multidimensional Poverty in India

Vinita Katiyar[1]; Shishir Kumar Verma[2]

[1]Professor; Head Department of Economics, Narain College, Shikohabad
[2]Professor; Head Department of Economics, S.R.K. (P.G.) College, Firozabad

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Abstract: Poverty in India is not only an economic issue but also a social and structural phenomenon, making it complex and cyclical in nature. It is a major stumbling block in development of country. Poverty is a multidimensional issue that is not only related to insufficient income of people but also to health, education and standard of living. Multidimensional poverty is measured by the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)**. Like global MPI, India's national MPI has three equally weighted dimensions – Health, Education, and Standard of living – which are represented by 12 indicators instead of 10. India's multidimensional poverty was notably high in 2005-06, with over half the population (55.34%) experiencing deprivations across health, education, and standard of living. It reduced to 24.85% in 2015-16. India has attained a significant reduction in its MPI value and Headcount Ratio between 2015-16 and 2019-21. While the country has made substantial progress in reducing poverty, the decline has not been uniform across all regions.** Regional variations **remain a significant challenge, with some states and regions experiencing much higher levels of multidimensional poverty than others. This paper highlights the regional variations and the factors that influence them. It also focuses the government policy and programmes aimed at reducing these variations and provides some policy recommendations for further reducing multi-dimensional poverty and regional variations in the MPI.**

Keywords: *Multidimensional Poverty, Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), Regional Variations, Government Policies.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Poverty in India is not only an economic issue but also a social and structural phenomenon, making it complex and cyclical in nature. It is a major stumbling block in development of country. Poverty is a multidimensional issue that is not only related to insufficient income of people but also to health, education and standard of living. Multidimensional poverty in India reflects not just income deprivation but also deficits in health, education, and living standards. Multidimensional poverty is measured by the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) captures this broader view by assessing deprivation across multiple indicators, including health, education, and standard of living. While the country has made significant strides in reducing poverty overall, regional disparities remain stark. Different parts of India experience poverty in varying intensities and forms, influenced by factors such as geography, governance, infrastructure, and historical inequalities. Southern states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu report low poverty levels due to better public services, whereas eastern and northern states such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Odisha continue to struggle with widespread deprivation, particularly in rural areas. These regional patterns are crucial to understand for targeted policy-making and inclusive development. This analysis explores how multidimensional poverty differs across India's regions and what drives these disparities.

➢ *Objectives of Study:*

This paper examines the status of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) in India. It broadly covers the concept of multidimensional poverty and the MPI, along with its dimensions. The research provides a comprehensive analysis of variations in multidimensional poverty across India and offers insights into its prevalence, contributing factors, and potential solutions. This study contributes valuable knowledge to the field of poverty studies and can help inform policy-making.

The main objectives of this paper are:

- To assess the trends of multidimensional poverty in India.
- To examine regional variations in multidimensional poverty in India.
- To explore the factors influencing variations in the MPI.
- To evaluate government policies on poverty reduction, regional variations in the MPI, and their challenges.

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- To provide policy recommendations for reducing MPI variations.

II. METHODOLOGY

The National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) was developed by NITI Aayog in collaboration with the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI). The MPI is calculated using NFHS (National Family Health Survey) data to assess deprivation across 3 dimensions and 12 indicators. The present study is entirely based on secondary data, which has been obtained from sources such as the NFHS, state-level government statistical reports, the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), various publications of the Government of India, NSS surveys, economic surveys, and online sources. The collected data were computed, tabulated, and presented using graphs and bar diagrams, and subjected to statistical analysis in accordance with the objectives of the study.

➢ *Key Indicators of Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)*

The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) was developed by Alkire and Santos (2010). It offers a comprehensive measure of poverty by considering multiple deprivations in health, education, and standard of living. India's adaptation of the MPI typically includes three dimensions and employs a dual-cutoff approach to assess both the incidence and intensity of poverty across 12 indicators. Like the global MPI, India's national MPI includes three equally weighted dimensions – Health, Education, and Standard of Living – which are represented by 12 indicators instead of 10. A person is considered multidimensionally poor if they are deprived in one-third or more of these weighted indicators.

Table 1 MPI Dimensions and Indicators

Dimensions	Indicators
Health (1/3)	Nutrition
	Child Mortality
	Mortality Maternal Health
Education (1/3)	Years of Schooling
	School Attendance
Standard of Living (1/3)	Cooking Fuel
	Sanitation
	Drinking Water
	Electricity
	Housing
	Assets
	Bank Account

➢ *Calculation of Sub-Indices of the National MPI:*

- Headcount Ratio (H): This is the proportion of multidimensionally poor individuals in the population, which is calculated by dividing the number of multidimensionally poor persons by the total population.
- Intensity of Poverty (A): This is the average proportion of deprivations experienced by multidimensionally poor individuals. The weighted deprivation scores of all poor people are summed and then divided by the total number of poor people to compute the intensity.

The MPI value is obtained by multiplying the Headcount Ratio (H) and the Intensity of Poverty (A), capturing both the share of people in poverty and the degree to which they are deprived.

MPI = H x A

➢ *Trends of Multi-Dimensional Poverty in India*

India's multidimensional poverty was notably high in 2005–06, with over half the population (55.34%) experiencing deprivations across health, education, and standard of living. It reduced to 24.85% in 2015–16. India has attained a significant reduction in its MPI value and Headcount Ratio between 2015–16 and 2019–21, reflecting the country's commitment and action to address the multidimensional nature of poverty through a multisectoral approach. States such as Uttar Pradesh (UP), Bihar, Madhya Pradesh (MP), Odisha, and Rajasthan have shown a sharp and rapid decline in MPI values. Improvements in factors such as years of schooling, sanitation, nutrition, and access to clean cooking fuel have played a valuable role in reducing the MPI. The MPI value declined from 24.85% in 2015–16 to 14.96% in 2019–21, highlighting a near-halving of India's national MPI value over this period. This represents a major contribution toward achieving sustainable development and poverty eradication. At the same time, the Intensity of Poverty also decreased, from 47.14% to 44.39%.

Table 2 Trends in Multidimensional Poverty in India

Indicator	NFHS-3 (2005–06)	NFHS-4 (2015–16)	NFHS-5 (2019–21)
Headcount Ratio (H)	55.34%	24.85%	14.96%
Intensity (A)	54.96%	47.14%	44.39%
MPI Value	0.304	0.117	0.066

Source: undp.org

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In terms of the number of MPI-poor individuals, Uttar Pradesh topped the list for the fastest state-wise absolute reduction in multidimensional poverty, with 3.43 crore people escaping poverty in the last five years, followed by Bihar (2.25 crore) and Madhya Pradesh (1.36 crore).

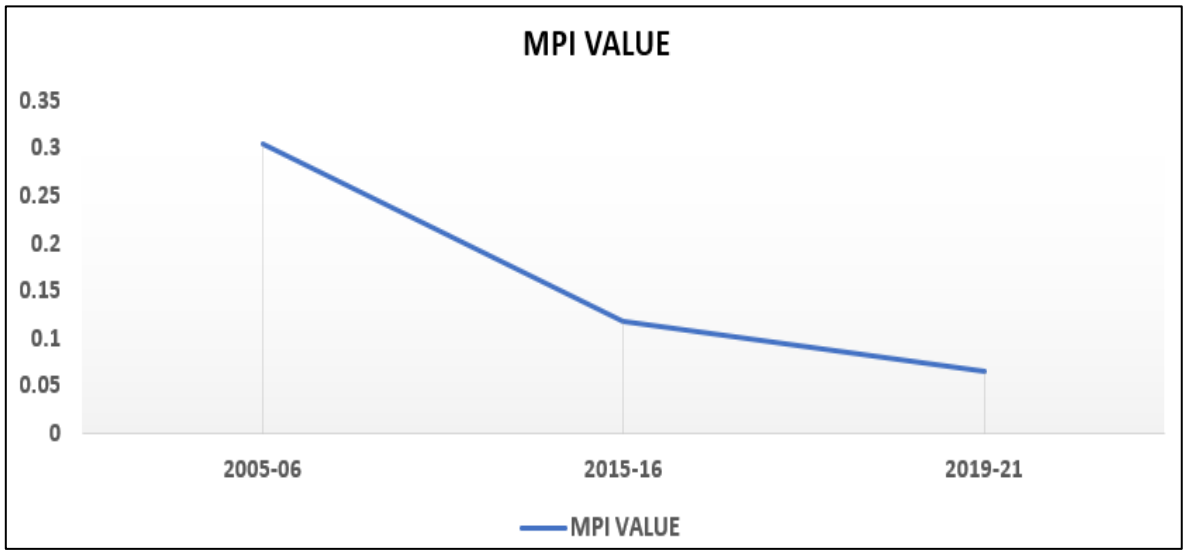

Fig 1 Trends in Multidimensional Poverty in India
Source: Compiled from Table-2

Overall, India's MPI decreased from 0.304 in 2005–06 to 0.117 in 2015–16. It further declined from 0.117 in 2015–16 to 0.066 in 2019–21, indicating a near halving of multidimensional poverty. The headcount ratio also declined from 24.85% to 14.96% during the same period. In state-level progress of MPI, Uttar Pradesh led in the number of people escaping multidimensional poverty, with 5.94 crore individuals moving out of poverty between 2013–14 and 2022–23. Other states showing remarkable improvements include Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan. Looking at indicator-wise improvements, all 12 indicators used in the MPI showed progress between 2015–16 and 2019–21, with significant gains observed in the following areas:

- Sanitation: Deprivation reduced by 21.8 percentage points.
- Cooking Fuel: Deprivation decreased by 14.6 percentage points.
- Nutrition: Notable improvements in child and adolescent mortality rates due to better nutrition.
- Education: Increased years of schooling and improved school attendance.
- Standard of Living: Enhanced access to electricity, housing, and assets has uplifted the standard of living.

➢ *Regional Variations in Multi-Dimensional Poverty in India*

While India has made substantial progress in reducing poverty, the decline has not been uniform across the country. Regional variations remain a significant challenge, with some states and regions experiencing far higher levels of multidimensional poverty than others.

- *Variation Across Rural and Urban Areas:*

Variation in multidimensional poverty still persists between rural and urban areas, with 19.28% of the rural population being multidimensionally poor compared to 5.27% in urban areas in 2019–21. The reduction in MPI value has been pro-poor in absolute terms. This indicates that rural areas experienced a faster reduction in their MPI value compared to urban areas. The incidence of poverty fell from 32.59% to 19.28% in rural areas, compared to a decline from 8.65% to 5.27% in urban areas between 2015–16 and 2019–21.

Table 3 Variation Across Rural and Urban Areas

Area	MPI (2015-16)	MPI (2019-21)
Rural	32.59%	19.28%
Urban	8.65%	5.27%

Source: NFHS-4 (2015–16) and NFHS-5 (2019–21)

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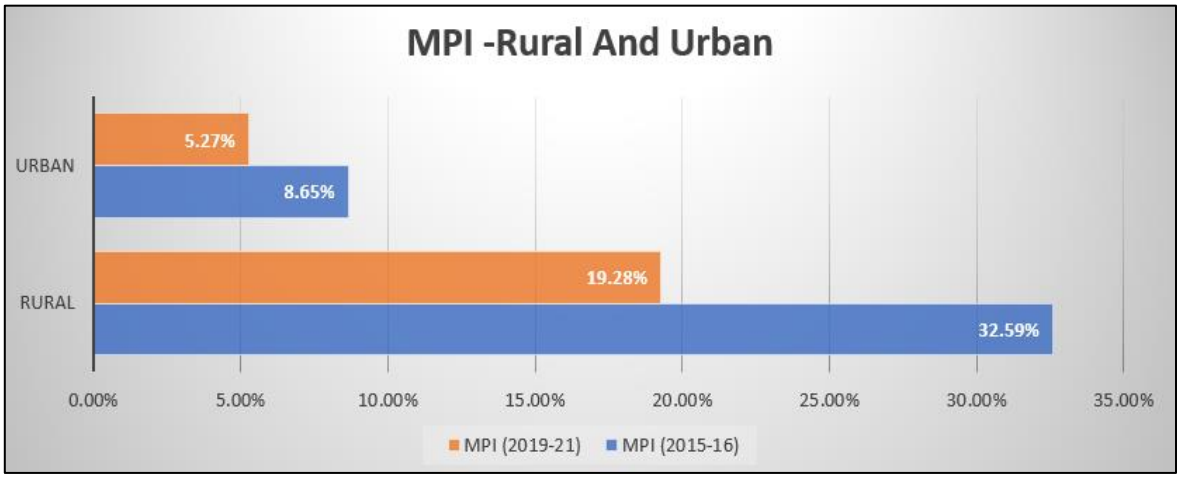

Fig 2 Variation Across Rural and Urban Areas
Source: Compiled from Table-3

Rural areas experienced a more significant reduction in multidimensional poverty, with the headcount ratio falling from 32.59% in 2015–16 to 19.28% in 2019–21. Urban areas saw a decrease from 8.65% to 5.27% during the same period.

➢ *Region-Wide Variations in Rural and Urban Areas*

India is a country of immense diversity, with regional variations evident across multiple dimensions—geography, climate, culture, language, cuisine, economy, and more. These variations also impact living standards, educational levels, and health, which ultimately affect the economic conditions of people and their Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI).

Table 4 Region-Wide Variations Across Rural and Urban Areas

Region	Urban MPI (%) Approx.	Rural MPI (%) Approx	Comment
North India	8–10%	25–30%	Large rural-urban divide in UP, Rajasthan
South India	2–3%	4–6%	Smaller divide; good public services
East India	12–15%	30–35%	Severe deprivation in rural Bihar, Odisha
North-East	10–15%	25–28%	Access issues in remote tribal areas

Source: NITI Aayog's Multidimensional Poverty Index Reports (2021–2023), NFHS-5

States like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh exhibit high levels of MPI, especially in rural areas. These states often suffer from inadequate health and education infrastructure, along with pronounced gender and caste inequalities. For instance, rural Uttar Pradesh has one of the highest poverty rates in the country. In contrast, southern states - particularly Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh report some of the lowest MPI levels. These regions have benefited from strong public health systems, higher literacy rates, and effective welfare schemes. States like Bihar, Jharkhand, and Odisha reflect the highest levels of multidimensional poverty. In Bihar, over one-third of the rural population remains multidimensionally poor due to a weak system, low educational attainment, and poor sanitation. The North-Eastern states, such as Assam, Meghalaya, and Arunachal Pradesh, exhibit moderate to high MPI levels, largely due to geographic isolation, inadequate infrastructure, and challenges in service delivery in tribal and hilly areas.

- *Region- and State-wise MPI Variations*

Eastern and North-Eastern states consistently show high MPI levels, primarily due to large tribal populations, geographic remoteness, and weak infrastructure. Southern states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu have outperformed others due to long-standing investments in human development, public service delivery, and social equity. Northern states like Uttar Pradesh continue to face significant challenges due to their scale, population pressures, and service delivery gaps. Western states like Rajasthan exhibit moderate MPI levels, with specific challenges in arid regions and rural education.

Table 5 Region and State -Wise Variations in MPI

State	MPI	Region	Remarks
Low MPI States			
Kerala	0.7%	Southern	Best performer; high literacy, healthcare, and public service delivery
Tamil Nadu	4.9%	Southern	Effective public health and education schemes (e.g., noon meals, PDS)
Punjab	5.6%	Northern	Agrarian wealth, good infrastructure, relatively high incomes
Moderate MPI States			
Rajasthan	16.1%	Western	Arid conditions, rural poverty, gender disparity

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Madhya Pradesh	20.6%	Central	High tribal population; access and outreach issues
Uttar Pradesh	22.9%	Northern	Dense population, poor education and health indicators
High MPI States			
Bihar	32.7%	Eastern	Worst performer; weak infrastructure, low state capacity
Jharkhand	28.8%	Eastern	Tribal poverty, low outreach
Meghalaya	~27%	North-Eastern	High tribal population with low service access
Assam	~23%	North-Eastern	Prone to floods, rural isolation, health poverty

Source: undp.org and NITI Aayog, 2019-21

Disparities are stark: Bihar's MPI (32.7%) is nearly 50 times higher than Kerala's (0.7%). This state-level breakdown highlights the uneven nature of poverty in India. Targeted regional planning, particularly in education, nutrition, and infrastructure is essential to bridging the multidimensional poverty gap and achieving inclusive development.

Table 5 presents the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) across regions and states of India, showing strong regional variations. Low MPI states have succeeded in delivering essential services such as education, healthcare, and sanitation. While Moderate MPI states are showing improvement but continue to struggle in rural or marginalized areas. High MPI regions face deep-rooted deprivation, especially among tribal populations, the rural poor, and women. Southern and some northern states benefit from robust welfare infrastructure, better governance, and higher Human Development Index (HDI) scores. In contrast, moderate MPI states are interior states and face systemic governance challenges and uneven development. Eastern and North-Eastern states exhibit structural poverty, largely linked to geographic vulnerabilities (e.g., floods, hilly terrain), historical neglect, and the marginalization of tribal and rural communities.

Table 6 Region-Wise Trend and Issues affect MPI

Region	Trend	Key Issues / Strengths
Southern India	Lowest poverty	Strong social welfare, literacy, public health
Northern India	Mixed; Punjab better than UP	Agriculture vs. population pressure
Eastern India	Highest poverty levels	Tribal deprivation, lack of basic services
Central India	Moderate to high poverty	Tribal and rural underdevelopment
Western India	Moderate poverty	Water scarcity, uneven development
North-Eastern India	High MPI in some states	Geographical isolation, tribal poverty

Multidimensional poverty in India is highly region-specific. The eastern region, along with parts of northern and central India, remains significantly poverty-stricken, while the southern and western regions have shown sustained success in reducing poverty. Table 6 outlines the contributing factors, highlighting how structural inequality, policy implementation, and regional development patterns contribute to the stark contrasts in multidimensional poverty across Indian states. To reduce these disparities, region-specific strategies, improved governance, and greater investments in human capital and infrastructure are essential.

➢ *Factors Influencing Variations in MPI*

- *Socio-Demographic Factors Influencing Variations in MPI in India*

Multidimensional poverty in India is not evenly distributed across the population. Socio-demographic characteristics such as caste, religion, gender, age, location, and household composition significantly influence the incidence and intensity of poverty. Understanding these factors is essential for designing inclusive and targeted poverty alleviation strategies.

✓ *Caste and Social Groups:*

Table 7 Cast/ Social Groups and MPI

Caste Group	Headcount Ratio (H)	Intensity of Poverty (A)	MPI Value (M_0)	Approx. MPI (%)	Observations
Scheduled Tribes (STs)	50.6%	48.6%	0.232	~23.2%	Highest multidimensional poverty rates; significant deprivation in health, education, and living standards
Scheduled Castes (SCs)	33.3%	47.3%	0.147	~14.7%	Historically disadvantaged; progress observed but still facing substantial poverty
Other Backward Classes (OBCs)	27.2%	46.5%	0.118	~11.8%	Lower poverty rates compared to SCs and STs; still considerable deprivation in rural areas

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General Category (Others)	15.6%	46.3%	0.066	~6.6%	Lowest MPI among all caste groups; better access to resources and opportunities

Source: National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4, 2015–16), Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2021, and Associated Studies.

Table 7 shows that Scheduled Tribes (STs) exhibit the highest levels of multidimensional poverty, with over 50% facing deprivations across health, education, and living standards. This reflects deep-rooted structural inequalities and limited access to essential services. Geographic isolation in tribal areas and social exclusion are also key barriers to development. While there have been improvements among Scheduled Castes (SCs), approximately one-third still remain multidimensionally poor. Historical disadvantages continue to impede their progress, so it is necessary for targeted interventions. Approximately 27% of OBCs experience multidimensional poverty, indicating that despite being relatively better off than SCs and STs, but there are significant disparities persist, especially in rural regions. General Category (Others) is the least affected group, with an MPI value of 0.066, reflecting the advantages of higher socio-economic status and better access to resources.

- ✓ Religion: Muslims and SC/ST Hindus face high levels of multidimensional poverty, largely due to large family sizes, low levels of education, limited income, and poor access to essential resources. They are disproportionately represented among the multidimensionally poor. Religious minorities living in urban slums also face limited access to public services.

Table 8 Religion Groups and MPI

Religious Group	MPI (%) (approx.)	Key Issues
Muslims	~31%	High poverty in education, sanitation, housing
Hindus	~20%	Largest population share; varies by caste
Christians	~12–15%	Varies by region; better outcomes in Kerala, NE
Sikhs, Jains	<5%	Very low MPI; strong education and wealth levels

Source: NITI Aayog's MPI Reports (2021–2023)**,** NFHS-5 (National Family Health Survey, 2019–21)**,** Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI)

Around one-third of Muslim households are multidimensionally poor—higher than any other religion. This elevated MPI is primarily linked to deficiencies in education, sanitation, and housing. Among the Hindu community, the MPI stands at approximately 20%, which reflects the community's large population size. However, there are significant intra-group variations, often driven by caste and differences in access to services. MPI among Christians is lower than Hindus and Muslims, though outcomes vary by region. Typically, it is better in Kerala and parts of the Northeast. Both Sikh and Jain communities typically register MPI levels below 5%, demonstrating strong performance in education, wealth, and overall living standards.

- ✓ Gender Inequality and Variations in MPI: Gender inequality perpetuates the poverty cycle with lower access to education, healthcare, and employment to women. They often suffer from "invisible" or uncounted poverty, particularly in patriarchal households. Socio-economic and identity-based inequalities are deeply intertwined with multidimensional poverty. STs, SCs, Muslims, and rural women face structural barriers that limit their ability to escape poverty. Intersectionality further enhances these challenges; for example, a tribal woman living in a rural area is likely to experience a higher level and greater depth of poverty due to overlapping disadvantages.

Table 9 Gender Inequality and Variations in MPI

Factor	Impact on Poverty
Female-headed households	Higher MPI, especially in rural areas
Women & girls	Often face deprivations in education and nutrition
Early marriage	Affects health and education of young women
Care responsibilities	Limit women's economic participation

Multidimensional poverty in India is not just about economic status — it is shaped by deep-rooted social structures. Effectively addressing poverty requires tackling the intersecting disadvantages faced by marginalized groups through targeted and inclusive development strategies. These socio-demographic disparities can be reduced through caste and community-specific interventions, such as targeted scholarships, nutrition drives in tribal areas, gender-sensitive schemes for promoting education, health, and financial inclusion for women. Inclusive urban policies enhance slum infrastructure and access to appropriate services. Social protection measures are required to the tailored needs of vulnerable elderly, children, and women-headed households.

- *Other Factors Influence the Regional Variations in MPI*

- ✓ Governance and Public Policy: States with efficient governance and welfare programs have succeeded in

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reducing multidimensional poverty. On the other hand, states with inefficient governance cannot get such success, which influences regional variations in the MPI.

- ✓ Education and Health Infrastructure: Improvement in access to schools and healthcare facilities significantly helped to reduce deprivation. However, there are remote and rural areas which has less Infrastructure facilities resulting in higher MPI values.
- ✓ Economic Opportunities: Industrialized and service-oriented states offer more employment, reducing income-related poverty.
- ✓ Geographical Challenges: Remote, tribal, and hilly regions face difficulties in service delivery, leading to higher poverty as compared to other states.
- ✓ Social Inequality: There are caste, gender, and religious marginalization that contribute to persistent poverty in many areas.

➢ *Government Policies of Poverty Reduction in India and challenges in policy implementation*

- *Government Policies of Poverty Reduction in India*

India has implemented a wide range of targeted government policies and programs aimed at alleviating multi-dimensional poverty by addressing deprivation in health, education, housing, sanitation, financial inclusion, nutrition, and employment. Over the past two decades, these interventions have had a measurable impact, as reflected in the decline in poverty indicators from surveys like NFHS and MPI reports.

- *Key Government Policies Contributing to MPI Reduction:*

- ✓ Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA): Provides 100 days of guaranteed wage employment to rural households which reduced income poverty and distress migration and helped in smooth consumption during lean agricultural seasons. This scheme has also empowered women and SC/ST households through job guarantees.
- ✓ Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY): PMAY Urban & Gramin scheme offers pucca housing for the economically weaker sections for improved standard of living in both rural and urban areas and contributed to reduction in MPI through the housing indicator.
- ✓ Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM): Eliminate open defecation and improve sanitation by improving sanitation access from ~48% in 2015 to >70% in 2021 which significantly reduces health-related deprivations, especially for women.
- ✓ Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY): This scheme provides health insurance coverage of ₹5 lakh per family for poor and vulnerable people. It has enhanced health security for ~50 crore people and reduced out-of-pocket expenditure and health shocks, which often push families into poverty.
- ✓ Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY): This scheme provides LPG connections to poor women, improving access to clean cooking fuel, reducing indoor air pollution, and easing the burden of cooking. It has significantly contributed to MPI improvement in the standard of living.
- ✓ Poshan Abhiyaan & Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS): This scheme addresses malnutrition and promotes maternal/child health. This scheme has had moderate success in improving nutrition, though stunting remains high (~35%). It has also created awareness and community-level action against child malnutrition.
- ✓ Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan: Aim of this scheme is providing universal access to school education. This scheme has improved school attendance and retention, especially among girls and helped reduce educational deprivation under MPI.
- ✓ PM Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY): Aim of this scheme is providing universal financial inclusion via no-frills bank accounts. Over 50 crore accounts were opened under this scheme, which has enabled Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) efficiency.

- *Challenges in Policy Implementation*

Government policies and programs have significantly contributed to poverty reduction in India, especially by improving access to basic services. The multidimensional poverty rate dropped by nearly 10 percentage points between 2015 and 2021, largely due to interventions in sanitation, housing, electricity, cooking fuel, health insurance, and banking. However, despite progress, there are some challenges which remains:

- ✓ Uneven implementation: Uneven implementation of government policies and programs is the main challenge. Poor states often lag behind due to governance and capacity issues.
- ✓ Leakages and exclusion errors: Incomplete coverage, especially among migrants, elderly people is a big challenge in poverty reduction.
- ✓ Gender and social bias: Women and marginalized communities are still marginalized.
- ✓ Urban poor often excluded: Many urban poor live in informal settlements without legal recognition. These urban poor often left out from government programs. They are root cause of urban poverty limiting the effectiveness of government policies and programs.
- ✓ Monitoring and accountability: Inconsistent data, weak local governance also affects the effectiveness of government policies and programs for poverty reduction.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REDUCING MULTI-DIMENSIONAL POVERTY

India has achieved a remarkable reduction in its MPI value, but to sustain and deepen this progress, policy implementation must be localized and inclusive. Programs should address structural social inequalities (e.g., caste, gender, tribal isolation). Continued investment in education, nutrition, and employment is essential to further reduce MPI. Persistence variations in multidimensional poverty underlines the need for:

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- Targeted Policy Interventions: Government should Implement caste-specific policies to address the unique challenges faced by each group.
- Resource Allocation: It is necessary to ensure equitable distribution of resources to bridge the gap between marginalized and privileged communities by government.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: It is necessary to conduct regular assessment of policies to measure their effectiveness and make necessary adjustments.
- Health & Nutrition: Government should scale up access to nutrition and healthcare of targeted population.
- Education: It is necessary to improve the quality of education and reduce dropouts specially girls and improve vocational skills of targeted group.
- Infrastructure: Government should increase infrastructure facilities in rural and remote areas and also accelerate sanitation, housing, fuel, electricity facilities.
- Economic Opportunities: Government should promote employment, MSMEs, financial inclusion.
- Social Inclusion: Government should target marginalized groups and empower women.
- Urban Poverty: Government should focus on slum improvement, migrant welfare and marginalized groups within high MPI regions, such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and minorities.

IV. CONCLUSION

India's success in reducing multidimensional poverty highlights the effectiveness of targeted policies and interventions. While this achievement is commendable, significant challenges remain, particularly in addressing regional disparities and ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities. Regional variations in multidimensional poverty in India reflects deep-rooted variations in development across states and districts. While southern and western states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra have made significant progress in reducing poverty through better education, healthcare, and infrastructure, states in the central and eastern regions—such as Bihar, Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh—continue to experience high levels of deprivation. India is on a path of steady development, but these regional variations in multidimensional poverty highlight the need for more inclusive and region-specific strategies that address the unique challenges of each area. A regionally balanced approach to poverty reduction, supported by strong governance and equitable resource allocation, is key to ensure that no one is left behind in India's growth story. Ultimately, reducing multidimensional poverty across all regions is essential for achieving inclusive and sustainable development in India.

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