

7. Global Multidimensional Poverty Index Report – Economy

Almost all poor people in South Asia exposed to one or more climate shocks. The 2025 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index report highlights that nearly 1.1 billion people globally, particularly in South Asia, face acute multidimensional poverty, with climate change acting as a “poverty multiplier.” India has made significant progress in poverty reduction and climate resilience through targeted social protection schemes, livelihood support, and climate-adaptive policies.

Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2025 Report

About the Index – The Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) is jointly released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI). It provides a comprehensive measurement of poverty, going beyond income-based metrics to capture how individuals experience deprivations in their daily lives. It covers three key dimensions of poverty, each containing specific indicators –

Dimension	Indicators
Health	Nutrition, Child Mortality
Education	Years of Schooling, School Attendance
Standard of Living	Cooking Fuel, Sanitation, Drinking Water, Electricity, Housing, Assets

A person is classified as multidimensionally poor if they are deprived in at least one-third of these weighted indicators.

Key Findings of the 2025 MPI Report

Global Poverty Snapshot – Around 1.1 billion people across 112 countries live in acute multidimensional poverty. Over half (584 million) of these are children under 18, highlighting intergenerational poverty persistence.

Poverty–Climate Overlap – 887 million poor individuals – nearly 80% of the total poor – are directly exposed to at least one major climate hazard. 651 million poor people face two or more hazards, while 309 million endure three or four hazards – creating multiple layers of vulnerability termed as a “triple or quadruple burden.”

Geographical Hotspots

The most vulnerable regions include South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, which together account for the majority of the world’s multidimensionally poor.

South Asia – 380 million poor people exposed to climate hazards.

Sub-Saharan Africa – 344 million poor people exposed.

Why South Asia is Particularly Vulnerable to Climate Shocks

1. High Exposure to Hazards – The region’s geography exposes it to intense heatwaves, severe floods, and worsening air pollution. Countries like Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan experience overlapping challenges of poverty and extreme climate risks.

2. Dependence on Climate-Sensitive Livelihoods – A large proportion of the poor depend on agriculture and informal labour, both highly sensitive to weather variations. A failed monsoon, heatwave, or flood can lead to immediate loss of income and food insecurity, worsening multidimensional poverty.

3. Limited Adaptive Capacity – Poor households lack savings, durable housing, insurance coverage, and social safety nets. These limitations reduce their capacity to recover from climate shocks, trapping them in a cycle of poverty and vulnerability.

How Climate Change Exacerbates Multidimensional Poverty

MPI Dimension	Impact of Climate Change
Health	Extreme weather affects food supply → malnutrition (Nutrition indicator). Floods and disease spread increase child mortality.
Education	Floods and displacement disrupt schooling → dropouts and loss of attendance.

Standard of Living	Disasters damage homes (Housing), contaminate water (Drinking Water), disrupt sanitation (Sanitation) and electricity supply, and destroy assets like livestock and tools.
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Hence, climate change acts as a “poverty multiplier”, worsening deprivations across all MPI indicators.

India’s Efforts to Combat Multidimensional Poverty and Build Climate Resilience

1. Poverty Reduction Achievements – 415 million people were lifted out of multidimensional poverty between 2005–06 and 2019–21 (UNDP). As per NITI Aayog (Jan 2024) – 248.2 million people escaped multidimensional poverty between 2013–14 and 2022–23. The poverty headcount ratio fell from 29.17% to 11.28%. India targets to reduce multidimensional poverty to below 1% and achieve SDG Target 1.2 (halving poverty) ahead of 2030.

2. Social Protection Schemes Addressing MPI Dimensions

Dimension	Major Schemes / Missions	Purpose
Health & Nutrition	Ayushman Bharat, Poshan Abhiyan	Universal health coverage and improved maternal/child nutrition
Living Standards	Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)	Housing, clean drinking water, and LPG access
Livelihood Security	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)	Provides employment and income stability to rural poor

3. Climate Action and Legal Framework

National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) – Comprises eight national missions focusing on sustainable development and climate-resilient agriculture. Aims to promote adaptation and mitigation measures in vulnerable sectors.

Judicial Recognition – The Supreme Court of India recognized the “right to be free from the adverse effects of climate change” as part of Fundamental Rights under –

- Article 21** – Right to Life
- Article 14** – Right to Equality

Conclusion

The 2025 MPI underscores that poverty and climate vulnerability are deeply interconnected. For South Asia, and particularly India, addressing multidimensional poverty requires climate-sensitive development planning, resilient livelihoods, and inclusive social protection. India’s policy push under the SDGs, NAPCC, and poverty alleviation schemes positions it as a leader in integrating climate action with human development.

Source – [https - //www.downtoearth.org.in/climate-change/almost-all-poor-people-in-south-asia-exposed-to-one-or-more-climate-shocks](https://www.downtoearth.org.in/climate-change/almost-all-poor-people-in-south-asia-exposed-to-one-or-more-climate-shocks)