

◆ What is Poverty?

📖 **Definition:** Poverty is a condition in which a person cannot meet basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, healthcare, and education.

India has the largest number of poor people in the world – nearly 270 million in 2011-12 lived in poverty (about 22% of the population).

◆ Two Real-Life Cases of Poverty

👤 **Ram Saran (Urban Poor):**

- Daily wage laborer in a flour mill near Ranchi
- Monthly income ~₹1,500
- Lives in a one-room hut, family of 6
- No money for children's education or healthcare
- Lives with constant shortage of food and clothes

👤 **Lakha Singh (Rural Poor):**

- Landless worker in a village near Meerut
- Earns in kind (wheat, dal) instead of money
- Lives in a kuchha hut, no access to medicines
- Entire family works for survival, no one went to school

📖 These examples show the multi-dimensional nature of poverty:

- Hunger and malnutrition
- Lack of shelter
- No schooling
- No medical care
- Helplessness

◆ Social Scientists' View of Poverty

They study poverty using social indicators like: ✓ Illiteracy

✓ Malnutrition

✓ Lack of access to healthcare

✓ Joblessness

✓ Drinking water & sanitation issues

📖 **Key Terms:**

◆ **Social Exclusion:**

Poor people are excluded from better-off sections of society and denied opportunities.
e.g. Caste-based discrimination.

◆ Vulnerability:

Some groups (SC, ST, women, disabled) are more likely to become poor when a crisis hits. They lack the assets and resources to recover.

◆ What Is Poverty Line?

 **Definition:** An imaginary line below which people are considered poor.

In India, it is based on minimum calorie intake + essential expenses.

- Rural: 2400 calories/day
- Urban: 2100 calories/day

2011-12 Data:

- Rural Poverty Line = ₹816/month
- Urban Poverty Line = ₹1000/month


A family of 5 needs ~₹4080 in rural or ₹5000 in urban areas to stay above the poverty line.


Surveys done by NSSO (National Sample Survey Organisation)


 Global Standard (World Bank):


\$1.90/day/person (PPP – Purchasing Power Parity)

◆ Poverty Trends in India

 1993-94 → 45% people were poor

 2011-12 → 22% people were poor

 Poor people reduced from 407 million → 270 million in this time

 Average annual poverty reduction (2004-12): ~2.2%

◆ Vulnerable Groups

Groups most prone to poverty:

Group	% Poor (2011–12)
Scheduled Tribes (ST)	43%
Urban Casual Laborers	34%
Rural Agricultural Laborers	34%
Scheduled Castes (SC)	29%

Inequality even within households:

Women, elderly, and girls often suffer more in poor families.

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◆ Inter-State Disparities

Highest Poverty (2011–12):

- Bihar (33.7%)
- Odisha (32.6%)
- Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh

Lowest Poverty:

- Kerala
- Punjab
- Haryana
- Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal


Factors for improvement:

- Kerala → Education & health
- West Bengal → Land reforms
- AP & TN → PDS (food distribution)
- Punjab/Haryana → Agricultural growth

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◆ Global Poverty Trends

- Global poverty declined from 36% (1990) → 10% (2015)
- South Asia: 34% (2005) → 15% (2014)
- China: 88% (1981) → 0.6% (2019)
- Sub-Saharan Africa: 51% (2005) → 40.2% (2018)
- Latin America: 10% (2005) → 4% (2018)

 India still has higher poverty compared to many countries due to different definitions.

◆ Causes of Poverty in India

1. 📉 **Historical Exploitation:**
 - British rule destroyed crafts & industries
2. ⚠️ **Low Economic Growth:**
 - Less jobs, less income
3. 🎯 **Population Growth:**
 - Higher family size → less income/person
4. 🚜 **Unequal Land Distribution:**
 - Land reforms not properly implemented
5. 💸 **Indebtedness:**
 - Poor borrow for farming, social events, healthcare — can't repay
6. 🏠 **Social customs:**
 - Spending on marriage, rituals despite poverty

◆ Anti-Poverty Measures by Government

📁 Two Major Strategies:

1. 📈 **Promote Economic Growth:**
 - Higher GDP → More jobs & income
 - Since 1980s, growth improved → poverty declined
2. 🎯 **Targeted Schemes:**

Scheme Name	Objective
MGNREGA (2005)	100 days rural wage work
PM Rozgar Yojana (1993)	Self-employment for educated unemployed
REGP (1995)	Rural jobs in small towns
SGSY (1999)	Self-help groups for poor
PM Gramodaya Yojana (2000)	Basic services (water, shelter, education)
AAY (2000)	Food grains for poorest families

📌 Challenges:

- Poor implementation

- Overlapping of schemes
- Benefits don't reach the needy due to corruption

📖 Need better targeting & monitoring

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◆ The Bigger Picture: Human Poverty

📖 Human Poverty = Not just lack of income, but:

- No education
- Poor health
- Lack of dignity
- No job security
- Discrimination (caste, gender)
- No access to rights

🧠 Eradicating income poverty is only the first step — we must ensure full human development.

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📊 Summary Table:

Key Point	Description
Poverty Line	Minimum income to meet basic needs
Trends in India	45% (1993) → 22% (2012)
Vulnerable Groups	ST, SC, casual laborers
Main Causes	History, population, inequality, debt
Govt. Strategies	Growth + Targeted schemes
Human Poverty Concept	Includes education, health, security, dignity