

Declining Poverty in India: An Analysis of Government-Led Alleviation and Development Efforts Since Economic Reforms

***Dr. S. R. Keshava, **Dr. Hanumantharayappa B. H**

* Senior Professor of Economics, Department of Economics, Bangalore University, Bangalore 560056.

**Faculty of Economics, Department of B.A (UG), Bangalore University, Bengaluru-56

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ABSTRACT

Poverty in India is not just a statistic—it is a lived experience etched into the everyday struggles of millions. This study is a sincere attempt to understand how the Government of India addresses this deep-rooted issue, particularly in the years following economic liberalisation. Drawing on secondary data from 2011-12 to 2022, the research explores the long-term trends in poverty reduction, with a special focus on the rural population and the marginalised.

Through this study, it is clear that the ranges of government-led policies and development programmes-backed by strong political will, community participation, and digital innovation-have transformed the lives of the poor. The findings are encouraging: poverty levels have declined drastically, extreme poverty (\$2.15/day) dropped from 16.2% in 2011-12 to just 2.35% in 2022-23, a reduction of nearly 86% in terms of proportion. Moderate poverty (\$3.00/day) saw a similar sharp decline, from 27.12% to 5.25%, a fall of over 80%. The absolute number of poor people fell from 205.9 million to 33.6 million (extreme poverty), and from 344.47 million to 75.2 million (moderate poverty). This shift represents more than economic change—it symbolises hope, empowerment, and growing social justice.

At the heart of the study is a personal conviction: that inclusive development is not just a policy goal but a moral imperative. The success of poverty alleviation lies not only in numbers but in restoring dignity, expanding opportunities, and bridging the gaps that divide our society. This paper reflects a journey of India's evolving development model and of my own efforts as a researcher committed to understanding and contributing to a more equitable future.

Keywords: *Evaluation; Pre-Reform Period; Post-Reform Period; Poverty Rate; People Living in Poverty; Poverty Alleviation Programmes.*

Introduction

India has emerged as one of the world's most dynamic and rapidly expanding major economies. Over the past decade, the country has made commendable progress in poverty reduction, largely driven by targeted inclusive development policies and a series of welfare-oriented programmes. The steady economic growth witnessed since the early 2010s has been closely linked with a significant decline in poverty levels. The economic liberalisation initiated in 1991 played a pivotal role in this transformation, accelerating the pace of growth and broadening the government's fiscal space to invest in social welfare.

Since attaining independence, poverty alleviation has remained a central concern for Indian policymakers. A consistent thrust has been placed on enhancing the socio-economic conditions of the population, especially the underprivileged. While the progress made so far is noteworthy, a considerable segment of the population still lives below the poverty line. Contemporary anti-poverty initiatives have therefore focused on improving social safety nets and ensuring access to essential services such as food, shelter, healthcare, education, and livelihood opportunities.

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These programmes emphasise employment generation, skills training, and the empowerment of marginalised groups, with the broader aim of fostering inclusive and sustainable development.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the trends in poverty rates, the number of people living below the poverty line, and those who have moved out of poverty in India during the post-economic reform period.
2. To assess the impact and effectiveness of key poverty alleviation programmes implemented since the economic reforms.
3. To explore the underlying factors contributing to the decline or persistence of poverty levels in India in the post-reform era.

Hypothesis

- The mean poverty rates are equal across all years ($\mu_1 = \mu_2 = \dots = \mu_8$).

Materials and Methods

The present study is based entirely on secondary data drawn from a range of credible and authoritative sources. These include the *Economic Survey* of India published by the Ministry of Finance, Government of India; recent reports by the World Bank (2025); publications of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO); and analytical reports issued by the NITI Aayog. The time frame considered for the analysis spans from 2011-12 to 2022-23. To study the trends in poverty, the exponential growth model has been employed. Data analysis and statistical estimations were carried out using Microsoft Excel and SPSS 21, ensuring both rigour and reliability in interpreting the long-term changes in poverty levels.

Results and Discussions

Extreme and Moderate Poverty Decline in India

The table presents a comparative picture of poverty in India for two time periods—2011–12 and 2022–23—using two widely accepted international poverty thresholds: \$2.15/day and \$3.00/day at purchasing power parity (PPP). The \$2.15/day figures are with the base year of 2017, and \$3 /day is with the base year of 2021, and these thresholds represent extreme poverty and moderate poverty, respectively, as defined by the World Bank.

Year	\$2.15/day (Extreme Poverty)	No. of People (in million)	\$3.00/day (Moderate Poverty)	No. of People (in million)
2011–12	16.2%	205.9 million	27.12%	344.47 million
2022–23	2.35%	33.6 million	5.25%	75.2 million

Source: World Bank

Extreme poverty (\$2.15/day) dropped from 16.2% in 2011–12 to just 2.35% in 2022–23, a reduction of nearly 86% in terms of proportion. Moderate poverty (\$3.00/day) saw a similar sharp decline, from 27.12% to 5.25%, a fall of over 80%. The absolute number of poor people fell from 205.9 million to 33.6 million (extreme poverty), and from 344.47 million to 75.2 million (moderate poverty). The reduction in poverty in India is attributed to the achievement of a combination of factors, including sustained economic growth, well-targeted welfare schemes, and improved access to essential services such as education, healthcare, housing, and digital infrastructure.

Rural and Urban Poverty in India based on International Poverty Lines (PPP 2017)

Poverty Line	2011-12		2022-23	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Extreme poverty(\$2.15/day)	18.41	10.7	10.7	1.1
Moderate Poverty Line(\$3.65/day)	69	43.5	28.1	17.2

Source: World Bank

Over the last decade, India has made remarkable strides in reducing poverty, and the numbers in the table tell a story of real progress—one that has directly touched the lives of millions of people. In 2011–12, nearly one in five rural

Indians (18.4%) lived in extreme poverty, surviving on less than \$2.15 a day. By 2022–23, this number had dropped to 10.7%. For urban residents, the fall is even more striking—from 10.7% to just 1.1%. This almost complete elimination of extreme poverty in cities is a testament to improved access to jobs, services, and welfare schemes.

But progress goes beyond the bare minimum. When we look at the moderate poverty line—\$3.65/day—we see even greater improvements, especially in rural India. In 2011–12, a staggering 69% of rural Indians lived below this threshold. A decade later, that number has more than halved to 28.1%. Urban poverty at this level also fell from 43.5% to 17.2%, reflecting overall improvements in quality of life—better housing, healthcare, education, and employment opportunities.

In the case of moderate poverty, the data also reveals the challenges. Rural India continues to carry a heavier burden of poverty, particularly at the moderate level. This indicates that while the country is lifting millions out of deprivation, the rural-urban gap persists in moderate poverty. The road ahead demands sustained investment in rural livelihoods, infrastructure, and social safety nets to ensure no one is left behind, and the Government's efforts in doing so are appreciable, and the rural-urban poverty gap will no longer exist.

Reduction of Poverty in India's Five Most Populous States

Five of India's most populous states—Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, West Bengal, and Madhya Pradesh—together accounted for nearly 65% of the country's extreme poor in 2011–12. Encouragingly, these same states contributed to two-thirds of the overall reduction in extreme poverty by 2022–23. However, they continue to house a significant share of the poor, accounting for 54% of the country's extreme poor and 51% of the multidimensionally poor as of recent data.

Understanding the Human Face of Poverty: A Multidimensional View

Poverty by Group	Poverty Rate (%)	Multidimensional Poverty Components	(% of Pop.)
Urban population	17.2	Daily consumption of less than US\$2.15 per person	2.3
Rural population	32.5	At least one school-aged child is not enrolled in school	N/A
Males	27.5	No adult has completed primary education	13.8
Females	28.8	No access to limited-standard drinking water	11.2
0 to 14 years old	36.2	No access to limited-standard sanitation	29.9
15 to 64 years old	25.7	No access to electricity	1.0
65 and older	23.8		
Without education (16+)	35.1		
Primary education (16+)	29.6		
Secondary education (16+)	24.9		
Tertiary/post-secondary education (16+)	14.9		

Source: World Bank

Note: The rates in the Poverty by Group table above are shown at the \$3.65 lower-middle income line. The data for the Poverty by Group table is derived from a 2022 Household Consumption Expenditure survey, and the data for the Multidimensional Poverty Components table is derived from a survey.

The table presents a multidimensional picture of poverty in India, offering insight not just into income deficits but into the human realities that underlie deprivation. It urges us to see poverty as more than a statistic—it is a lived experience that affects dignity, opportunity, and well-being. By disaggregating the data across region, gender, age, and education levels, the table reveals the varied and unequal ways in which poverty touches lives.

A striking contrast emerges between rural and urban populations. While 17.2% of urban dwellers live below the poverty line, this figure climbs sharply to 32.5% in rural areas. This disparity reflects the unequal distribution of

services, employment, healthcare, and infrastructure. Rural households are more likely to lack access to reliable roads, electricity, quality schools, and healthcare, deepening the cycle of poverty across generations. The economic vulnerability in villages often coincides with social isolation and limited access to safety nets.

The data also points to how gender and age further shape the experience of poverty. Poverty rates among women (28.8%) are slightly higher than those among men (27.5%), revealing the continued impact of gender inequality on access to resources, inheritance rights, and employment. Particularly concerning is the situation of children aged 0 to 14, with a staggering 36.2% of them living in poverty. These children often grow up in households where basic needs—like adequate food, sanitation, and education—are unmet, risking long-term damage to their development and future earning potential. Even among the elderly, poverty remains high at 23.8%, suggesting that ageing without social security or formal pensions leaves many vulnerable to neglect and hardship.

Education emerges as a critical factor in shaping poverty outcomes. Among adults aged 16 and above with no formal education, the poverty rate stands at 35.1%. In comparison, those with tertiary or post-secondary education have a significantly lower poverty rate of 14.9%. These sharp gradient highlights education as a powerful equaliser—yet access to quality schooling remains uneven, particularly in poorer and marginalised communities. For millions, limited education not only restricts income opportunities but also curtails the ability to access government schemes, health services, and information.

Multidimensional poverty indicators further illustrate the depth of deprivation. While only 2.3% live on less than US\$2.15 a day, other forms of deprivation are more widespread. For instance, 13.8% of the population lives in households where no adult has completed primary education, and 11.2% lack access to limited-standard drinking water. A particularly concerning figure is that nearly 29.9% of the population has no access to basic sanitation—conditions that are closely linked to public health outcomes, especially for women and children. Though only 1% lack electricity, quality and continuity of power supply, especially in rural regions, remain a concern.

Ultimately, these figures compel us to move beyond a narrow understanding of poverty. They remind us that poverty is not only about low consumption but about constrained choices, indignity, and unequal life chances. Whether it is a girl child in a remote village who cannot attend school, an elderly widow without a pension, or a family living without sanitation or clean water, each number in the table represents real lives and stories. Addressing poverty, therefore, requires more than just raising incomes—it demands inclusive growth, social protection, and a commitment to human dignity at every level of policy and governance.

Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis (H_0): The mean poverty rates are equal across all years ($\mu_1 = \mu_2 = \dots = \mu_8$).

Result of One-Way ANOVA test for the difference in years on Poverty Rate

	DF	SS	MS	F VALUE	P VALUE
Year	7	221	31.68	0.711	0.031
Residuals	485	18418	37.62		

From the ANOVA table:

- **F-value:** 0.711
- **p-value:** 0.031
- **Significance level (α):** 0.05

Since the p-value (0.031) is less than α (0.05), we reject the null hypothesis. In fact, the ANOVA shows that poverty rates have varied significantly across the years. This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in poverty rates among the years examined.

Poverty Alleviation Programmes in Pre- and Post-Reform Periods

Poverty alleviation efforts in India have evolved considerably over time, with varying degrees of success across different regions and phases of economic policy. The effectiveness of these programmes has been uneven—while urban and economically progressive states have seen significant improvements, several rural and backward regions continue to struggle with entrenched poverty. A comparative assessment of the pre- and post-reform periods offers

critical insights into how policy shifts, institutional frameworks, and socio-economic dynamics have influenced poverty outcomes over the decades.

Pre-Reform Period (1947–1990)

In the decades following independence, poverty alleviation did not receive focused economic attention during the initial phase of nation-building. During the 1950s and 1960s, more than half of India's population lived below the poverty line, and economic growth remained sluggish—averaging around 3–4% annually, often described as the "Hindu rate of growth." Early attempts to reduce poverty included measures such as the Public Distribution System (PDS), land reforms, and rural employment schemes. However, the impact of these efforts remained limited due to weak implementation and the absence of a clear targeting mechanism.

It was only in the late 1970s and 1980s that poverty-specific programmes began to take shape. Flagship schemes like the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) were launched to generate employment and enhance rural livelihoods. Despite these initiatives, the lack of accurate identification of the poor and weak institutional mechanisms often hinders the intended impact.

Post-Reform Period (1991 Onwards)

The introduction of economic reforms in 1991 marked a turning point in India's development trajectory. The Liberalisation, Privatisation, and Globalisation (LPG) framework led to a structural transformation of the economy, promoting higher growth, increased investments, and integration with global markets. These changes significantly influenced the nature and implementation of poverty alleviation programmes. In the post-reform period, the poverty rate witnessed a notable decline—from around 45% in 1993–94 to approximately 22% by 2011–12, based on the Tendulkar Committee methodology. This reduction was supported by growth-oriented policies, increased fiscal capacity, and targeted welfare schemes such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), National Food Security Act, and various social protection measures aimed at vulnerable groups.

Positive Impact of Post-Reform Poverty Alleviation Programmes in India

Since the economic reforms of 1991, India has launched a series of well-targeted welfare and development programmes to address the multidimensional nature of poverty. These initiatives have sought to empower the poor by ensuring food security, creating employment opportunities, promoting financial inclusion, improving access to basic services, and fostering self-reliance. The cumulative impact of these programmes has contributed meaningfully to the steady decline in poverty and inequality, particularly among rural and vulnerable populations.

Employment and Livelihood Generation

Post-1991 economic reforms in India ushered in a range of poverty alleviation measures focusing on generating employment and supporting sustainable livelihoods. A landmark initiative was the MGNREGA enacted in 2005, which provides legal assurance of 100 days of wage employment annually to rural households willing to undertake unskilled manual work. This programme significantly improved rural purchasing power, helped reduce migration, and contributed to the development of rural infrastructure. Earlier, in 1999, the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) was introduced to support self-employment through the formation of Self-Help Groups (SHGs), a model that was later institutionalised in the form of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) in 2011. DAY-NRLM emphasised the social and economic empowerment of rural women by providing financial access, skills, and entrepreneurship support. In urban areas, the National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM), launched in 2013, extended similar support to the urban poor through skill development, credit facilitation, and employment generation. The Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), launched in 2008, offered credit-linked subsidies for micro-enterprises, promoting self-employment and entrepreneurship among artisans and youth. Additionally, the Solar Charkha Mission (2018) created decentralised employment opportunities in rural areas through solar-powered khadi clusters.

Food and Nutritional Security

Food security has been a critical domain of poverty reduction strategy. The restructuring of the Public Distribution System (PDS) into the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) in 1997 marked a shift towards directing subsidized food grains to Below Poverty Line (BPL) households. The system was further strengthened by the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) in 2000, which offered food grains at highly subsidized prices to the poorest of the

poor. The introduction of the National Food Security Act (NFSA) in 2013 institutionalized food entitlements for nearly two-thirds of the population; thereby ensuring protection against hunger and price shocks. To support destitute senior citizens, the Annapurna Yojana (2000) provided 10 kg of free food grains monthly. The Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS), which expanded significantly after 2001 following a Supreme Court directive, has enhanced the nutritional status of children and incentivized school attendance. In 2018, the Poshan Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission) was launched to address malnutrition among children, adolescents, and women through a multi-sectoral approach, reinforcing the cycle of health and productivity essential for poverty eradication.

Housing and Basic Services

Improving living conditions through better housing, infrastructure, and connectivity has remained a key pillar in India's efforts to reduce poverty. Launched in 2015, the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-G) aims to provide every rural household with a permanent home and basic amenities under the vision of "Housing for All." So far, States and Union Territories have been allocated a target of 4.12 crore houses, with 3.84 crore beneficiaries sanctioned and 2.81 crore homes already completed—bringing security, dignity, and stability to countless families.

The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), initiated in 2000, has greatly improved rural mobility by connecting remote villages with all-weather roads. This has expanded access to essential services like healthcare, education, and local markets, thereby improving everyday life and economic prospects in rural areas. Supporting these efforts, the Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana (PMGY), introduced in 2000–01, has taken a broader approach by strengthening rural infrastructure across multiple sectors—health, housing, water, and roads—making a meaningful impact on the quality of life in rural India.

The Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), launched in August 2019, continues to change lives by ensuring access to safe drinking water through tap connections. With 80% of rural households now covered, the mission has been extended under the Union Budget 2025–26 to reach the remaining 20% by 2028—moving closer to the goal of assured water for every home.

Health and Social Protection

Access to affordable healthcare and social protection is crucial for preventing poverty traps. The Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY), launched in 2018 under the Ayushman Bharat umbrella, is the world's largest health assurance scheme, providing ₹5 lakh per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation for over 10 crore vulnerable families. The scheme has helped mitigate catastrophic health expenditures, a major cause of poverty. The National Maternity Benefit Scheme, revised in 2016, supports pregnant women with a cash transfer of ₹6000, especially aiding those in remote and underserved regions. Additionally, low-cost insurance schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (both launched in 2015) offer life and accident insurance to economically vulnerable sections, improving household financial resilience.

Financial Inclusion and Empowerment

The government's push to include the financially excluded into the formal banking system made a significant leap with the launch of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) in 2014. As of 7th March 2025, over 55.02 crore zero-balance bank accounts have been opened under this scheme, with 36.63 crore accounts in rural and urban areas. This wide banking coverage has laid a robust foundation for Direct Benefit Transfers (DBTs), enabling pensions, scholarships, and subsidies to be credited directly into beneficiaries' accounts, minimising leakages and improving transparency in welfare delivery.

According to a study by the Blue Kraft Digital Foundation, the DBT system saved the government over ₹3.48 lakh crore between 2015 and March 2023 by plugging leakages. The share of subsidy expenditure has also come down—from 16% to 9% of the total government expenditure—reflecting better targeting and efficiency. With the momentum continuing, total transfers through DBT are estimated to cross ₹44 lakh crore by May 2025. Complementing these financial inclusion efforts, the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), launched in 2015, has played a crucial role in empowering youth—especially school dropouts and those from marginalised communities—by providing market-relevant skill training, helping them improve their employability and move towards self-reliance.

Targeted Support for the Poor and Informal Workers

The government has designed several targeted schemes for informal workers and deprived groups. The Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), launched in 2016, has provided over 9 crore LPG connections to women from BPL households, drastically reducing indoor air pollution and improving women's health and dignity. The Pradhan Mantri

Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan (PM-SYM), introduced in 2019, is a contributory pension scheme for unorganised sector workers, ensuring a monthly pension of ₹3000 after the age of 60. The PM SVANidhi scheme was launched in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, extended micro-credit to urban street vendors, enabling them to restart their businesses and sustain their livelihoods during the economic downturn.

Integrated Rural Development and Model Village Promotion

Even before the formal introduction of MGNREGA, earlier schemes such as the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) and Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) provided foundational models for rural self-employment and asset creation. These programmes helped rural households to undertake income-generating activities based on their local resources and skills. The National Food for Work Programme (2004) and Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) aimed to provide supplementary wage employment and strengthen food security in backward districts. In 2014, the Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) encouraged Members of Parliament to adopt and holistically develop villages through the convergence of existing schemes, focusing on both physical infrastructure and social development outcomes such as education, sanitation, and social harmony.

Key Reasons for the Decline of Poverty in India (Post-2014)

Government Intervention through Policies and Programmes: The remarkable reduction in poverty in India between 2011–12 and 2022–23 is the outcome of a convergence of multiple economic, social, and governance initiatives.

Expanding Financial Inclusion through Jan Dhan Yojana: One of the most transformative factors has been the scale and depth of financial inclusion, largely driven by the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY). According to the World Bank's Global Findex 2025 Report, the proportion of Indian adults with access to financial accounts rose dramatically from just 35% in 2011 to 77.5% in 2021, reaching an impressive 89% by 2024. This near-universal coverage has laid the foundation for delivering welfare efficiently and empowering the poor economically.

Digital Payment Revolution: Alongside account ownership, India's digital payments ecosystem has rapidly evolved. Platforms such as the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), Aadhaar-enabled Payment System (AePS), and various mobile wallets have significantly altered how financial transactions are conducted across rural and low-income regions. These tools have enabled faster, secure, and traceable transactions, reducing dependence on cash and eliminating many intermediaries, which in turn has curtailed opportunities for corruption. The digital infrastructure has particularly supported informal workers, self-help groups, and microenterprises by improving access to financial services and facilitating integration with the formal economy.

JAM and DBT: The implementation of the JAM trinity—Jan Dhan accounts, Aadhaar numbers, and mobile connectivity—has been a game changer in public service delivery. The Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system, built on this framework, has ensured that welfare transfers reach the intended beneficiaries without leakages. A study by the BlueKraft Digital Foundation underscores this fiscal transformation: during the pre-DBT period (2009–2013), subsidies accounted for 16% of total government expenditure, approximately ₹2.1 lakh crore annually, much of which was plagued by inefficiencies. Post-2014, the introduction of DBT not only reduced this burden to 9% of total expenditure by 2023–24 but simultaneously expanded the beneficiary base from 11 crore to 176 crore individuals, representing a 16-fold increase in coverage without a proportionate increase in spending.

Food Security and PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana: Food security, a critical buffer against poverty, was reinforced during and after the COVID-19 pandemic through robust interventions. The Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package (PMGKP), launched in March 2020, ensured that vulnerable households received essential support. Under the PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PM-GKAY), over 81 crore beneficiaries were provided with 5 kg of food grains per person per month, free of cost. The continuation of this programme until 2029, as declared in January 2024, with a financial outlay of ₹11.80 lakh crore, reflects the government's long-term commitment to ensuring food security. This massive public provision has played a crucial role in insulating poor households from economic shocks.

Effective Implementation and Grassroots Coordination: Effective implementation mechanisms have also played a pivotal role. Improved coordination between central ministries, state agencies, local self-governments, and digital platforms has allowed for better outreach and delivery of services. Awareness campaigns and real-time grievance redressal have helped enhance the uptake and impact of welfare schemes. This has not only reduced extreme deprivation but also generated employment and enhanced social inclusion at the grassroots level.

High and Inclusive Economic Growth: India maintained robust GDP growth, averaging over 6% in the decade post-2010, which contributed to higher per capita income. Growth in non-agricultural sectors like construction, services, and manufacturing expanded low-skilled employment opportunities.

Collectively, these efforts—rooted in inclusive growth, technological innovation, targeted welfare delivery, and robust institutional mechanisms—explain the sharp decline in both extreme and moderate poverty. The proportion of people living below the \$2.15/day threshold fell from 16.2% (205.9 million) in 2011–12 to just 2.35% (33.6 million) by 2022–23. Similarly, under the \$3.00/day line, the percentage declined from 27.12% (344.47 million) to 5.25% (75.2 million). These figures underscore a decade of steady and impactful progress in India's fight against poverty.

Conclusion

India's journey from widespread poverty to remarkable progress in human development is both inspiring and instructive. This study has traced that path through a careful analysis of data, policy evolution, and the real-world impact of government-led initiatives, particularly in the post-reform era. Over the post-reform period, India's poverty alleviation strategy has shifted from a welfare-centric to a rights-based, inclusive development approach. With greater emphasis on skill-building, financial inclusion, rural infrastructure, women's empowerment, and health protection, these programmes have not only addressed the symptoms of poverty but also tackled its root causes. The cumulative impact of these initiatives is reflected in the sharp reduction in poverty levels, improved human development indicators, and enhanced dignity of life for millions across the country.

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