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MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY IN INDIA

This article covers 'Daily Current Affairs' and the topic details of "Multidimensional Poverty in India''. This topic is relevant in the "Social Issues and Governance " section of the UPSC CSE exam.

UPSC Mains GS1 and GS2 Syllabus : Social Empowerment and issues, issues relating to poverty and hunger

Why in the News?

The NITI Aayog has produced a Discussion Paper titled "Multidimensional Poverty in India since 2005-06," which states that 24.82 crore individuals have escaped Multidimensional Poverty over the last nine years. To further understand long-term poverty patterns, the discussion paper draws on data from National Family Health Surveys (NFHS) conducted in 2005-06, 2015-16, and 2019-21.

Key highlights of the report

- **Substantial Drop in Multidimensional Poverty:** India's multidimensional poverty has decreased significantly, from 29.17% in 2013-14 to 11.28% in 2022-23, a 17.89% point decline. Approximately 24.82 crore people have left multidimensional poverty over the last nine years (2013-14 to 2022-23).
- **State-wise Decline:** Uttar Pradesh experienced the greatest drop, with 5.94 crore people leaving multidimensional poverty, followed by Bihar (3.77 crore), Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan.
- **Successful Achievement of SDG Objectives**:Target 1.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) is expected to be accomplished by India well before 2030. The target 1.2 targets "at least by half the proportion of men, women, and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions."
- All **12 MPI indicators** have improved significantly, demonstrating development in the Health, Education, and Standard of Living dimensions.
- **Level of Deprivation**:
1. Compared to 2005–06 and 2013–14, the **Severity of Deprivation (SoD)** decreased at a marginally slower rate between 2015–16 and 2019–21. Deprivations that the typical multidimensionally poor individual experiences are measured by SoD.
2. In addition, because fewer years had passed since 2015–16, the decline in the proportion of MPI poor people in the overall population was faster than it had been during the previous ten years. The percentage of MPI poor people in India's overall population in 2005–06 was 55.34%.
- **A few notable initiatives which the report highlights**
1. Deprivation has dramatically decreased as a result of initiatives like **Poshan Abhiyan** and **Anaemia Mukt Bharat**, both of which have greatly improved access to healthcare facilities.

2. Under the **National Food Security Act**, the Targeted Public Distribution System, which is one of the biggest food security programmes in the world, serves **81.35 crore beneficiaries** by supplying food grains to both urban and rural areas.

Multidimensional Poverty

- A poor individual may have several disadvantages at once, such as poor health or malnourishment, a lack of power or clean water, low-quality employment, or insufficient education. To fully grasp the actual nature of poverty, only one factor—such as income is not enough to capture the true reality of poverty.
- Multidimensional poverty is defined as having income or consumption below the $2.15 worldwide poverty level (as defined by the World Bank) in addition to deprivations in education and access to basic infrastructure. The World Bank sets the daily purchasing power parity (PPP) threshold for the international poverty line at USD 2.15.
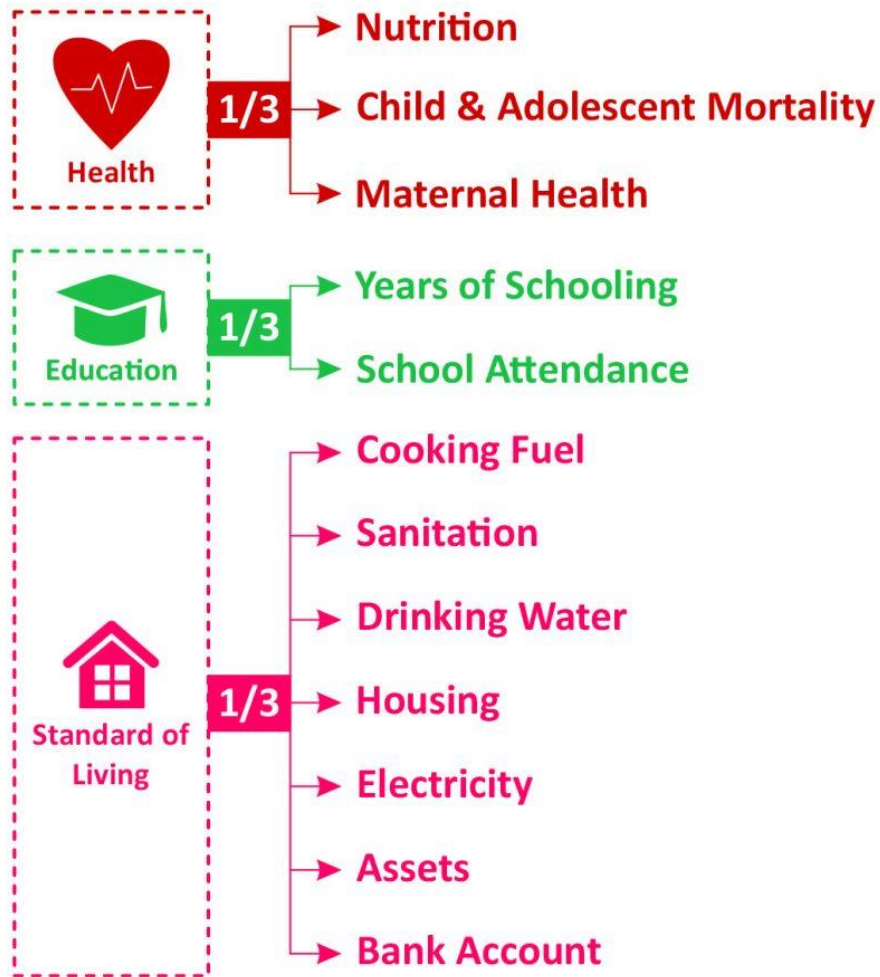
What is the National Multidimensional Poverty Index?

- Since 2010, the United Nations Development Programme (**UNDP**) has incorporated MPI into its flagship Human Development Report. In this regard, the first edition of the national Multidimensional Poverty Index for India was released in **2021** by NITI Aayog.
- **Goal**: Since a nation's national MPI statistic is customised to fit its priorities, each nation selects its own set of dimensions, indicators, weights, and cutoffs based on its own goals and circumstances.
- The headcount ratio and intensity of multidimensional poverty at the national, state/UT, and local levels are thoroughly examined in this research. The **National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-4** reference period for 2015–16 served as the basis for the first report.

MPI Parameters & Methodology

- The **solid Alkire and Foster (AF) technique** is used in MPI's worldwide methodology, which defines people as poor based on widely accepted criteria intended to assess acute poverty and also provides a complementary viewpoint to traditional monetary poverty measures.
- However, the **National MPI** covers **12 indicators** while global MPI covers **10** indicators.Nutrition, maternal health, child and adolescent mortality, years of education, electricity, school attendance, assets, fuel for cooking, cleanliness, drinking water, housing, and bank accounts are a few of these.

Indicators and their weights

Health — 1/3
- → Nutrition
- → Child & Adolescent Mortality
- → Maternal Health

Education — 1/3
- → Years of Schooling
- → School Attendance

Standard of Living — 1/3
- → Cooking Fuel
- → Sanitation
- → Drinking Water
- → Housing
- → Electricity
- → Assets
- → Bank Account

Prelims practice questions

Q1) What is Multidimensional Poverty?

1. a) A concept that solely focuses on economic well-being
2. b) A measure that considers various dimensions of poverty beyond income
3. c) A term used to describe poverty in only one specific region
4. d) An approach that excludes education and health from poverty assessment

Answer: b

Q2) Which of the following is covered by the Multi-dimensional Poverty Index developed by Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative

1)Lack of access to resources, services, health care, and education at the household level
2)Parity in purchasing power at the national level
3)The size of the national budget deficit and GDP growth rate

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: a

Mains practice question

Q1) Discuss the concept of multidimensional poverty and how it differs from traditional measures of poverty.
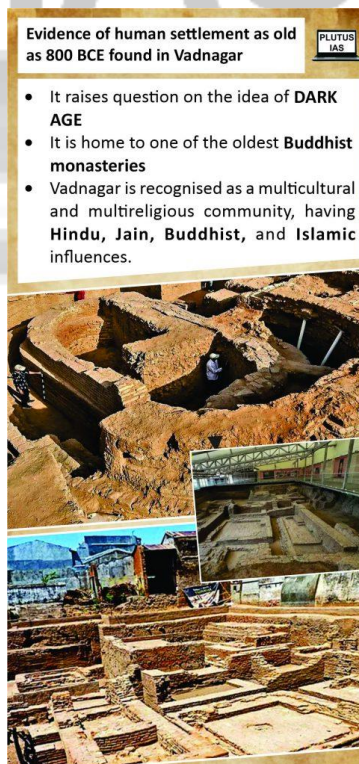**Q2) Explore the interlinkages between multidimensional poverty and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). How can addressing multidimensional poverty contribute to achieving the broader goals of sustainable development?**

OLDEST LIVING CITY OF INDIA

This article covers 'Daily Current Affairs' and the topic details of "Vadnagar- the oldest living city of India''. This topic is relevant in the "Indian culture " section of the UPSC CSE exam

Why in the News?
Evidence of cultural continuity in Vadnagar, Gujarat, even after the fall of the Harappans has been discovered by a joint study of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and Indian Institute of Technology (Kharagpur). The research disproves the idea of a "Dark Age " by showing that Vadnagar's culture persisted even after the Harappan civilization fell.

Evidence of human settlement as old as 800 BCE found in Vadnagar

- It raises question on the idea of **DARK AGE**
- It is home to one of the oldest **Buddhist monasteries**
- Vadnagar is recognised as a multicultural and multireligious community, having **Hindu, Jain, Buddhist,** and **Islamic** influences.

Important findings of the Vadnagar Excavation

- **Age of Settlement**: Evidence from the study points to a human settlement at Vadnagar that may have existed as early as 800 BCE. This dates the town to the oligarchic republic or late Vedic/pre-Buddhist Mahajanapadas period.
- **Settlement Characterised by Pluralism and Multireligion**: Vadnagar is characterised as a multicultural settlement with influences from Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, and Islam.
- **Seven cultural phases (periods) were discovered during the excavation**: the Mauryan, the Indo-Greek, the Indo-Scythian, the Hindu-Solankis, the Sultanate-Mughal, and the Gaekwad-British colonial administration.
- **Climate Influence:** It is hypothesised that extreme climate variations, such as variations in rainfall or droughts, are what caused the rise and fall of several kingdoms during a 3,000-year period and the repeated invasions by warriors from Central Asia.
- **Radiocarbon Dates**: The idea of a **Dark Age** is called into question by unpublished radiocarbon dates that point to a settlement that may have existed as early as 1400 BCE. In Indian history, the "Dark Age" is the time between the fall of the Indus Valley Civilization and the rise of the Iron Age with cities such as Gandhar, Koshal, and Avanti. If accurate, it suggests that India's culture has been stable for the past 5500 years.
- **Buddhist Monastery**: One of the major finds is that Vadnagar is home to one of the oldest Buddhist monasteries, which contributes to the settlement's historical and cultural diversity.
- **Archaeological Relics**: During the excavation, a number of archaeological objects were found, including pottery, copper, gold, silver, and iron objects. The discoveries also contain coin moulds and bangles with elaborate designs from the Indo-Greek era.

About Vadnagar

- **Geography and Location:** Gujarat, India's Mehsana district has the town of Vadnagar.Located around 107 kilometres northwest of Ahmedabad, the state capital, Vadnagar lies in the northern region of Gujarat.Its stunning location is enhanced by the surrounding lush flora and its location on the banks of the Shedhi River.
- **Cultural Legacy**:
1. **Hatshepsut Temple**: Located near Vadnagar, this ancient temple is thought to have been constructed in the Gupta era. The temple honours the Egyptian queen Hatshepsut and showcases the variety of cultures present in the town.
2. **Hatkeswar Mahadev Temple**: One of Vadnagar's most well-known religious sites, this temple honours Lord Shiva. Both tourists and devotees are drawn to the architecture and the religious celebrations.
3. **Tana Riri Samadhi**: Known for their contributions to classical music, the holy brothers Tana and Riri are honoured in this memorial. It is a significant Vadnagar cultural landmark.
- **Wonders of Architecture**:
1. **Toran**: Vadnagar is home to an impressively constructed historic toran, or beautiful arch. Traditional arches known as torans are frequently connected to cultural and religious importance.
2. **Sharmishtha Lake**: Sharmishtha Lake is a prominent body of water in Vadnagar that is encircled by ghats and temples. It enhances the town's visual charm.
3. **Kirti Toran**: Originally serving as the entryway of a Buddhist monastery, Kirti Toran is an archway from antiquity. It displays the impact of Buddhism on the area.

Archaeological Survey of India

- The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), established in 1861, is a leading organization responsible for archaeological research and cultural heritage conservation in India.
- Under the Ministry of Culture, ASI conducts extensive archaeological explorations, focusing on ancient sites, artifacts, and monuments. It also plays a crucial role in identifying and nominating Indian sites for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List, such as the Taj Mahal, Qutub Minar, and Ajanta Caves.
- ASI manages numerous archaeological museums, providing insights into India's cultural heritage. It conducts epigraphical studies, deciphering and documenting inscriptions on ancient monuments, to understand historical, cultural, and linguistic aspects.
- ASI also promotes public awareness and appreciation of India's archaeological heritage through exhibitions, lectures, and outreach activities.
- It implements legislation and regulations to protect archaeological sites and prevent illegal excavations.

Conclusion

The study's findings not only change the historical story of Vadnagar, but also add significantly to our knowledge of India's ancient cultural continuity, challenging traditionally held beliefs of a Dark Age. The archaeological discoveries and extensive research presented in the study highlight the significance of Vadnagar in unravelling the complexity of India's long and diverse past.

Prelims practice questions

Q1) Which architectural style is prominently featured in the Sun Temple at Modhera in Gujarat?
1. a) Mughal
2. b) Indo-Aryan
3. c) Dravidian
4. d) Persian

Answer: b

Q2) What is the cultural significance of Vadnagar, a town in Gujarat, as disclosed by the recent archaeological discoveries?
1. a) It is the birthplace of a notable freedom fighter.
2. b) India's oldest surviving city, with evidence going back to 800 BCE
3. c) It is the location of the first Buddhist Council in ancient India.
4. d) Location of the largest mediaeval fortification in India.
 Answer: B.

Mains practice question

Q1) Analyze the impact of ASI's archaeological excavations on our understanding of India's past. How have these excavations contributed to the reconstruction of historical narratives and cultural practices?

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