



## International Day for the Eradication of Poverty 2020

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### Why in News

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Every year **17<sup>th</sup> October** is observed as International Day for the eradication of Poverty.

- Its observance started in **1992** with the adoption of **UN resolution**.
- The **theme** for the year 2020 is "**Acting Together to Achieve Social and Environmental Justice for All**"

### Key Points

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- **Poverty Trends:** More than 90% countries have reported a **dip in per capita income** because of **Covid-19** and the ensuing economic disruptions.
  - **More than 115 million new poor** have been added to the world, and their spread is universal, from the rich Europe to the already poor Asia and from rural to urban areas.
  - According to the latest "**Poverty and Shared Prosperity Report**" by the world bank, the Covid-19 pandemic is estimated to push an additional 88 million to **115 million** people into extreme poverty this year, with the total rising to as many as **150 million by 2021**.
- **Beyond Income Poverty: India and Nigeria** are two countries that host the world's largest number of poor. Here, the poor live in **very ecologically fragile areas**. This makes poverty **not alone an income related aspect as economists and politicians consider**.

- **The Ecology of Poverty:**

- **In India**, the **poorest regions** are invariably the **forested areas** of the country in states like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh.  
Some **275 million people** in India depend on forest for subsistence. In the country's poorest regions, forests provide up to **30% of their total income**. This is more than agriculture and other sources of income.
- At the global level, just **five countries—India, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo—** account for **half of the extreme poor** in the world. Paradoxically, the above five countries, barring Congo, are also witnessing rapid economic growth.
- Various estimates say **the natural capital accounts for 9% of wealth globally**, but it accounts for **47% of the wealth in low income countries**. This shows the **dependence of people on natural resources** in developing and poor countries.

- **Poverty and Forest Dependence:**

- A **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** study shows that more than a billion people are forest-dependent, and most of them are below the poverty line. Most of them are in **Africa and Asia**.

- **The Geography of Poverty:** The more the reliance on ecology/nature for survival, higher is the probability to be poor due to modern urban development.  
**Regional Shift:** In **1990**, half of the world's poor lived in **East Asia and the Pacific**. At present, **sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia** host over **85%** of the poor in the world. Further, **26 of the world's 27 poorest** countries are in sub-Saharan Africa.

- In these regions, three-fourths of the total poor live in **rural areas**.

- These places have a **highly degraded ecology** (due to increasing exploitation of natural resources for development). Most of the poor depend on natural resources like land, forests and livestock for survival. So, for them, the economy is all about ecology. Degradation of the ecology, thus, **leads to poverty**.

- **Ecology and Entitlement:** According to the **International Union of Forest Research Organizations**, forestry contributes at least **\$539 billion** directly to the world Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
  - **Development** has come with a heavy cost to the ecology. For instance, the latest **the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) global assessment** reported a decline in nature’s contributions to people **since 1970**.
 

It clearly said that “extraction of provisioning services has increased, while provision of regulating and maintenance services has declined”.
  - According to a study by **the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** (covering 140 countries), the globally produced capital per head doubled and human capital per head increased by about 13%, but the **value of the stock of natural capital per head declined by nearly 40%** in 1992-2014.
  - It means those who depend on the environment witnessed **a decline in their assets thus triggering poverty**.

## Way Forward

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- The importance of ecology to overall world development including poverty eradication can be gauged from the fact that **86 out of 169 Sustainable Development Goals targets directly or indirectly seek to reduce environmental damage** or emphasize the critical role of **natural resources and ecosystem services**.
- The deadline of “eradicating poverty” in all forms is just 10 years away (as per the SDG 2030 target). To achieve this goal itself makes “social and environmental” justice as the key to our poverty eradication plans and programmes.
- There are various reasons for environmental degradation that ultimately trigger poverty among the nature-dependent people. Climate change is the latest major factor.
- We need to focus on the ecological dimension of poverty also. When income comes from ecology, access to it becomes the sole way to eradicate poverty. Both access and entitlement for nature dependent people remains a key focus for poverty eradication.

**Source: DTE**