

**UPSC Syllabus Topic : GS paper2- Governance-mechanisms, laws, institutions and bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.**

**Flaws in the Reduction of Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) under the NDA Administration**

The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) is a measure that goes beyond traditional income-based approaches to assess poverty. Developed by Niti Aayog in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and modelled on the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index, it considers three key dimensions: health, education, and standard of living. The index aims to capture the various aspects of poverty that extend beyond monetary considerations.

**However, there are several issues associated with the MPI:**

1. **Simplified Approach to Poverty Measurement:** One criticism is that the MPI uses uniform weights for its three components—health, education, and standard of living. This oversimplification may not adequately represent the complexity of poverty, as scholars like Amartya Sen argue for a broader perspective that considers both capabilities and functioning.
2. **Questionable Data Sources:** The reliance on data from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 4 and 5 has been criticised. Instances where NFHS data contradicted official claims, such as the case of open defecation, raised concerns about the reliability of the data used for MPI calculations.
3. **State-Level Variations Ignored:** While the MPI claims a reduction in poverty at the national level, specific state-level data, such as in Uttar Pradesh, contradicts this assertion. The failure to account for significant regional variations in poverty raises questions about the accuracy of the MPI's assessment.
4. **Discrepancy with Pandemic Impact:** The MPI's indication of a reduction in poverty between 2015-16 and 2019-21 appears inconsistent with the economic challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The significant job losses and healthcare issues during the pandemic seem at odds with the reported decrease in poverty.
5. **Inconsistency with Important Covariates:** The author suggests that covariates like per capita state income, urban population share, criminality among State MPs, and health and education expenditure play a significant role in influencing poverty levels. The MPI's findings on poverty reduction are questioned for being highly exaggerated when compared against trends in these covariates.

The way forward for improving poverty measurement through MPI includes integrating detailed surveys, such as the 75th Round of the National Sample Survey (NSS), with NFHS data. Additionally, a more nuanced approach to weighting and consideration of broader economic indicators are recommended. Accounting for political influences on resource allocation is also suggested to provide a more comprehensive and accurate assessment of poverty.

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**Recent Findings in the NCRB Report on Crimes Against Women**

The latest NCRB report reveals a concerning trend in crimes against women, indicating a 4% year-on-year increase in 2022. This translates to approximately 51 FIRs filed every hour.

**Crimes at Home:** A significant portion of crimes against women stems from domestic settings, with cruelty by husbands or their relatives leading in 31.4% of cases. This highlights the pressing need to strengthen anti-dowry laws and underscores a societal view of women as commodities.

**Assault and Rape:** Nearly 26% of crimes against women involve assault and rape, reflecting a distressing reality.

**Higher Crime Rates in Industrialised States:** States with higher levels of industrialisation, including Maharashtra and Rajasthan, exhibit the highest crime rates against women. Delhi surpasses the national average, recording the highest rate of such crimes.

**Underreporting:** It is important to note that the crime statistics may significantly underestimate the actual prevalence, capturing only reported incidents.

**Factors Contributing to Underreporting:**

1. **Social Harassment:** Women often fear social stigma, victim-blaming, or judgment when reporting crimes.
2. **Personal Danger:** Reporting crimes may expose women to the risk of retaliation from the perpetrator or associated individuals.
3. **Indifference of Authorities:** Previous instances of authorities not taking complaints seriously or providing inadequate support discourage victims from reporting.

**Implications of Prevailing Attitudes:**

1. **Workforce Participation:** Crimes against women contribute to India's persistently low female workforce participation rates.
2. **Chauvinistic Family Attitudes:** Crimes at home discourage women from seeking financial or social independence, impacting their career choices.
3. **Societal Attitudes:** Gender preferences leading to imbalanced ratios contribute to crimes like kidnapping and abduction, ranking third in crimes against women.

The NCRB data underscores the urgency of intervention to address the prevailing unsafe environment for women in India.