



ERADICATING POVERTY: A GLOBAL ISSUE

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Abstract: *This article discusses the main essence of poverty, its causes, and the factors contributing to it. It also addresses the research conducted by many scholars on eradicating poverty and the reforms aimed at reducing poverty globally and in Uzbekistan.*

Key words: *Poverty, World Bank, UN, China's poverty eradication program, Pandemic, Education, Unemployment, "Bolsa Familia" program, and more.*

What is Poverty? Poverty is understood as the lack of sufficient resources to meet basic needs in life. However, poverty is a broader concept than the definitions provided. The World Bank expands on this by describing poverty as "lack of shelter, hunger, illness without access to a doctor, illiteracy, and fear of the future."

Poverty at the global and local levels continues to persist as a global issue due to factors such as economic inequality, climate change, economic problems, poor education, and political and social instability. According to statistics, 9.2% of the world's population, or nearly 700 million people, live in extreme poverty. The World Bank reports that households earning less than \$1.9 a day are considered poor, indicating a significant portion of the world's population is impoverished. Geographically, poverty is highly prevalent in regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and parts of Latin America.

Why are approximately 9.2% of the world's population poor? Why can't some governments lift their people out of poverty? Why do living conditions fail to improve, and why do families lack adequate income? There are several causes and factors mentioned in various sources. For instance, the inability of governments to provide quality education is one of the global causes of poverty. It is known that lack of adequate education leads to unemployment, inability to protect one's rights, and many other consequences. We witness that in some countries, children are forced into hard labor at an early age instead of attending school. Historically, their parents also worked without receiving education, but this hasn't changed their life in poverty. Education plays a significant role in people's ability to work in high positions, master their professions, and earn a high income. In the Philippines, for example, one needs to complete at least high school or college to obtain a specific profession. Unfortunately, some children enter the workforce before even finishing secondary school. This situation will likely lead to low skills, limited potential, and a lifetime of low-income jobs. This is a significant failure and loss for the government as well.



Approximately 13% of the world's population, or 770 million people, are illiterate. Although these numbers are decreasing, the rate remains high in some developing countries. Nigeria, for instance, records the highest illiteracy rate globally, where almost no women and girls attend school. Such unfortunate circumstances are the result of not providing quality and free education, leading to poverty and social issues.

Natural Disasters and Other Factors. Another factor contributing to poverty is natural disasters such as infectious diseases, floods, fires, and so on. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries around the world faced economic crises: companies closed, people struggled with unemployment, and lost income sources. According to the World Bank, more than 120 million people fell into poverty due to the pandemic in 2020, and the figure rose to 150 million the following year. Contributing factors during the pandemic included weak social protection systems, lack of sufficient resources in some countries to help the poor, food shortages, and rising prices, which all led to severe social impacts on the poor.

Gender inequality. Of course, we must also consider gender inequality. Limited educational opportunities, specifically the deprivation of women from education, labor market inequalities—where women have fewer job opportunities compared to men—social norms, and superstitions limit women's social activity and restrict their role in the labor market. As a result, in some countries, women make up a significant portion of the impoverished population. Women and men should have equal rights, both in politics and social life. Countries with educated women undoubtedly do not lag in development.

Global and National Efforts to Combat Poverty. For years, comprehensive measures have been taken by international organizations, governments, and social movements to fight against poverty. For example, eradicating poverty is one of the main issues on the UN agenda. The organization has implemented several actions to address this. On October 17, 1992, the UN General Assembly declared the day as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. The periods 1997-2006, 2008-2017, and 2018-2027 were designated as Decades for the Eradication of Poverty. The UN Development Programme (UNDP) has also launched various important initiatives to eradicate poverty, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aiming to eliminate poverty in all its forms by 2030 under the motto "Leaving no one behind."

Efforts by the World Bank and Other Organizations. In addition, the World Bank has established a Poverty Reduction Support Facility (PRSF) to assist countries in developing and implementing their national poverty reduction strategies. The World Bank views investing in human capital as a key factor in reducing poverty. According to Lilia Brunchak, the World Bank's Regional Director for Central Asia, poverty reduction is noticeably evident. In some countries undergoing economic transition, including the United States, an individual's daily income of \$2.15 is considered the poverty line. Households earning less than this are classified as living in absolute poverty. Absolute poverty refers to the inability of a household to meet its basic needs, while relative poverty refers to having an income lower than others around them, reflecting economic inequality.



China's Example in Poverty Reduction. China's approach to poverty reduction can serve as an example. Under Deng Xiaoping's "Get Rich First" strategy, which began with agricultural reforms in 1980, to advanced infrastructure construction, China lifted 800 million people out of extreme poverty. In 2013, the Chinese government announced a policy to reduce poverty, and by 2020, China had aggressively pursued and succeeded in completely eradicating poverty by 2021. Today, China is one of the world's wealthy and advanced countries. The Chinese example shows that well-organized policies and excellent governance can also be crucial factors in reducing poverty.

The African Union is implementing wide-ranging reforms to eradicate poverty as part of its "Agenda 2063" plan. Brazil, on the other hand, has achieved success in reducing poverty with its "Bolsa Familia" program, which provides cash investments to low-income families to improve their living standards.

Academic Contributions. It is also worth mentioning several scholars who have conducted research on improving the financial lives of the population. Uzbekistan has also utilized the experiences of the 2019 Nobel Prize laureates Michael Kremer, Esther Duflo, and Abhijit Banerjee in its efforts to eradicate poverty. Additionally, in the 1970s, Muhammad Yunus established the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, providing microcredits to low-income families, particularly women, significantly improving their economic conditions. His approach, microfinance, offers opportunities for entrepreneurship and poverty reduction by providing microcredits to low-income individuals and small business owners.

Jeffrey Sachs, the author of "The End of Poverty," developed a special program and tested it in several impoverished regions of Africa in the 2000s. The program involves a systematic approach focused on long-term investments in agriculture, education, healthcare, infrastructure, and other areas to help communities overcome poverty.

Uzbekistan's Efforts in Poverty Reduction in Uzbekistan, extensive measures have been implemented to improve social life and eradicate poverty. In 2021, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev initiated a government program to eradicate poverty. Within this program, additional jobs were created to improve living standards, and investments were made in education, healthcare, and agriculture. A special monitoring system was established to regularly assess poverty levels. Tax benefits, social allowances, and initiatives like the "Yoshlar daftari" and "Temir daftar" were provided to low-income families. Vocational training centers were established for the unemployed and low-income individuals, offering free education. Microcredits were granted to small business owners, entrepreneurs, and farmers. The most significant reform focused on women's education and employment, introducing a system of interest-free and long-term microcredits. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasized that "we must teach our people to fish, give them the tools." The reforms implemented in recent years have laid the foundation for the further advancement of our developing New Uzbekistan. Additionally, projects and concepts based on international experience have been developed and are aimed at the near future. A poverty reduction strategy for 2021-2030, developed in cooperation with the World Bank and the UN, has been placed under public consideration.



In conclusion, eradicating poverty may be a complex process, but it is not without solutions. A good life does not build itself; it requires hard work. Every person is capable of overcoming material poverty, but spiritually impoverished individuals cannot rise. We all deserve quality education, a good life, and to work in deserving positions. We, the youth, are the future of Uzbekistan, and we are deeply grateful to President Shavkat Mirziyoyev for the opportunities being created for us. We are ready to support our leader in building an even brighter future and in raising our country to the ranks of leading nations. The Uzbek people have never been poor and will never be!

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