



Oxfam Report: Inequality Kills

For Prelims: Oxfam Report and its key findings.

For Mains: Key Findings, Causes of Inequality, Impact of the Covid-19.

Why in News

Recently, the [Oxfam report](#) titled “**Inequality Kills**” was released, the report **pointed out a stark income divide worsened by the Covid pandemic**, globally and in India.

Key Points

- **Magnitude of Growing Inequities:** Widening economic, gender, and racial inequalities—as well as the inequality that exists between countries—are tearing our world apart.
 - The wealth of the **world’s 10 richest men has doubled** since the pandemic began.
 - The incomes of **99% of humanity are worse off because of Covid-19**.
 - Inequality **contributes to the death of at least one person every four seconds**.
- **Economic Violence:** A kind of economic violence is perpetrated when structural policy choices are made for the richest and most powerful people. This affects the poorest people, women and girls, and racialized groups most.
 - **Unequal Access to Healthcare:** Healthcare of good quality is a human right, but is too often treated as a luxury for rich people.
 - **Gender-Based Violence:** It is rooted in patriarchy and sexist economic systems. For example, sex-selective abortions.
 - **Poverty-Induced Hunger:** Hunger is one of the ways in which poverty kills, and it is faced by billions of ordinary people all over the world each day.
 - **Inequality of Climate Change Crisis:** The emissions of the richest people are driving this Climate Change crisis, with the CO₂ emissions of 20 of the richest billionaires estimated on average to be 8,000 times that of the billion poorest people.
- **Vaccine Apartheid:** Rich countries may back their pharmaceutical monopoly billionaires and hoard vaccines to protect their populations, but in so doing they push their own people toward risk from the mutations that vaccine apartheid is creating.
 - Vaccine apartheid as a concept calls attention to the effects of inequitable vaccine distribution policies on historically subordinated peoples.

Indian Scenario

- **Decline in Social Security Expenditure:**
 - A Covid continued to ravage India, the country’s **healthcare budget saw a 10% decline** from RE (Revised Estimates) of 2020-21.
 - There was a **6% cut in allocation for education**.
 - The **budgetary allocation for social security schemes declined from 1.5% of the total Union budget to 0.6%**.
- **Growing Inequalities:** According to the report, the **income of 84% of households in the**

country declined in 2021, but at the same time, the **number of Indian billionaires grew from 102 to 142.**

- **Growing Rich:** During the pandemic, the wealth of Indian billionaires increased from Rs 23.14 lakh crore to Rs 53.16 lakh crore.
 - India has the third-highest number of billionaires in the world, just behind China and the United States.
 - There is a 39% increase in the number of billionaires in India in 2021.
- **Growing Poor:** More than 4.6 crore Indians are estimated to have fallen into extreme poverty in 2020. This is nearly half of the global new poor according to the United Nations.
 - Also, in the same year, the share of the bottom 50% of the population in national wealth was a mere 6%.
 - The unemployment in India has also increased.
- **Blow to Gender Parity:** Women collectively lost Rs 59.11 lakh crore in earnings in 2020, with 1.3 crores fewer women in work now than in 2019.
- **Increasing Fiscal Deficit:** Lowering **corporate taxes from 30% to 22%** to attract investment last year (2020) resulted in a loss of Rs 1.5 lakh crore, which contributed to the increase in India's **fiscal deficit.**
- **Unequal Federalism:** Despite the country's federal structure, the revenue resources remained concentrated in the Centre's hands.
 - However, the management of the pandemic was left to the states – who were not equipped to handle it with its financial or human resources.

Way Forward

- **Clawback extreme wealth into the real economy to tackle inequality:** All governments should immediately tax the gains made by the super-rich during this pandemic period.
- **Redirect that wealth to save lives and invest in our future:** All governments must invest in evidence-based and powerful policies to save lives and invest in our future.
 - The legacy of the pandemic must be quality, publicly-funded, and publicly-delivered universal healthcare.
- **Change rules and shift power in the economy and society:** This includes ending sexist laws, including those which mean that nearly 3 billion women are legally prevented from having the same choice of jobs as men.

Source: IE

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/oxfam-report-inequality-kills>