

POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Fact Sheet

BACKGROUND

Fiji is committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It aims to halve its poverty rate by 2030. Poverty persists as a significant challenge. Approximately 24.1% of Fijians live below the Basic Needs Poverty Line, revealing economic hardship alongside moderate average incomes. Multidimensional poverty further complicates poverty alleviation, with many lacking access to essential necessities beyond income. Fiji has enacted social assistance schemes and interventions targeting vulnerable groups, yet multidimensional poverty rates remain high, especially in rural areas lacking infrastructure. Poverty not only hinders human capital development and economic growth but also contributes to social issues like increased crime rates. Fiji's future strategies will emphasize income generation, capacity building, and targeted social protection to empower vulnerable populations and poverty migration schemes for the vulnerable.

CURRENT STATUS

Fiji faces significant poverty challenges, notably in rural areas and the Eastern division, where poverty rates exceed 30%. Despite comprehensive poverty alleviation strategies, the government reaffirming its commitment to eradicating poverty in line with Sustainable Development Goal 1. Employing a multidimensional approach, Fiji prioritizes education, employment generation, and equitable resource distribution to reduce income disparities. However, slow progress necessitates accelerated economic growth beyond 5-7% to achieve the 2030 target of a 14% poverty rate. Notably, the government's allocation of significant funding for social protection programs, collaboration with development partners, and investments in education and vocational training demonstrate its commitment to fostering sustainable livelihoods and inclusive development.

CHALLENGES

1. Vulnerability to climate change threatens agricultural sectors and coastal communities, leading to economic instability and exacerbating poverty.
2. Disparities between rural and urban areas limits access to essential services and hindering equal opportunities for income generation.
3. High unemployment rates, especially among youth, pose a significant challenge to poverty alleviation and economic stability.
4. Limited skills matching between available jobs and the workforce contributes to unemployment and unstable incomes.
5. Insufficient social insurance coverage leaves many outside the formal sector without income security in old age, contributing to poverty risk among elderly populations.
6. Inadequate access to basic amenities such as piped water, sewerage, and electricity in squatter settlements perpetuates poverty and inequality.
7. Social protection programs often lack effective exit strategies and fail to prepare beneficiaries for sustainable economic activities.

OPPORTUNITIES

1. Embracing subsistence living and sustainable farming practices can offer a pathway to poverty alleviation and economic resilience, particularly in rural communities.
2. Investments in education, vocational training, and economic diversification can create more job opportunities and foster entrepreneurship, addressing unemployment challenges.
3. Poverty graduation programs play a crucial role in lifting vulnerable populations out of poverty by combining immediate support with long-term

investments in life skills and enterprise development.

4. Strengthening social protection systems through education subsidies, health insurance, and cash transfers can reduce poverty and inequality, ensuring income security and access to essential services.

FUTURE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

➤ **Poverty Alleviation**

- ✓ Implement programmes in housing, national insurance and social security under the Integrated National Poverty Eradication Programme.
- ✓ Develop community infrastructure for sustainable poverty alleviation programmes.
- ✓ Create income-generating opportunities for the people in formal and informal.
- ✓ Strengthen civil society and government partnership in alleviating poverty.
- ✓ Ensure financial inclusion through microfinance and digital literacy.
- ✓ Foster community based skill sharing initiatives
- ✓ Integrate CSOs and development partners' projects for comprehensive poverty alleviation.

➤ **Empower vulnerable and disadvantage group through social protection initiatives**

- ✓ Improve living standards through Family Assistance Scheme.
- ✓ Empower older persons through the Social Pension Scheme.
- ✓ Expand food voucher for Pregnant Mothers.
- ✓ Upgrade residential care for older Persons.
- ✓ Review Bus Fare Concession.
- ✓ Expand conditional cash transfer programs.
- ✓ Review of the social transfers (cash or food). Programme.
- ✓ Support aging population in the face of increased labor migration and impacts of climate change
- ✓ Strengthening families for social and human development.

➤ **Monitor progress of Government's Poverty Alleviation programmes (PAP) under the INPEP**

- ✓ Strengthen base line information and analysis for poverty alleviation program
- ✓ Strengthen networking with stakeholders on poverty alleviation programs
- ✓ Review of Poverty Information Centre
- ✓ Conduct awareness on government's poverty alleviation programs
- ✓ Review of the Fijis Poverty Alleviation Eradication Strategy Framework 1999
- ✓ Develop an INPEP Monitoring and Evaluation Framework