What do we know about how social norms affect efforts to REDUCE EXTREME POVERTY?

Social norms provide order and predictability to society but they also reflect power structures and often reinforce them to the detriment of some groups.

DATA & EVIDENCE deep TO END EXTREME POVERTY

01

There is a complex two-way relationship between harmful social norms and extreme poverty.

Harmful social norms may lead to discrimination and exclusion that causes or exacerbates poverty.

Poverty and drivers of poverty such as conflict, migration, and inequality can generate or reproduce harmful social norms.

02

What do we know about discrimination based on identity?

Ethnicity, race, caste and religion

Disability

Gender

Migration status

The risk of impoverishment due to harmful social norms is greatest when marginalised group identities intersect.

Exclusion from social and political spheres.

Exploitation

Limited access to economic opportunities and secure employment.

Racism, Xenophobia and Prejudice

Barriers to education, health, and other social services.

Violence or harm

Laws and policies that perpetuate harmful social norms or fail to prevent discrimination.

Disproportionates responsibility for unpaid and domestic care.

03

What are the evidence gaps?

Gender

- Studies which observe poverty at the individual level instead of at the household level
- Data about poverty often can't be disaggregated by gender

Disability

- Studies which disaggregate results by disability status

Ethnicity, race, caste and religion

- Cross-country analysis
- Evidence on affirmative action policies
- Evidence in a broader range of contexts to better understand historical and contextual factors
- Evidence on the relationship between religious discrimination and poverty

Women & Girls

are more likely to live in poverty than males.

While income poverty in India declined by

40 %

between 1983 and 2005, the decline was only 35 % among Dalits and 31 % among Adivasis

More than 50 %

of all children with disabilities are estimated to be excluded from education in low- and middle-countries, and in some countries the figure is closer to 90%.

3 times

indigenous peoples more likely to live in extreme poverty.

Fragile and conflict affected settings are home to around half of all people living in poverty.

Under 50 %

of refugee children are enrolled in primary school and just 11% in secondary school.

04

What do we know about leading policy and investment areas?

Social protection

- Relatively strong evidence exists, however many of the poorest countries have highly inadequate programmes in place.

Financial inclusion

- More research is needed to better understand if (and how) better financial inclusion may help ameliorate the impoverishing effects of harmful social norms.

Affirmative action to increase political participation

- Interventions have increased women's representation, but only a few studies look at interventions to support other groups.
- Most studies have focused on participation as the outcome, not transformational impacts.

Policies and programmes promoting social cohesion

- Studies of programmes that promote intergroup cohesion in fragile contexts found small positive effects.
- Further study is needed beyond conflict settings.

Sensitisation campaigns

- Some immediate outcomes have been observed though more transformational outcomes have tended to be neglected or show negligible results.

Here we apply a welfare approach to understanding the relationship between social norms and poverty, where 'harmful' social norms are those that contribute to the impoverishment of certain groups within societies.