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Down to Earth May 2026 — Why Poor Remain Poor Forever

15 May 2026

ENVIRONMENT

ECONOMY

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GS1

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CURATED & WRITTEN BY

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Down to Earth May 2026 — Why Poor Remain Poor Forever


Down to Earth May 2026 (15 May issue) **GS1** **GS2** **GS3**



Down to Earth
 CSE · Fortnightly

EDITION

May 2026 (15 May issue)

MAINS:

GS Paper 1

GS Paper 2

GS Paper 3

Down to Earth’s May 15, 2026 edition is themed “**Why Poor Remain Poor Forever**” — a deep investigation into chronic poverty in India’s forest-dependent and tribal communities, based on a 30-year longitudinal study.

[Source: Down to Earth archive — Centre for Science and Environment — May 2026 —
<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/magazine/archive/archives>]

MAY 15, 2026 EDITION — “WHY POOR REMAIN POOR FOREVER”

Lead Article: “Poverty’s own republic: ‘Deep inside jungles, nobody can find us’”

Author: Richard Mahapatra **Publication Date:** 1 May 2026

[Source: Down to Earth — Centre for Science and Environment — 1 May 2026 —
<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/governance/povertys-own-republic-deep-inside-jungles-nobody-can-find-us>]

Key Study Details

DIMENSION	DETAIL
Study	Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC) longitudinal study
Households tracked	3,000
Duration	30 years (1968-1999)
States covered	Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Telangana

Core Findings

- **Chronic poor** constitute approximately half the total poor population in India
- Most chronically poor reside in **natural resource-dense, forest-dependent areas**

- The most significant cause of chronic poverty: people **slipping back below the poverty line** after having risen above it
- Poverty is **becoming hereditary** for a sizeable population in certain geographies — especially tribal and forested areas
- Chronic poor lack the capacity to absorb economic shocks (health crises, natural disasters)
- Resource access barriers and human capital deficits reinforce the poverty trap

Chronic poverty defined (Aasha Kapur Mehta): “People, households and social groups who are poor for sustained and significant or extended periods” whose families may inherit poverty.

Why Geography Matters

People in **tribal and forested or degraded forest regions** are most likely to remain poor permanently. Geographic isolation compounds:

- Exclusion from formal markets
- Limited access to government schemes
- Dependence on degrading natural resources
- Weak human capital development

KEY TERMS

TERM	MEANING
Chronic Poverty	Poverty sustained over extended periods across generations; defined by CPRC as poverty lasting 5+ years
CPRC	Chronic Poverty Research Centre — international research consortium tracking long-term poverty trajectories
Poverty Trap	Self-reinforcing cycle where poverty itself prevents escape from poverty
Forest-Dependent Communities	Tribal/Adivasi communities whose livelihoods depend primarily on forest produce, classified under the Forest Rights Act, 2006

UPSC GS RELEVANCE

PAPER	TOPICS
GS1	Poverty and development; social structure; tribal communities; regional inequality
GS2	Tribal welfare policies; Forest Rights Act 2006; social protection schemes; governance gaps in forest areas
GS3	Poverty measurement; chronic vs. transient poverty; forest-based livelihoods; rural development

The May 16-31 fortnightly issue had not been published or indexed as of May 7, 2026 (today's date). This page will be updated when that issue becomes available.



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