

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

# SOUTH ASIA'S PATH TO RESILIENT GROWTH



**ASIA AND PACIFIC  
DEPARTMENT**

## **Social Protection Reforms in South Asia**

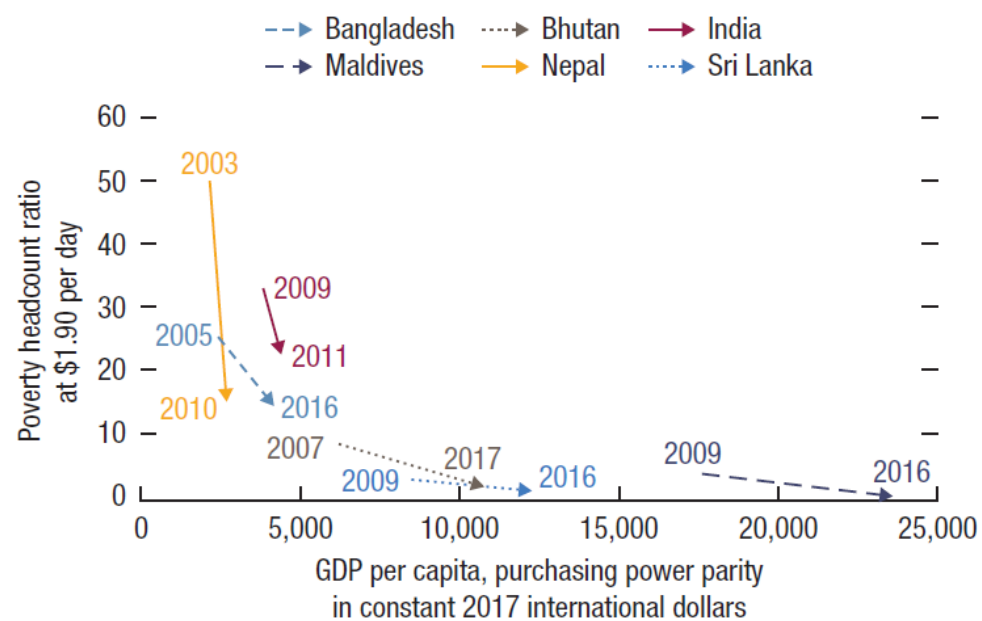
**Bazlul H Khondker and Emmanouil Kitsois**

**JANUARY 6, 2023**



# Social Protection Reforms in South Asia

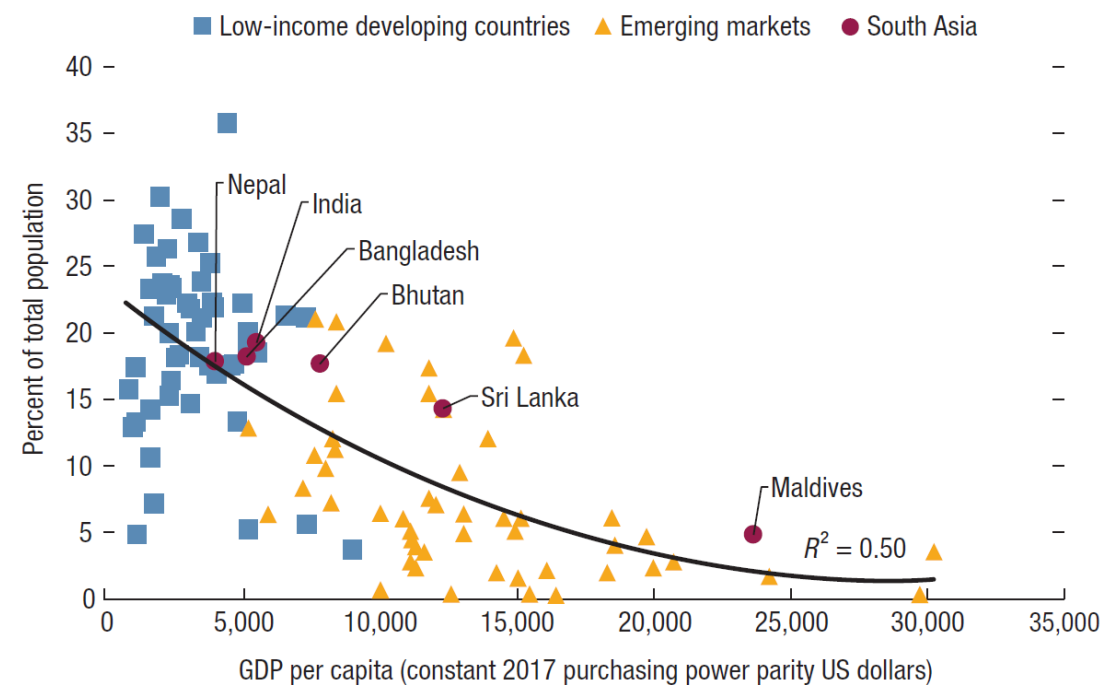
## Poverty Head Count Ratio and GDP Per Capita



Sources: IMF's World Economic Outlook Database; and World Bank's World Development Indicators Database.

Note: Poverty head count ratio at \$1.90 per day is the percentage of the population living on less than \$1.90 per day at 2011 international prices.

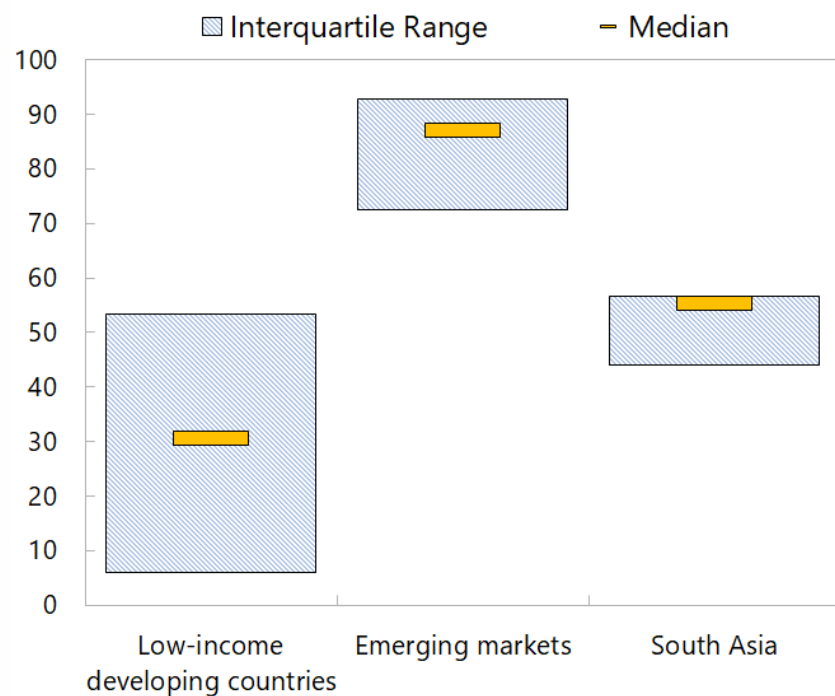
## Population Vulnerable to Multidimensional Poverty



Sources: IMF's World Economic Outlook Database; and United Nations Development Program 2021.

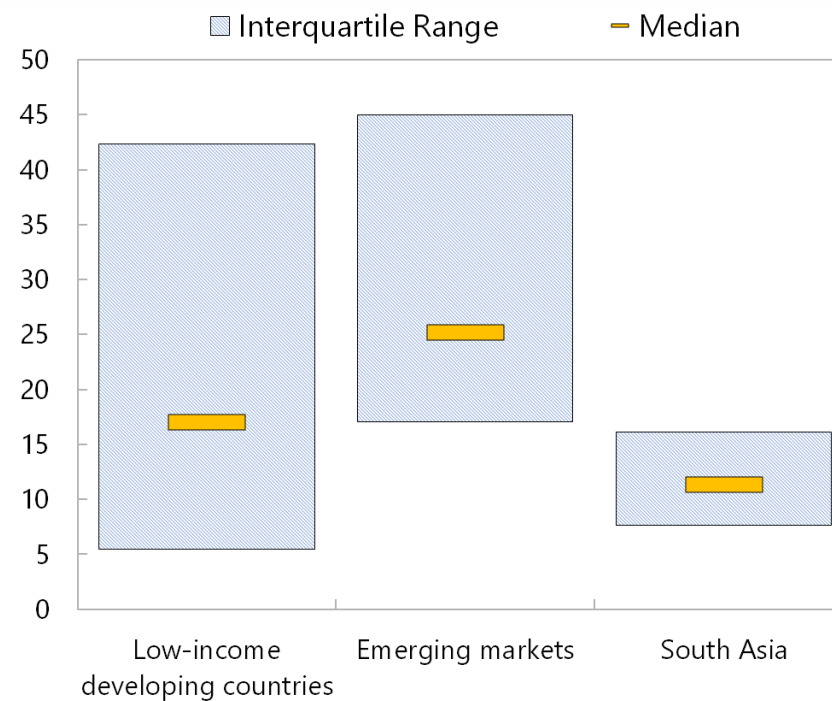
# Social Protection Reforms in South Asia

## Social Protection: Coverage, 1<sup>st</sup> Quintile



Sources: World Bank's ASPIRE Database.  
 Note: Data are for the latest year available.

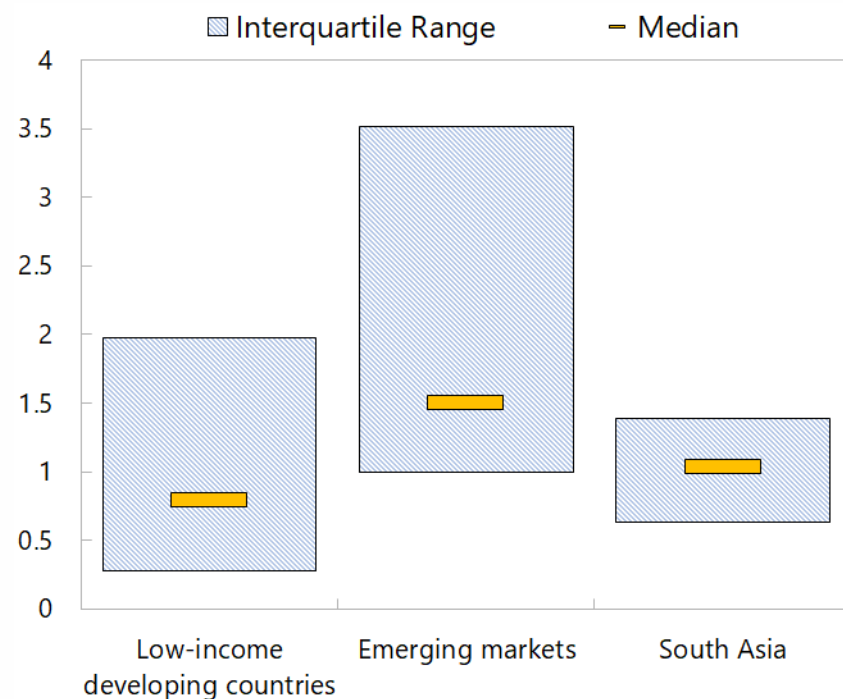
## Social Protection: Adequacy, 1<sup>st</sup> Quintile



Sources: World Bank's ASPIRE Database.  
 Note: Data are for the latest year available.

# Social Protection Reforms in South Asia

## Social Assistance: Spending in Percent of GDP



Sources: World Bank's ASPIRE Database.  
Note: Data are for the latest year available.

## Conclusions

- How can South Asia tackle the risks of rising inequality and poverty in the post-COVID era?
- Steps that could help strengthen social protection include:
  - ▶ Expanding social protection and labor market programs to improve their adequacy and coverage.
  - ▶ Addressing inefficiencies in social protection delivery.
  - ▶ Expanding government-to-person social transfers.
  - ▶ Better aligning the design of social protection with South Asia's demographic and labor market structure.