

# OPHI

## Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative

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Phuba, Bhutan

### Multidimensional Poverty Index Profile



Phuba is 72 years old and lives in a small village in the Chhukha region of Bhutan. She is a widow with one son and two daughters. She lives with her son and daughter-in-law and their child, her granddaughter, Pelden. The journey to her village from the capital Thimpu requires a 10-hour drive followed by a five-hour walk through the country's mountainous terrain.

Their home is a one-room thatch hut on a gentle sloping hillside, without electricity or an inside tap. No one in their family has completed five years of schooling, and at 12 years of age, Pelden has never been to school. The family face food insecurity. They struggle to feed themselves to the extent that Phuba worries about their health. Her son and daughter-in-law work for their neighbours and earn around 60 Ngultrum (US\$ 1.17) (for women) and around 80 Ngultrum (US\$ 1.56) per day (for men).

Like all families in the village, Phuba cooks with wood – a fuel that causes eye problems and a cough for her and many other elderly women in her village. The family use a simple pit latrine for sanitation, which she states is just fine for her needs.

Phuba brims with life and vitality. She carries herself upright and walks quickly up the mountain paths with a stick. She clucks to the calves with affection, and they approach her without fear. She also talks to the kitten that sleeps by her fire. She offers fresh milk and cheese to visitors and to share the details of her life.





Phuba rises at 6 am on most days and makes tea, followed by a breakfast of rice and curry for the family. She then leaves to look after her animals. The family have two cows, two calves and a pig. During February and March there is little or no work in the fields of other people; when there is, she also works as a labourer, as do her children. She returns home sometime between 5 and 6 pm. The family have a meal together, talk with one another and then go to bed.

Though she becomes sad and worried when she feels sick, Phuba is proud because even at her advanced age, she remains strong. She is still regarded as the head of the household, and holding the family together gives her a sense of accomplishment.

Phuba is poor according to the MPI. The shaded boxes of the figure below show the deprivations that she faces.

