

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDG) Targets and Achievements

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ABSTRACT

Member countries of United Nations were required to meet the set targets of Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. These goals were fixed in 2015 across 17 sectors. India took promising steps in meeting these goals but still remains a long way off its targets. The SDG India Index data compiled by Niti Aayog in 2019 show that of the 104 sub indicators measured for the 17 SDG, India has only met 6 targets so far. India stunted progress seems to have been due to wider gaps among states. Have a look at India's progress on 12 selected socio-economic sub indicators. See the tabulate.

1. POVERTY:

The SDG target of India's population below poverty line was set at 11 percent but it is 21.90 percent at present. Chhattisgarh is the worst state where 39.9 percent population is still below poverty line as against Goa where only 5 percent population is poor. Rangarajan Committee (2011 – 2012) had defined the Poverty Line at ₹5,700/- per month for a family of 5 persons. According to International Standards, extreme poverty line is fixed at less than \$ 1.9 a day, roughly Rs. 4000/- per month for a family of 5 persons. Chukwudi P. Obinne (1991) reported that there are 10 most striking indicators of poverty: (1) Borrowing from local money lenders at exorbitant rate of interest, (2) Living in crowded localities, (3) Dominance of male superiority, (4) Unemployment under employment, (5) Low wages, (6) Unskilled occupations, (7) Child Labour, (8) Chronic shortage of cash, (9) Great emphasis on maintaining family cohesiveness, and (10) Low participation in national welfare activities. He found 68 percent of these poverty traits in Nigerian people. In all probabilities, this kind of poverty is detrimental to progress.

2. HUNGER:

India's 34.7 percent children under 5 are still stunting far away from the SDG target of 2.5 percent. Bihar is the worst state where 42 percent children under 5 are in the grip of hunger. India is ranked 102 on Global Hunger Index (2019) among 117 countries. The GHI ranks countries on a 100 point scale with "Zero" being the best score (No Hunger) and 100 being the worst. Values less than 10 reflect Low Hunger. Score values from 20 to 34.9 indicate Serious Hunger. Score values 35 to 49.9 are Alarming. Score values of 50 or more are

Extremely Alarming. India scored 30.3 putting it in the “Serious Hunger” category. The GHI Score are based on the proportion of a country's child population undernourished; share of children under 5 years of age who have insufficient weight for their height or whose height is not commensurate to their age, and mortality rate of under-five children.

3. UNEMPLOYMENT:

The SDG targets to end unemployment at zero per cent. In India, however, 6 per cent people are still unemployed. Worst is Nagaland at 21.40 per cent. Unemployment is a global phenomenon. According to ILO 2019 report, 40 per cent people worldwide are currently unemployed, 35% underemployed, and 25 per cent potential labour force who have given up searching for work or otherwise lack access labour market. India in comparison is much better in ending unemployment.

4. INEQUALITY:

Growth rate of expenditure per capita in the bottom 40 per cent of rural households is 13.60 per cent as against SDG target of 15.60 per cent. This growth rate in urban households is 13.40 per cent as against SDG target of 11.30 per cent. This apparently means inequality is not of much significant difference between rural and urban population. However, inequality exists more in urban as it has crossed the limit of 11.30 per cent. In rural households, inequality is in check as it does not cross the line of 15.60 per cent. Inequality is worse everywhere. In India, 1% of 13 million wealthy people hold 42.5 per cent of national wealth. The bottom 50% 650 million poorest citizens hold only 2.80 per cent wealth. The brunt of this inequality is borne by women who have to battle the double disadvantage of social economic deprivation and discriminatory norms. This only shows that rich are growing richer. Gini Wealth Coefficient in 2019 at 83.2 per cent up from 81.2 per cent in 2008 is an indicator of this trend. A coefficient of 100 percent represents perfect inequality. Verma (2007) has reported that income earned by India's wealthiest 10 per cent as a ratio to that earned by poorest 10 per cent is 10.3 times. By Global Standards, it is a lot better than USA, UK, Russia and Italy where this ratio is 15.9 times, 13.8 times, 12.7 times and 11.6 times respectively. (According to Human Development Index 2016). It apparently means India is one of the most economically equal societies. On another parameter, India's per person position of wealth at \$1100 is much less than Japan at \$1,81,000, USA at \$1,44,000 and Indonesia at \$1400. By this standard too, India is more equal than many others. Equal societies

more than India are Azerbaijan, Japan, Czech Republic, Bosnia and Hungary.

5. CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN:

In India, number of crimes against women are occurring at the rate of 58 crimes per 1 lakh women population; though SDG target was set at zero. Assam and Delhi are the worst states where 143 and 133 crimes are found occurring per 1 lakh women population respectively. Best state is Nagaland where this crime rate is 7 only. According to latest figures available from National Crime Records Bureau, India's crime rate at 1.8 rapes per 1 lakh population is ranked at 94 on the Global Rape Rate Index. South Africa has world's worst rape rate at 132.4 per one lakh population. In India, Delhi has the highest rape rate at 19.1 per one lakh population. Puducherry, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Nagaland and Gujarat are the best states where rape rate is around 2.0 for 1 lakh population. Crime rate against women on all India basis is recorded at 5.2 incidents per 1 lakh population. Madhya Pradesh is on the top at 14.7 (1.6) and Tamil Nadu on the bottom at 0.8 followed by Bihar (1.2), Gujarat (1.6), Karnataka (1.8), Maharashtra (3.3) Andhra (3.8), Punjab (3.9) UP (4.0) and J&K (4.9).

6. EDUCATION:

Adjusted net enrolment ratio for Class I to Class X is reported at 75.8 per cent whereas SDG target was set at 100 percent. It apparently means education in India is still short of 25 per cent of meeting this SDG goal. The worst states are Sikkim and Nagaland where this ratio is at 45 per cent and 56 per cent respectively. Tripura, Delhi and Himachal Pradesh are the best states where school enrolment is more than 92 per cent. NSSO World Inequality Database shows that an average Indian has to spend over ₹8000 per year on general education. At least one third of boys discontinue their education because their families cannot afford this much expenditure on education alone. Almost 90 per cent Indian adults earn less than ₹12000 per month. Direct financial constraint is thus a big reason for low enrolment in education. However, nearly half of students continue their study because of various subsidies provided by the government. This includes free education, scholarships and stipend, subsidized text books and stationery. RTE Act 2010 mandated education for children between the age of 6 to 14 years but there has been only 12.7 per cent RTE compliance according to Right To Education Forum and Centre For Budget Policy Studies Report 2019.

7. MORTALITY:

Infant mortality under 5 is occurring at the rate of 50 deaths per 1000 live births as against the SDG target of 25. UP, MP and Chhattisgarh have Infant Mortality at more than 64 deaths. Kerala and Goa have substantially lower infant mortality rates than the SDG target of 25/1000 live birth. Maternal mortality, on an average, is 122 deaths per 1 lakh live births. The SDG target was set at 70. Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu have met this target as the maternal mortality is below 70 in these states. Currently (2019), global birth rate is 18.5 per 1000 people and India's is 18.

8. HEALTH INSURANCE:

The SDG target was set at 100 percent population under Health Insurance cover. India, however, is more than 70 per cent short of achieving this target. Hardly, 28.7 per cent people in India take health insurance policy. Worst states are Manipur, J&K, UP and Nagaland. Apparently, spending on health is very meagre in India. Among OECD countries, the US spent the most on healthcare at 16.9% of GDP. This is much higher than the health expenditure in India at 1.3 per cent of GDP and 4.6 per cent of budget. Though India lags behind developed countries, its strong economy has significantly improved the health infrastructure. NITI Aayog's annual health index for 2017-18 shows that Haryana, Rajasthan and Jharkhand registered best improvement in health care. Verma (2010) reported that in India share of the government in healthcare expenditure is only 25 per cent of the total health spend while in Europe it is as high as 76 per cent. It apparently means that 75% healthcare expenditures are met by private sector. India is one of the best privatized healthcare system in the world.

9. LABOUR FORCE:

The SDG target 100 per cent labour force participation in the activities of the organization. It may be the participation in management, it may be in social activities or it may also be in the welfare of the labour force as also of the organization. This parameter, however, is found at 49.8 per cent almost half of SDG target. Bihar, Nagaland and Uttarakhand are the worst states where labour force participation rate is below the average of 49.8 per cent. Chhattisgarh, Meghalaya and Himachal Pradesh are the best states where labour force participation is more than 62 per cent. As regards women labour force participation, India is stagnated at 25 per cent of female population aged between 15 to 64 years. In UK, China and USA female labour force participation is registered at 73 per cent, 69 per cent and 67 per cent respectively. In India, women's labour force

is almost lowest in the world. By 2030, India's working age population will cross 1 billion of which 400 million will be women making it vital to generate jobs for women. In one of the studies conducted by Adeogun Stephen Oluseun (2016) found that lack of labour participation badly affects the success of organization. He further found that shortage of labour and inadequate strength of the labour force creates stressful situation in the organization.

10. WOMEN MLAs:

The SDG target was set at 50 per cent seats reservation for women in state legislative assemblies. But the data show that hardly 8.3 per cent women are in state assemblies. J&K, Karnataka are the worst states where hardly 3 per cent MLAs are women. Haryana, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal and Rajasthan are the states where women MLA are more than 12 per cent. The SDG goal, however, is far away from being met. The Times of India dated 25 October 2019 reported that the number of women MLA has risen significantly in state assemblies since 1952. They, however, are still a minicule of percentage among the total winners. For example, in Maharashtra, it was 0% in 1972 but by 2019 percentage of women MLA in the House risen to 8.3 per cent (24 MLA) of the total strength. Women in active politics are thus steadily surging ahead. Political parties are, however, still lethargic in fielding women candidate in the fray. In Maharashtra, just 235 (7.3 per cent) of the total 3237 candidates in the fray of Assembly Election 2019 were women. Overall Average Age of women MLAs is 51.4 year and Overall Average Assets is 22.2 crores.

11. MOBILE CONNECTION:

The SDG target was set at 100 people to have 100 mobile connections. India has progressed well on this parameter. Delhi, Himachal, Punjab, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Gujarat have not only achieved this target but also exceeded the target of 100 mobile connection per 100 persons. It means in state like Delhi there are 255.5 mobile connections over 100 persons. More than one SIM per mobile has become a craze. However, overall connections at 88.4 per 100 person are still short of 11.6 connections for 100 persons for meeting the SDG target. A PEW survey findings released in Times of India dated 11 February 2019 revealed that 35 per cent Indian adults have no phone at all while 40 per cent own mobile but only a basic version. Survey further found that 75 per cent Indian adults do not possess a smartphone. In contrast, in developed countries like USA, Australia and Spain almost 80% adult population owns a smartphone.

12. INTERNET PENETRATION:

The SDG target was set at 100 internet subscribers for 100 persons. Internet penetration, however, is only 48.5 subscribers per 100 persons. It apparently shows that India is still short of 51.5 internet connections for 100 persons. Some states like Himachal, Haryana and Delhi have exceeded the SDG target. In Himachal Pradesh, for example, there are 205.12 internet connections per 100 persons. In Haryana and Delhi, per 100 persons internet connections are reported at 140.2 and 138.06 respectively. Multiple connections, therefore, are becoming fashion in many Indian households. Rajasthan is worst as there are only 8.8 internet connections per 100 persons. Donna Degan et al (2014) reported that successful integration of Tablet PC into Agricultural Education System is found to be a potential approach to update the technology such as Wi-Fi access and to deal with technical issues in the delivery of classroom education.

The SDG goals set in 2015 are halfway in their attainment. The 12 socio economic indicators reported in this paper, India is moving fast in meeting almost all by the end of 2030. Some indicators like labour force participation in the activities of the organization is hampered mainly because of the shortage of labour force as reported by Adeogun Stephen Oluseun (2016). He found that low participation of labour force in organizational activities is attributed to higher levels of occupational stress that affected not only their work productivity but also the success of organization. He, therefore, suggested that labour force should be adequate enough in the organization so as to reduce their stress level and optimize their work productivity. LAWAL-Adebowale (2015) found that the use of mobile phones, laptops and multimedia projectors in extension tasks execution have enhanced quality time usage in reaching out stakeholders in agriculture, reduced the traveling and enhanced social interactions. He opined that several emerging mobile ICTs should be ensured in extension service delivery systems.

Ambika Pandit (2019) reported that India has upped Sustainable Development Goal Score from 57 to 60 as per the SDG India Index 2019. However, India is still in the “Performers” category as no state could get closed enough to the “Achiever” tag with a full score of 100. Two goals, “Zero Hunger” and “Gender Equality” are where India's performance tapered off reflecting the need for special attention as the Overall Country's Score is below 50 putting most states in the category of “Aspirants”.

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