

## **THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: WHERE DOES INDIA STAND?**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is one of the most definite and widely accepted goals by United Nations (UNs) as a result of discourse and deliberations among the member States. The global goals that seek to consider three dimensions of poverty i.e., social, economic and environmental dimensions to improve people's lives and protect the planet for future generations. The article seeks to juxtapose 17 SDGs and the existing status of the goals of India in comparison with the South Asian countries. The study extensively used secondary sources of data to paint a quantitative picture of SDGs and the ranking given by various international agencies. Since the SDGs were adopted in September 2015, we may not get the impact as such. The purpose of the study is to give a summarised picture of goals so that future course of action can be drawn from the study. The study found nearly 21.9 per cent of the people in India live below poverty line. The situation of poverty is grim more particularly in rural areas, as around 25.7 per cent live below the poverty line. Among the South Asian countries, lowest poverty rate exists in Sri Lanka that stood at close to 7 per cent. The life expectancy rate of India is 68.3 years, which is even less than that of Bangladesh. The per capita income of India is \$5,663 which is half of that of Sri Lanka. The literacy rate of India is 74 percent, Maldives on its way to achieve cent percent literacy rate. In the Human Development Index, India was ranked 131 among the list of countries. However, it is noteworthy that among South Asian countries, Sri Lanka and Maldives could figure themselves in 73 and 105,*

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*respectively. The Global Hunger Index report of 2016 ranking has placed India at 97 out of 118 countries. India performed poorly in the Gender Development Index, managed to perform better than Pakistan and Afghanistan. India will have go long way to achieve 100 per cent access to clean drinking water and electricity. Starting business in India still not a good proposition and huge inequality persists in the income distribution. India's position in crime index and pollution index is also not up to the mark. Global collaboration, engaging with countries of expertise will help in addressing these issues.*

**Keywords:** SDGs, Poverty, India, South Asia.

## Introduction

The perennial problems of the world like poverty, famine, drought, wars, plague, epidemic, hunger, etc., drive the global leaders in a common platform (UNDPb, 2016). At the UN Sustainable Development Summit, UN General Assembly's Opening Working Groups on SDG has adopted the proposal of 17 global goals with 169 targets in New York which will guide the countries in the next 15 years (United Nations, 2015; World Bank; 2016). Although, the foundation stone of SDGs was laid in Stockholm, Sweden in 1972. The idea of SDGs can be traced when member States met for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, to consider the rights of the human family to a healthy and productive environment. In the later years in 1983, the United Nations decided to create the World Commission on Environment and Development to unite the member countries to pursue sustainable development together. The commission defined sustainable development as "meeting the needs of the present without

compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland, 1987). The cornerstone of the SDGs was laid in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) in 2012 (also known as Rio+20) on Sustainable Development called "The Future We Want". The conference recognised the need for SDGs for addressing the three dimensions of poverty viz., economic, social and environmental. The conference put forwarded the ideas to promote coherent and focused actions so as to achieve sustainable development goals (Pinter et al., 2014; RIS, 2016). International financial institution World Bank termed SDGs as World Development Indicators (WDI) of global development and the quality of people's lives. The WDI are derived from numerous international agencies with the joint effort of national statistic offices and other development agencies (World Bank, 2016). To conclude, Sustainable Development Goals is a global set of goal on things to be done by different governments in the interest of the well-being of the entire world and humanity.

In the year 2000, 189 countries came together at New York, USA to adopt United Nations Millennium Declaration and they committed to achieve eight development Goals by 2015. The objectives were:

1. To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. To achieve universal primary education
3. To promote gender equality and empower women
4. To reduce child mortality
5. To improve maternal health
6. To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
7. To ensure environmental sustainability
8. To establish a global partnership for development

The advancement in those 15 years has been impressive. Hunger has been reduced to half, the proportion of the global population living below the extreme poverty (earning below the international poverty line of \$1.25 a day) line is down nearly by half between 2002 and 2012 that is from 26 per cent to 13 per cent, improved access to drinking water, increase in the numbers of primary school enrollment, and reduced child mortality as being reported by the United Nations in 2015 (UNDPa, 2016). Despite the fact that proportion of global population increased by 2 billion from 5.3 billion in 1990, more than 1 billion people escaped extreme poverty. It is worthwhile to mention that closed to 2.1 billion have gained

access to sanitation facilities and 2.6 billion have gained access to an improved source of drinking water. The global mortality rate was cut down to half from 91 to 43 per 1,000 live births over the preceding decade. During the last decade, frequency of disease viz., HIV, malaria and tuberculosis have declined. The share of seats held by women in parliaments rose to 23 per cent worldwide in 2016 (UNDPa, 2016). Despite this success, the intense of poverty has not been ended for all, causing a grave headache for world leaders. To make a set a broader framework and continuing with, the additional widely accepted set of goal was adopted known as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it replaced the earlier Millennium Development Goal (MDG) in 2015 (United Nations, 2015). Inequality, coordination, sustainability, institutional resourcefulness, implementation efficacy, environmental deterioration, etc., are said to have obstructed workings of MDGs (United Nations, 2014). The SDG framework commits to provide methodical means to the predicament identified in the case of MDGs.

SDGS were adopted by the UN General Assembly on 25 September, 2015 under the official agenda "Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development." On the same day, 194 member countries adopted the 2030 Development Agenda and committed to work towards achieving the goals by 2030. The Resolution adopted the

following 17 Sustainable Development Goals:

1. To eradicate extreme poverty in all its forms everywhere.
2. To end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
3. To ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all the people irrespective of ages.
4. To ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
5. To achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls.
6. To ensure availability and sustainable management of clean water and sanitation for all.
7. To ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
8. To promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
9. To build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
10. To reduce inequality within and among countries.
11. To make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
12. To ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
13. To take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
14. To conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
15. To protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
16. To promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
17. To strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

The SDGs are comprehensive and focus on five central themes: people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership. The signatory countries have committed to end poverty and hunger so that people can fulfill their potential in dignity and equality. The countries have resolved to protect the planet from degradation and take urgent action on climate change. They have determined that all people can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that progress takes place in harmony with nature; inclusive societies free from fear and violence, and a healthy environment. The Sates have resolved to mobilise the means to implement the agenda primarily focused on the disadvantaged section and most

vulnerable through strong global partnership (World Bank, 2016).

Against this backdrop, this article seeks to use various secondary sources of data to examine the current status of the goals, focusing mainly on India and South Asian countries. This paper will serve as a valuable resource for those engaged with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and will aid in formulating effective policy at the Central and State levels.

### **Sustainable Developmental Goals and India**

Being a signatory to the Agenda of Sustainable Development, all the South Asian countries, particularly India, attach high priority to this end. Much of India's development agenda and schemes of the Government of India are mirrored in the SDGs. Prime Minister of India at the "UN Summit for the adoption of the post 2015 Development Agenda" exhorted that elimination of poverty in all forms everywhere is at the top of India's goal. He added that elimination of poverty is vital necessity for ensuring peaceful sustainable and just world (NITI Aayog, 2015).

The role of all the stakeholders, particularly the State governments, is essential for the implementation of the programmes and schemes in order to effectively influence social and economic parameters. Keeping this in view, NITI Aayog has been in the forefront for the implementation SDGs in India (RIS, 2016).

### **Region-wise status of health, education, standard of living**

As we have observed above that the progress of human development has been impressive over the preceding decades, yet the parameters of human development has been craggy and deprivations persists in the globe (UNDPa, 2016).

We have started our analysis from the human development perspectives, for measuring the status of health, education and standard of living; we have taken the Human Development Index report of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite index of life expectancy, education, and per capita income. A country with a longer life expectancy at birth, longer education period, and the higher income per capita scores higher HDI. Norway with .949 score ranked first and Central African Republic with .352 score ranked lowest in the list of countries.

Table 1 reveals that the human development indicators of Europe and Central Asia are way ahead and stood at the score of 0.756, followed by Latin America and Caribbean at 0.751 and East Asia and Pacific at 0.720 among the list of regions, respectively. These three regions are considered to be the high human development region. The HDI score of Arab States and South Asia is 0.687 and 0.621, respectively, and is considered to be medium human development region. Sub-Saharan Africa region lagged the most in terms

**Table 1: Region-wise Component and Overall Human Development Index**

| Region                    | Life Expectancy | Mean Years of Schooling | Gross National Income (GNI) per capita US Dollar(\$) | Overall HDI |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|--|-------------|
| Arab States               | 70.8            | 6.8                     | 14,958   | 0.687       |
| East Asia & Pacific       | 74.2            | 7.7                     | 12,125   | 0.720       |
| Europe & Central Asia     | 72.6            | 10.3                    | 12,862   | 0.756       |
| Latin America & Caribbean | 75.2            | 8.3                     | 14,028   | 0.751       |
| South Asia                | 68.7            | 6.2                     | 5,799  | 0.621       |
| Sub-Saharan Africa        | 58.9            | 5.4                     | 3,383  | 0.523       |

Source: Human Development Report, 2016.

(UNDP has considered Iran among South Asian countries for HDI report, but for our analysis we have not considered Iran).

of HDI score and stood at a score of 0.523 and is considered to be low human development region. The life expectancy and Gross National Income of Latin America and Caribbean is higher among the list of regions. Mean Years of Schooling of Europe and Central Asia is higher among the list of regions. South Asian countries somehow managed to show better results than the Sub-Saharan African countries.

### **Status of Health, Education, Standard of Living in South Asian Countries**

South Asia is home to 1.8 billion people constituting 22.2 per cent of the world's population or about one-fourth of the world's population (Singh, 2008).

Among the South Asian countries, Sri Lanka outperformed the rest in terms of overall human development with a score of .766. However, its literacy rate is lower than Maldives. Sri Lanka and Maldives are considered to be the high human development<sup>1</sup> countries. India's overall score is negligibly higher than

Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan and Afghanistan. India is considered to be medium human development region. Afghanistan is languishing at bottom with a score of .479 among the South Asian countries and is considered to be low human development region (Table 2).

### **Status of Poverty in South Asian Countries**

The poverty scenario is very severe among South Asian countries. Apart from the Maldives, the population living below the poverty line ranges from 21 per cent to nearly 36 per cent. Thapa (2006) mentioned that close to 40 per cent of world's poor live in South Asian countries. However, countries are gradually moving from the daunting task of ending the abject of poverty. Around 10 per cent of the world's workers and their families were living on less than 1.90 US dollars per person per day in 2015. The number has down from 28 per cent in 2000 to 10 per cent in 2015

(UNDPa, 2016). Multidimensional Poverty Index is used to measure the percentage of poverty and the contribution of education, health and living standards to the deprivations<sup>2</sup>.

Poverty is severe in Afghanistan as close to 36 per cent of people live below the poverty line. India is one the fastest growing major economies, growing at a pace of 6.1

per cent, but the same is uneven across the region. It has been the home to 84 billionaires in Forbes 2016 richest list, and at the same time, it is home to roughly one-third of poor people in the world. Planning Commission of India (2014) estimated that nearly 21.9 per cent of the people live below poverty line (Table 3). The situation of poverty is grim more particularly in rural areas, as around 25.7 per

**Table 2: Components of Human Development Index of South Asian Countries**

| Country     | Life Expectancy (Yrs) | Mean Years of Schooling (Yrs) | Literacy Rate (%) | (GNI) per capita US Dollar (\$) | Score | Rank |
|-------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|-------|------|
| Sri Lanka   | 75.0                  | 10.9                          | 92.6              | 10,789                          | .766  | 73   |
| Maldives    | 77.0                  | 6.2                           | 99.3              | 10,383                          | .701  | 105  |
| India       | 68.3                  | 6.3                           | 74.0              | 5,663                           | .624  | 131  |
| Bhutan      | 69.9                  | 3.1                           | 64.9              | 7,081                           | .607  | 132  |
| Bangladesh  | 72.0                  | 5.2                           | 61.5              | 3,341                           | .579  | 139  |
| Nepal       | 70.0                  | 4.1                           | 64.7              | 2,337                           | .558  | 144  |
| Pakistan    | 66.4                  | 5.1                           | 58.7              | 5,031                           | .550  | 147  |
| Afghanistan | 60.7                  | 3.6                           | 38.2              | 1,871                           | .479  | 169  |

Source: Human Development Report, 2016.

**Table 3: Multidimensional Poverty Index of South Asian Countries**

| Countries   | National Poverty Line (%) | PPP US Dollar (\$)<br>1.90 a day | Contribution of deprivation (%) |        |                  |
|-------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------|------------------|
|             |                           |                                  | Education                       | Health | Living standards |
| Afghanistan | 35.8                      | N/A                              | 45.6                            | 19.2   | 35.2             |
| Pakistan    | 29.5                      | 6.1                              | 36.2                            | 32.3   | 31.6             |
| India       | 21.9                      | 21.2                             | 22.7                            | 32.5   | 44.8             |
| Bangladesh  | 31.5                      | 18.5                             | 28.4                            | 26.1   | 44.5             |
| Nepal       | 25.2                      | 15.0                             | 32.2                            | 25.6   | 42.2             |
| Maldives    | 15.7                      | 7.3                              | 27.8                            | 60.2   | 11.9             |
| Bhutan      | 33.4                      | 12.0                             | 40.3                            | 26.3   | 33.4             |

Source: Human Development Report, 2016.

Note: The data of Sri Lanka was not available (N/A) for analysis.

cent of the people live in poverty line (United Nations, 2016). Amartya Sen (2000) argued that poverty is not only insufficient income, but it is the deprivation of various capabilities, which include security and ability to participate in economic as well as political systems. Sri Lanka has the lowest poverty rate among the South Asian countries standing at close to 7 per cent. The report stated that in India around 45 and 33 per cent of deprivation contributed by low standard of living and poor health, respectively, followed by education close to 23 per cent.

### Analysis of Multidimensional Poverty of South Asian Countries

For in-depth analysis of poverty, we have considered the country-wise amount of money spent on education and health as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) among the South Asian countries

We can observe from Table 4 that Afghanistan government's expenditure on

education is 3.38 per cent less than health i.e., 8.18 as a percentage of GDP. This has affected the poverty rate as the percentage contribution of education is 45.6 per cent and health is 19.2 to the overall poverty. Less expenditure on education has also affected the literacy rate of the country. So, in the case of Afghanistan, perhaps the State expenditure may have affected with the overall rate of poverty. State's expenditure on education of Nepal and Bangladesh is 3.75 and 2.18 per cent less than health as a percentage of GDP i.e., 5.80 and 2.82, respectively. This expenditure may have a bearing on poverty rate.

Even though India has improved its HDI rank from low in the 1990s to medium in 2015, the progress has been painfully slow because government expenditure on building social capital has been inadequate, given the extent of socio-economic deprivation. South Asia, which has the highest level of malnutrition in the world, also has the lowest public health

**Table 4: Country-wise Expenditure as a Percentage of GDP**

| Countries   | GDP (Million of US Dollar \$) | Education         | Health            |
|-------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|             |                               | Percentage of GDP | Percentage of GDP |
| Afghanistan | 19,199                        | 3.38              | 8.18              |
| Pakistan    | 269,971                       | 2.66              | 2.61              |
| India       | 2,095,398                     | 3.84              | 4.69              |
| Bangladesh  | 195,079                       | 2.18              | 2.82              |
| Sri Lanka   | 82,316                        | 2.18              | 3.50              |
| Nepal       | 20,881                        | 3.75              | 5.80              |
| Maldives    | 3,062                         | 5.71              | 13.73             |
| Bhutan      | 1,959                         | 7.39              | 3.57              |

Source: World Bank, 2015.



expenditure averaging 1.6 per cent of GDP. The SDG Index and Dashboard report of 2017 reveals that South Asian region faces major SDG challenges in health, education, improved nutrition and sustainable agriculture (SDG Index and Dashboard report, 2017)

To address the issues of poverty, the Government of India has implemented many schemes and programmes to bring about overall improvement in the quality of life in both urban and rural areas. Employment generation, development of rural infrastructure and provision of other basic amenities have always been the priorities of government. The Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Panchayati Raj and Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs are trying to address the poverty through various Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) viz., National Urban Livelihoods Mission, National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA), National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), National Land Record Management

Programme (NLRMP), etc., through the State governments. Apart from CSS, government has launched other related intervention schemes, namely Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJBY) and Atal Pension Yojana (APY).

### **Status of Food Availability and Security**

Among other targets, agricultural productivity and income of small farmers is to be doubled by 2030 (World Bank, 2016). Keeping this in view, Government of India set the deadline of 2022 to double farmers' income. For measuring the food availability, we have considered Global Hunger Index (GHI). The GHI is designed to comprehensively measure and track hunger globally.

The GHI report shows each country's successes and failures in hunger reduction and provides insights into the drivers of hunger. It is prepared by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). By raising awareness

**Table 5: Ranking of South Asian Countries in Global Hunger Index (GHI)**

| Countries   | 2016  |          | 2017  |          |
|-------------|-------|----------|-------|----------|
|             | Score | Rankings | Score | Rankings |
| Afghanistan | 34.8  | 111      | 33.3  | 107      |
| Pakistan    | 33.4  | 108      | 32.6  | 106      |
| India       | 28.5  | 97       | 31.4  | 100      |
| Bangladesh  | 27.1  | 90       | 26.5  | 88       |
| Sri Lanka   | 25.5  | 85       | 25.5  | 84       |
| Nepal       | 21.9  | 72       | 22.0  | 72       |

Source: Global Hunger Index, 2016; Global Hunger Index, 2017.

Note: Maldives and Bhutan data were not available for analysis.

and understanding of regional and country-wise differences in hunger, the GHI aims to trigger actions to reduce hunger.

No South Asian country figured in the list of alarming hunger or extremely alarming hunger level<sup>3</sup> countries. It is worth mentioning that Central African Republic, Chad, Zambia, Haiti, Madagascar, Sierra Leone and Yemen found a place in alarming bracket. It is difficult to assert a link but hunger can be extricably linked with poverty, inequality, violence, conflicts, disease and climate change (Global Hunger Index, 2017). Agricultural production and yields have moved up quickly in many parts of the world due to importance given by governments in this sector.

In India, the agricultural yield has recorded more than threefold increase between 1966-67 and 2013-14 from about 644 kg per hectare to 2101 kg per hectare. During this period, the acreage increased only marginally from 115.30 million hectares to 126.04 million hectares whereas foodgrain production jumped from 74.23 million tonnes to 252.68 million tonnes (Ministry of Agriculture, 2015). However, we have often seen situations when there is enough stock of foodgrains but many have no access to it. The Global Hunger Index by the International Food Policy Research Institute in its 2016 ranking has placed India at 97 out of 118 countries. According to new GHI report of 2017, India has been ranked 100 out of 119 countries. However, the hunger level in the country has

now improved to 'Serious' as against 'Alarming' in its 2013 ranking.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution of Government of India (GoI) are trying to address the food problems and hunger through various Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) viz., National Food Security Act, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) and other related interventions schemes like Mid-Day Meal Scheme, Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), etc.

### **Status of Gender Equality**

The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, 1995 had proposed gender mainstreaming as a key strategy to reduce inequalities between women and men. Gender mainstreaming is "the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action including legislation, policies, and programmes, in any area and at all levels" (UNESCO, 2000). It provides a guideline to all governments and other stakeholders for promoting an active and visible policy of gender mainstreaming perspective in all its policies and programmes.

GDI components consist of life expectancy, mean years of schooling, Gross National Income (GNI) per capita and Human Development Index (HDI) values of both female and male. GDI is the ratio of female to male HDI values. Gender-wise life expectancy at birth, mean years of schooling and gross

national income per capita have been taken into consideration for measuring the gender equality.

Latin America and Caribbean countries are doing desirable and stood at 0.981 among the list of regions, although the mean years of schooling is lower than Europe and Central Asia. Latin America and Caribbean countries fall under the group of very high gender development group<sup>4</sup>. South Asian countries are languishing at the bottom in terms of overall gender development scoring .822, although the life expectancy is higher than Sub-Saharan African region (Table 6). South Asian countries fall under the group of low gender development group. It is noteworthy that huge GNI per capita inequality persists between among all the regions. However, the life expectancy of female is higher as compared to males among all the regions. It is worth mentioning that mean years of schooling of female is lower than males among all the regions. Europe and Central Asia outperformed all other regions in respect to mean years schooling of females.

Sri Lanka performs better in terms of GDI among the South Asian countries. Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Nepal found a place in the medium gender development group. Afghanistan, Pakistan and India are considered to be the low gender development countries. It is very pertinent to mention that no South Asian country could find a place in the very high or high gender

development groups. Literacy rate of females in Maldives is almost equal to that of men and figured in the upmost list among South Asian countries. Afghanistan is languishing in the bottom of the list in terms of female literacy<sup>6</sup> (Table7).

Females are not adequately represented in the Parliament be it Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha. Female members consist of 12 and 11 per cent in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, respectively (Table 8). It is noteworthy to mention that out of 4,120 Members of Legislative Assembly (MLA) seats, only 363 seats are held by female members i.e., close to 9 per cent seats are held by female members in the respective States. However, it is noteworthy to mention that the number of women in Parliament has increased from 5 per cent in 1<sup>st</sup> Lok Sabha to 12 per cent in 16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha (Election Commission of India, 2014).

It is observed that (Table 9) gender-wise employment is much skewed as females are not adequately represented in the organised sector of India. Although, the representation of females in private sector is higher than public sector as closed to 24 per cent, females are engaged in private sector compared to around 18 per cent in public sector.

National Mission for Empowerment of Women, including Indira Gandhi Matritrav Sahyog Yojana, Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (SABLA), Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao, Sukanya Samridhi Yojana (SSY), Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), etc.,

**Table 6: Region-wise Component and Overall Gender Development Index (GDI)**

| Region                    | Life Expectancy |      | Mean Years of Schooling |      | GNI per capita US Dollar (\$) |        | HDI    |      | Overall GDI |
|---------------------------|-----------------|------|-------------------------|------|-------------------------------|--------|--------|------|-------------|
|                           | Female          | Male | Female                  | Male | Female                        | Male   | Female | Male |             |
| Arab States               | 72.8            | 69.1 | 5.9                     | 7.6  | 5,455                         | 23,810 | .621   | .726 | 0.856       |
| East Africa & Pacific     | 76.2            | 72.3 | 7.3                     | 8.0  | 9,569                         | 14,582 | .704   | .736 | 0.956       |
| Europe & Central Asia     | 76.3            | 68.7 | 9.9                     | 10.7 | 8,453                         | 17,547 | .733   | .770 | 0.951       |
| Latin America & Caribbean | 78.4            | 72.0 | 8.3                     | 8.3  | 10,053                        | 18,091 | .743   | .757 | 0.981       |
| South Asia                | 70.2            | 67.4 | 4.9                     | 7.8  | 2,278                         | 9,114  | .549   | .667 | 0.822       |
| Sub-Saharan Africa        | 60.2            | 57.6 | 4.5                     | 6.3  | 2,637                         | 4,165  | .488   | .557 | 0.877       |

Source: Human Development Report, 2016.

**Table 7: Components of Gender Development Index of South Asian Countries**

| Country     | Life Expectancy (age) |      | Mean Years of Schooling |      | Literacy Rate (%) |      | (GNI) per capita US Dollar (\$) |        | HDI    |       | Overall score |
|-------------|-----------------------|------|-------------------------|------|-------------------|------|---------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|---------------|
|             | Female                | Male | Female                  | Male | Female            | Male | Female                          | Male   | Female | Male  |               |
| Sri Lanka   | 78.4                  | 71.7 | 10.3                    | 11.4 | 91.7              | 93.6 | 6,067                           | 15,869 | 0.734  | 0.785 | 0.934         |
| Maldives    | 78.0                  | 76.0 | 6.2                     | 6.3  | 98.8              | 99.8 | 7,155                           | 13,591 | 0.676  | 0.721 | 0.937         |
| India       | 69.9                  | 66.9 | 4.8                     | 8.2  | 60.6              | 83.1 | 2,184                           | 8,897  | 0.549  | 0.671 | 0.819         |
| Bhutan      | 70.1                  | 69.6 | 3.6                     | 5.3  | 55.0              | 73.1 | 5,657                           | 8,308  | 0.573  | 0.637 | 0.900         |
| Bangladesh  | 73.3                  | 70.7 | 5.0                     | 5.6  | 58.5              | 64.6 | 2,379                           | 4,285  | 0.556  | 0.599 | 0.927         |
| Nepal       | 71.5                  | 68.6 | 3.2                     | 5.0  | 53.1              | 76.4 | 1,979                           | 2,718  | 0.538  | 0.582 | 0.925         |
| Pakistan    | 67.4                  | 65.4 | 3.7                     | 6.5  | 45.8              | 69.5 | 1,498                           | 8,376  | 0.452  | 0.610 | 0.742         |
| Afghanistan | 62.0                  | 59.5 | 1.6                     | 5.8  | 24.2              | 52.0 | 511                             | 3,148  | 0.348  | 0.572 | 0.609         |

Source: Human Development Report, 2016; CIA, 2015.

**Table 8: Gender Representation in Indian Parliament, 2000-2014**

|             | 2000         |            |       | 2014          |             |       |
|-------------|--------------|------------|-------|---------------|-------------|-------|
|             | Male         | Female     | Total | Male          | Female      | Total |
| Lok Sabha   | 498 (91.89%) | 44 (8.11%) | 542   | 476 (87.82%)  | 66 (12.17%) | 542   |
| Rajya Sabha | 230 (92.00%) | 209 (8%)   | 250   | 216 (88.88) % | 27 (11.11%) | 243   |

Source: eci.nic.in

**Table 9: Gender-wise Employment in the Organised Sector in India (in lakh)**

| Sector         | Female         | Male            | Total  |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------|--------|
| Public sector  | 31.71 (18.07%) | 143.77 (81.92%) | 175.48 |
| Private sector | 27.83 (24.30%) | 86.69(75.69%)   | 114.52 |

Source: Economic Survey of India, 2013.

were launched by the Ministry of Woman and Child Development of Government of India for ensuring gender equality, and empower all women and girls.

### Status of Clean water

Access to clean water and sanitation are among the top priorities in very high human development countries (United Nations, 2016). UN reported that 40 per cent of population of the world is affected by scarcity of water and this causes more than 800 children die every day due to water and sanitation related disease. The UN recognises access to safe drinking water and sanitation as an important element of human health and notes that lack of access to water and sanitation especially affected the rights of children and women. Many studies have found that lack of access to water and sanitation are the reason behind under-nutrition and anaemia in women (RIS, 2016).

For measuring the status of clean water, we have considered the report on Progress on Sanitation and Drinking Water-2015 update and MDG assessment prepared jointly by the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and World Health Organisation (WHO). We have considered the use of clean drinking water as a percentage of populations for measuring the status of use of clean drinking water.

Bhutan and Maldives have achieved close to 100 per cent access to clean drinking water. Afghanistan has been in the bottom of the list in terms of access to clean water. The populations of Pakistan, Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka are yet to access 100 per cent access to clean drinking water (Table 10). The RIS report of 2016 stated that over 770 million people do not have access to sanitation.

**Table 10: Use of Drinking water as a Percentage of populations of South Asian Countries**

| Countries   | Urban    |            | Rural    |            |
|-------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|
|             | Improved | Unimproved | Improved | Unimproved |
| Afghanistan | 78       | 22         | 55       | 45         |
| Pakistan    | 94       | 6          | 90       | 10         |
| India       | 97       | 3          | 93       | 7          |
| Bangladesh  | 87       | 13         | 87       | 13         |
| Sri Lanka   | 99       | 1          | 95       | 5          |
| Nepal       | 91       | 9          | 92       | 8          |
| Maldives    | 100      | -          | 98       | 2          |
| Bhutan      | 100      | -          | 100      | -          |

Source: UNICEF and WHO, 2015.

For ensuring availability and sustainable management of water, Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation of Government of India has launched National Rural Drinking Water Programme, National River Conservation Programme (NRCP), Namami Gange - Integrated Ganga Conservation Mission, etc.

### Status of Access to Energy

The Global Tracking Framework (GTF), 2015 reports that 1.1 billion people in the world still live without electricity and almost 3 billion still cook using polluting fuels like kerosene, wood, charcoal and dung. For measuring the status of access to energy, we have considered the World Bank data on access to electricity by both urban and rural populations.

India's greatest health hazards issues that have long been ignored. As per NSSO 69<sup>th</sup> round report, 80 per cent of household in

rural India have access to electricity. Close to 80 per cent of the household used firewood for cooking purpose. National Family Health Survey (NFHS) reported that 51 per cent of all TB cases in India (and 59 per cent in rural India) are caused by cooking smoke.

Maldives could able to provide 100 per cent of electricity coverage to its citizens, whereas Bangladesh figured in the bottom of list in terms of electricity access. It is pertinent to mention that, except Maldives no South Asian country could able to provide 100 per cent access to electricity to its citizens. It is also evident from the (Table 11) that rural areas have low access to electricity as compared to urban areas. The Table also shows that close to 99 per cent electricity produced by Nepal and Bhutan comes from renewable sources (hydropower, wind power, biomass, solar power, geothermal, etc.). India generates close to 19 per cent electricity from renewable sources.

**Table 11: Status of Access to Electricity of South Asian Countries**

| Countries   | Access to Electricity |       | Total Renewable (Gwh) | % of Renewable energy generation |
|-------------|-----------------------|-------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
|             | Rural                 | Urban |                       |                                  |
| Afghanistan | 87.80                 | 89.50 | 710                   | 80.32                            |
| Pakistan    | 95.63                 | 97.53 | 29,576                | 31.85                            |
| India       | 70.03                 | 79.17 | 1,99,151              | 19.11                            |
| Bangladesh  | 51.40                 | 62.40 | -                     | -                                |
| Sri Lanka   | 90.94                 | 92.19 | 4,849                 | 39.24                            |
| Nepal       | 81.70                 | 84.90 | 3,498                 | 99.49                            |
| Maldives    | 100                   | 100   | -                     | -                                |
| Bhutan      | 95.98                 | 100   | 6,745                 | 99.99                            |

Source: World Bank, 2014 and International Energy Statistics, 2016.

Ministry of Power, New & Renewable Energy Coal, Tribal Affairs Petroleum & Natural Gas, Government of India has launched Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana and National Solar Mission for providing continuous power supply to rural India. Pradhan Mantri Ujjala Yojana (PMUY) will have to go long way for making a smokeless society. International Solar Alliance is a landmark alliance of more than 120 countries, most of them being sunshine countries. Efficient exploitation of solar energy to reduce dependence on fossil fuels is the alliance's primary objective.

### **Status of the Economy**

The economic reform of 1991 has given luminosity to the India's economy. Since economic liberalisation even though there has been a tremendous improvement in India's per capita income, growth has been lopsided and income disparities and regional imbalances continue to exist. For measuring the status of economy of the country, we have considered the South Asian Economic Focus (SAEF) report and World Economic Outlook Database of International Monetary Fund, 2016. The report stated that the India is expected to grow at 7.6 per cent by 2017 through maintaining strong consumption and increasing investment.

Bhutan and India are the fastest growing economies in the South Asian region and are growing at the rate of 8.4 and 7.5 per cent, respectively. India's economy outnumbered all the countries in the South Asian region and figured as the second largest economy in the Asian continent. It is noteworthy to mention

that Bhutan is growing at 8.4 per cent and is considered to be the highest in terms of GDP growth. However, Bhutan recorded a current account deficit of 24.9 per cent of the country's GDP in 2016. The growing unemployment rate<sup>5</sup> is a major headache for all the South Asian countries. Afghanistan is having the highest rate of unemployment followed by Pakistan and Bangladesh. Only Nepal recorded current account surplus among the list of South Asian countries.

For ensuring inclusive and sustainable economic growth, Skill Development Mission, National Service Scheme (NSS), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Act (MGNREA), etc., were launched by the Ministry of Labour & Employment and Ministry of Rural Development of Government of India.

### **Status of Resilient Infrastructure and Sustainable Industrialisations**

The competitiveness of manufacturing industry is one of the basic determinants of long-run sustainable growth and it is important for achieving socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable economic development. Keeping in view of the importance of the same, it is of great significance to understand countries' relative positions on this metric. For measuring the status of industrialisation, we have considered the Composite Industrial Performance (CIP) Index, 2016 of United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and ease of doing business rank provided by World Bank, 2016.



**Table 12: Gross Domestic Products (GDP) at Nominal and PPP of South Asian Countries**

| Countries   | GDP                    |                    | Asian Rank | World Rank | Avg. Real GDP growth % | Current account balance as a % of GDP | % of Unemployment |
|-------------|------------------------|--------------------|------------|------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
|             | Nominal US Dollar (\$) | PPP US Dollar (\$) |            |            |                        |                                       |                   |
| Afghanistan | 17,275                 | 64,198             | 32         | 100        | 2.0                    | (3.3)                                 | 35                |
| Pakistan    | 270,961                | 930,759            | 11         | 26         | 4.5                    | (1.1)                                 | 6.7               |
| India       | 2,182,577              | 8,027,031          | 2          | 3          | 7.5                    | (1.5)                                 | 3.4               |
| Bangladesh  | 226,760                | 628,376            | 14         | 33         | 6.6                    | (1.3)                                 | 4.9               |
| Sri Lanka   | 79,524                 | 234,708            | 22         | 61         | 5.0                    | (1.5)                                 | 4.2               |
| Nepal       | 21,356                 | 70,076             | 31         | 95         | 0.5                    | 6.2                                   | 3.3               |
| Maldives    | 3,031                  | 4,732              | 42         | 161        | 3.5                    | (7.8)                                 | -                 |
| Bhutan      | 2,209                  | 6,384              | 41         | 158        | 8.4                    | (24.9)                                | 2.6               |

Source: World Economic Outlook Database; IMF, 2016 and ILO, 2016.

**Table 13: CIP and Ease of Doing Business Rank of South Asian Countries**

| Countries   | CIP Index |         | Ease of doing business Rankings |
|-------------|-----------|---------|---------------------------------|
|             | Score     | Ranking |                                 |
| Afghanistan | -         | -       | 183                             |
| Pakistan    | .031      | 75      | 144                             |
| India       | .083      | 43      | 130                             |
| Bangladesh  | .030      | 77      | 176                             |
| Sri Lanka   | .029      | 81      | 110                             |
| Nepal       | .005      | 128     | 107                             |
| Maldives    | -         | -       | 135                             |
| Bhutan      | -         | -       | 73                              |

Source: UNIDO and World Bank, 2016.

Although India ranked 43<sup>rd</sup> in CIP Index ranks, it could not better its position in the ease of doing business rankings. Bhutan occupies in the top ranking stood at 73 in the ease of doing business rank. For building resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation, the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India has launched Border Area Development Programme (BADP), Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Make in India, Start Up India, Ease of doing business initiative, Mudra Yojana, etc.

### Status of Income Inequality

After the new economic policy of 1991, Indian economy has witnessed a growth in the last two decades. Nevertheless, poverty and inequality remain a major concern to policymakers. Sustained growth is a necessary condition for poverty reduction but not sufficient, as inequality plays an important

role here (Ali and Son, 2007). Inequality not only slows down the growth process but also hinders the process of poverty reduction. While Indian policymakers have been giving considerable attention to reduction of poverty, all the government schemes revolve around elimination of poverty in India (Referring to Table 3: Multidimensional Poverty Index of South Asian Countries).

GINI Index<sup>7</sup> shows coefficient ranges from 0 (0 per cent) to 1 (100 per cent), with 0 representing perfect equality and 1 representing perfect inequality.

GINI Index, which measures the inequality of a distribution, shows that huge inequalities persist in distribution of income in South Asian countries. Sri Lanka occupies front seat and is ranked 22 in the list of South Asian countries. Pakistan figured in the bottom of the list and is ranked 99. GINI index shows that huge income inequality persists in Pakistan.

**Table 14: GINI Index of South Asian Countries**

| Countries   | Score | Rankings |
|-------------|-------|----------|
| Afghanistan | -     | -        |
| Pakistan    | 29.6  | 99       |
| India       | 33.6  | 82       |
| Bangladesh  | 32.1  | 89       |
| Sri Lanka   | 49.0  | 22       |
| Nepal       | 32.8  | 86       |
| Maldives    | 37.4  | 64       |
| Bhutan      | 38.7  | 61       |

Source: World Bank, 2016.

Multi-sectoral Development Programme for Minorities, Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF), Scheme for Development of SCs, STs, OBCs and women, Udaan Scheme for youth of Jammu & Kashmir, Grants from Central Pool of Resources for North-Eastern Region and Sikkim, etc., were launched for reducing inequality by Government of India.

### **Status of Access to Sustainable Housing and Making Cities Safe and Resilient for Human Settlements**

Habitat for Humanity estimated (2015) that 1.6 billion people around the world lack adequate housing. The Census of India defines homeless people as those not living in census houses i.e., a structure with a roof. India is estimated to be the home to 78 million homeless people, including 11 million street children. According to the 2011 census, the

percentage of homeless people came down by 28 per cent in rural areas and 20 per cent in the cities as compared to 2001.

The growth of urbanisation was at its peak during 1970's, as reported by the population census of India. However, the growth of slum areas has been the cause of concern for the governments. Government has to ensure that the all sections of populations and religious minorities have access to safe and affordable housing, basic amenities and open green space. It would involve slum upgradation, improvement of urban planning and management practices in a way that is both participatory and inclusive, besides safeguarding the heritage and protecting the citizenry against natural disasters.

For making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, Smart Cities mission, Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana both rural and urban (Housing for All by 2022), Swachh Bharat Mission (massive sanitation drive), Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY), etc., are launched by the government.

For measuring the status of crime among South Asian countries, we have considered Numbeo<sup>8</sup> crime index. The index is prepared based on crime levels and types. Accordingly, score is given based on those parameters.

**Table 15: Crime Index of South Asian Countries**

| Countries   | Score (%)   |              |
|-------------|-------------|--------------|
|             | Crime Index | Safety Index |
| Afghanistan | 76.46       | 23.54        |
| Pakistan    | 53.32       | 46.68        |
| India       | 44.49       | 55.51        |
| Bangladesh  | 66.58       | 33.42        |
| Sri Lanka   | 34.58       | 65.42        |
| Nepal       | 36.00       | 64.00        |
| Maldives    | 50.83       | 49.17        |
| Bhutan      | 45.81       | 54.19        |

Source: Numbeo, 2017.

Note: Countries with maximum crime given high score and countries with safety given high score on safety.

Afghanistan figured in the top in the crime index among the list of South Asian countries. Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Maldives have high crime index and scored more than 50 per cent. Sri Lanka ranked one of the safest countries among the South Asian countries with highest safety index. Bhutan and India scored moderately in the safety score (Table 15).

### Status of Climate Action

India is also the world's fourth largest energy consumer and the world's third largest carbon emitter (Energy Information Administration, 2016). India, being a signatory to 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference better known as Paris Conference,

attaches high priority to climate conference. Pollution index (high weight is given to air pollution than water pollution) is an estimation of the overall pollution in the country.

**Table 16: Pollution Index**

| Countries   | Score | Country rankings |
|-------------|-------|------------------|
| Afghanistan | 95.60 | 2                |
| Pakistan    | 80.08 | 22               |
| India       | 76.53 | 26               |
| Bangladesh  | 92.30 | 4                |
| Sri Lanka   | 61.90 | 61               |
| Nepal       | 82.50 | 20               |
| Maldives    | 78.48 | -                |
| Bhutan      | 48.25 | -                |

Source: Numbeo, 2017.

(Note: Very high number for highly polluted country and low number for low polluted country)

Sri Lanka is the least polluted country in the South Asian region. Afghanistan figured in the top of the list of polluted countries in South Asia. Soil Health Card Scheme, National Clean Energy Fund, National Clean India Fund (NCEF), National Action Plan on Climate Change, etc., among other things were introduced by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to contain pollution.

### Status of Marine Ecosystem and Forest Coverage

Marine pollution refers to contamination and presence of pollutant particles in seas/

oceans. It occurs when harmful chemicals, particles, industrial, agricultural and residential waste, or the spread of invasive organisms enter into sea/ocean water. According to Natural Defense Resources Council (2015), China dumps 8.82 million tonnes followed by Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam accounted for 3.22, 1.88 and 1.83 million tonnes, respectively. Among South Asian countries, Sri Lanka dumps 1.59 million tonnes of plastic each year. These kill thousands of sea birds, sea turtles and marine mammals each year. By 2025, India would be dumping 2.88 million tonnes of plastic in the ocean each year.

According to the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2015, the total area under forest and tree cover is 79.42 million hectare, which is 24.16 per cent of the total geographical area (Press Information Bureau, 2015). India has the highest forest coverage and ranked 10 globally in terms of forest coverage. Sri Lanka accounted for highest per cent of geographical

area under forest coverage. Maldives has the lowest forest coverage accounted for merely 3.56 per cent of geographical area under forest coverage (Table 17).

For protecting, restoring and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has launched National Afforestation Programme (National Mission for a Green India), National Agro-forestry Policy (2014), National Action Programme to Combat Desertification, etc.

### Status of the Inclusive Societies

The World Summit for Social Development introduced the concept of social integration to create an inclusive society “a society for all” as one of the key goals of social development, held at Copenhagen in March, 1995. The key outcomes of the Copenhagen Declaration are pledged to make the

**Table 17: Percentage of Forest Coverage of South Asian Countries**

| Countries   | Area km <sup>2</sup> | Percentage | Rankings |
|-------------|----------------------|------------|----------|
| Afghanistan | 1,631                | 0.25       | 155      |
| Pakistan    | 42,240               | 5.31       | 79       |
| India       | 778,424              | 24.16      | 10       |
| Bangladesh  | 8,710                | 6.05       | 125      |
| Sri Lanka   | 19,330               | 29.46      | 113      |
| Nepal       | 36,360               | 24.70      | 85       |
| Maldives    | 10                   | 3.56       | 189      |
| Bhutan      | 24,764               | 64.50      | 101      |

Source: The World Factbook; CIA, 2015 and Press Information Bureau, 2015.

eradication of poverty, full employment and social integration. The term inclusive growth got much prominence in Indian economic policies since the Eleventh Five Year Plan. Growth is inclusive when it creates opportunities for all segments of the population and distributes the dividends of increased prosperity, both in monetary and non-monetary terms, fairly across society (OECD, 2012).

For measuring the inclusive societies (referring to Table 3 for poverty), we have taken the Global Gender Gap Index (GGP) of World Economic Forum. GGP is an index designed to measure gender equality. The report considered four parameters i.e., economic participation, educational attainment, political empowerment, and health and survival between men and women.

**Table 18: Global Gender Gap Index (GGP) of South Asian Countries**

| Countries   | Score | Rankings (South Asia) |
|-------------|-------|-----------------------|
| Afghanistan | N/A   | -                     |
| Pakistan    | .556  | 7                     |
| India       | .683  | 2                     |
| Bangladesh  | .698  | 1                     |
| Sri Lanka   | .673  | 3                     |
| Nepal       | .661  | 4                     |
| Maldives    | .650  | 5                     |
| Bhutan      | .642  | 6                     |

Source: World Economic Forum, 2016.

Note: The highest possible score is 1 and the lowest possible score is 0

It is observed that Bangladesh figured in the top of the list with a score .698 in terms of gender equality among South Asian countries. Pakistan figured in the bottom of the list with a score of .556 and ranked 7<sup>th</sup> among South Asian countries (Table 18). South Asian countries will have to go long way for bettering its gender equality.

For promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, Ministry of Home Affairs has launched Panchayat Yuva Krida aur Khel Abhiyan (PYKKA), whereas Ministry of Law and Justice has introduced Development of Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary including Gram Nyayalayas, Right to Information Act, 2005, etc.

### Status of Global Partnership

SDG 17 focuses on the global partnership for achieving the target of within 2030. G77, China, India and emerging and developing countries have taken an active part in the negotiations. The international communities have vehemently highlighted the importance of finance and technology for effective delivery of a global development agenda. Global partnership is a key to achieving SDGs.

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is a leading organisation for the deliberation and discourse among South Asian countries. SAARC has touched the

issues of poverty and other areas much before the adoption of MDGs and SDGs. The 6<sup>th</sup> SAARC Summit at Colombo first time accorded the highest priority to the alleviation of poverty in South Asia and established an Independent South Asian Commission on Poverty Alleviation (ISACPA) in 1991. For the first time, a SAARC Poverty Alleviation Fund (SPAF) was established. Later, it was reconstituted as the SAARC Development Fund (SDF). The SAARC Integrated Programme of Action (SIPA) adopted nine areas of cooperation that form the core of the SAARC process which includes agriculture and rural development, communications and transport, social development, environment, meteorology, forestry, science and technology, human resources development and energy in 2000. Later in 2008, the objective of creation of "Energy Fund" for sustainable energy among South Asian countries was an endeavour to that end (RIS, 2016). Although the deliberate

inaction, poor accountability, resource crunch, lack of coordination and implementation, terrorism, etc., among the countries are said to have affected the workings of SAARC nations (Lama, 2010). The creation of Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) among like-minded nations will help in realising the objectives of SDGs.

### **Sustainable Development Goal Index (SDGI)**

Sustainable Development Goal Index is prepared by Sustainable Development Solution Network (SDSN) on current state of progress on 17 goals. The Index comprises 149 of the 193 UN member States with a national population greater than one million.

**Table 19: Regional and Global Membership of South Asian Countries**

| Country     | Membership   |
|-------------|--|
| Maldives    | SAARC, BIMSTEC, OIC, NAM   |
| Sri Lanka   | SAARC, BIMSTEC, NAM  |
| India       | SAARC, BRICS, SCO, Commonwealth of Nations, G-20, BIMSTEC, Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Mekong-Ganga Cooperation, Indian Ocean Rim Associations, ICIMOD |
| Bangladesh  | SAARC, BIMSTEC, OIC, ICIMOD, NAM   |
| Nepal       | SAARC, BIMSTEC, ICIMOD, NAM  |
| Bhutan      | SAARC, BIMSTEC, ICIMOD, NAM  |
| Pakistan    | SAARC, OIC, ICIMOD, NAM  |
| Afghanistan | SAARC, ECO, NAM  |

Note: This is not the exhaustive list of international membership of South Asian Countries.

Sweden outnumbered the rest in the list of countries with an overall index score of 84.5, which signifies that Sweden is on average 84.5 per cent of the way to the best possible outcome across the 17 SDGs.

Sri Lanka has been able to show a desired result in terms of achieving SDGs among South Asian countries. Afghanistan figured in the bottom of the list and ranked 139 globally. Although India was able to score better than previous year, the position in 2017 has gone down to 116 from 110 (Table 20).

### The Way Forward

India, being a welfare State, has the primary responsibility to take care of its people and play a key role in the protection and promotion of economic and social well-being of its citizens. It is evident that the Government of India needs to spend more

on building social capital to ensure inclusive growth and uplift of the deprived. The Kothari Commission recommendations of allocating six per cent of GDP for the education sector in view of its social impact would help in realising the objective of building social capital.

The GDP-tax ratio of India is 16 per cent and it is well below the ratio of emerging economies and Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, which averages 21 per cent and 34 per cent, respectively. The recent move of the Government of India of making one nation, one tax through subsuming all the indirect taxes by implementing Goods and Services Tax (GST) may be a positive step in this regard. There are still significant shortfalls on ensuring access to basic infrastructure services and innovations across the region, which deserves an immediate attention from the policymakers.

**Table 20: Sustainable Development Goal Index**

| Country     | 2016  |      | 2017  |      |
|-------------|-------|------|-------|------|
|             | Score | Rank | Score | Rank |
| Maldives    | N/A   | N/A  | N/A   | N/A  |
| Sri Lanka   | 54.8  | 97   | 65.9  | 81   |
| India       | 48.4  | 110  | 58.1  | 116  |
| Bangladesh  | 44.4  | 118  | 56.2  | 120  |
| Nepal       | 51.5  | 103  | 61.6  | 105  |
| Bhutan      | 58.2  | 82   | 65.5  | 83   |
| Pakistan    | 45.7  | 115  | 55.6  | 122  |
| Afghanistan | 36.5  | 139  | 46.8  | 150  |

Source: SDG Index and Dashboards, 2016.

Note: Country's position between the worst (0) and best (100) cases.



Financial inclusion has far-reaching consequences, which not only help people from the abject of poverty but also provide a sense of dignity to the human life. Affordable, effective and safe financial service can play a transformative role by fostering equitable growth and furthering the developmental goals such as poverty reduction, job creation and food security. In an ICT-enabled environment, technology is the main driver to achieve the coveted goal of financial inclusion. It is considered as a sine qua non for an effective delivery of banking service. Combination of information technology and mobiles along with other IT-enabled services minimise the need for setting up physical branches at all locations and allow banks to deliver banking services efficiently. A robust technology-driven financial service mechanism is required to extend the reach and uses of financial service to the rural populace.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) is a key programme for public health issues and affordable access to WASH is of great significance mainly for health issue, especially in developing countries.

Gandhiji famously said that the future of India lies in its villages as close to 68 per cent of the population in the country live in rural areas. But, they are struggling pretty much for basic necessities of life. Decentralisation with strong Gram Sabha may be a solution so that government scheme reaches to the needed beneficiaries. Above all, the proactive role of all the stakeholders would help a great deal for successful implementation of rural development schemes and achievement of SDGs.

Being the nodal institute for implementation of SDGs, the NITI Aayog should provide direction to all States and Union Territories in realising the need for SDGs within the desired timeframe. Above all, monitoring and evaluation of the development programmes regularly or at a fixed interval is needed so as to measure its effectiveness and realising the objective of last-mile delivery. The indices like Gross National Happiness Index (GNHI), Global Peace Index (GPI) and OECD's Better Life Index could also be suitably used to capture poverty in its different forms.

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### Notes

1. **Human development groups** (Very high human development=above 0.800, High human development= 0.701, Medium human development=0.550, Low human development= below 0.541).
2. **Contribution of deprivation** percentage of multidimensional poverty index attributed to deprivations in each dimension.
3. **The Global Hunger Index** (low hunger= Values below 10, moderate hunger= values from 10 to 19.9, serious hunger= values from 20 to 34, alarming hunger= values from 35 to 49.9, and extremely alarming hunger= values 50.0 or above).
4. **Gender Development Groups** (Very high gender development=above 0.980, High gender development=0.958, Medium gender development= 0.871, Low gender development=below 0.849).
5. **Unemployment rate** According to International Labour Organisation, unemployment rate refers to those who are currently not working but are willing and able to work for pay, currently available to work, and have actively searched for work.
6. **Literacy rate** here means age 15 and above can read and write according to 2015 estimates.
7. **GINI Index** which measures the inequality of a distribution of income. It is often used to measure economic inequality, measuring income distribution or, less commonly, wealth distribution among a population.
8. **Numbeo** is a collaborative online database which provides data about consumer prices, crime rates, quality of health, pollution, cost of living between countries and cities, etc.

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### Annexure 1

|  | Arab States | East Asia and the Pacific | Europe and Central Asia | Latin America and the Caribbean | South Asia  | Sub-Saharan Africa       |
|--|-------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
|  | Algeria     | Cambodia                  | Albania                 | Antigua and Barbuda             | Afghanistan | Angola                   |
|  | Bahrain     | China                     | Armenia,                | Argentina                       | Bangladesh  | Benin                    |
|  | Djibouti    | Fiji,                     | Azerbaijan              | Barbuda                         | Bhutan      | Botswana                 |
|  | Egypt       | Indonesia                 | Belarus                 | Bahamas                         | India       | Burkina Faso             |
|  | Iraq        | Kiribati                  | Bosnia and Herzegovina  | Barbados                        | Iran        | Burundi                  |
|  | Jordan      | North Korea               | Georgia                 | Belize                          | Maldives    | Cabo Verde               |
|  | Kuwait      | Laos                      | Kazakhstan              | Bolivia                         | Nepal       | Cameroon                 |
|  | Lebanon     | Malaysia                  | Kyrgyzstan              | Brazil                          | Pakistan    | Central African Republic |
|  |             |                           |                         |                                 |             | Rwanda                   |
|  |             |                           |                         |                                 |             | São Tomé & Príncipe      |
|  |             |                           |                         |                                 |             | Senegal,                 |
|  |             |                           |                         |                                 |             | Seychelles               |
|  |             |                           |                         |                                 |             | Sierra Leone             |
|  |             |                           |                         |                                 |             | South Africa,            |
|  |             |                           |                         |                                 |             | South Sudan              |
|  |             |                           |                         |                                 |             | Swaziland,               |

contd...

