

4. SDGs: India's Progress Analysis

Prelims Syllabus: Economy

Mains Syllabus: GS-III Economics - Inclusive Growth & Issues, Issues relating growth and development, employment



Why in News?

- A recent analysis published in The Lancet has concluded that India is not on-target to achieve 19 of the 33 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators. The critical off-target indicators include access to basic services, wasting and overweight children, anaemia, child marriage, partner violence, tobacco use, and modern contraceptive use.

Analysis:

- **On-Target:** Districts that have not met the SDG target by 2021 and have observed a magnitude of improvement between 2016 and 2021 sufficient to meet the target by 2030.
- **Off-Target:** Districts that have not met the SDG target by 2021 and either observed worsening between 2016 and 2021 or observed an insufficient magnitude of improvement between 2016 and 2021. If these districts continue with either of these trends, they will not meet their targets by 2030.
- **Progress in:** Indicators shows the progress in reducing adolescent pregnancy, tobacco use in women, multidimensional poverty, teenage sexual violence, and improving electricity access.
- **Areas where more efforts are needed:** More efforts are needed for reducing anaemia in women, improving access to basic services, providing health insurance for women, and reducing anaemia in pregnant women.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- The SDGs, otherwise known as the Global Goals, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.
- The SDGs were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 with a vision to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. The 17 SDGs came into force with effect from 1st January 2016 as a part of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- India is one of the signatory countries that has committed to achieving these goals by 2030.
- Though not legally binding, the SDGs have become de facto international obligations and have the potential to reorient domestic spending priorities of the countries during the next fifteen years.
- Countries are expected to take ownership and establish a national framework for achieving these goals.

Targets set for each of the SDGs:

- **No Poverty:** By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day.
- **Zero Hunger:** By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.
- **Quality Education:** By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.
- **Gender Equality:** End all forms of discrimination, violence, harmful practices against all women and girls everywhere. Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life.

SDG

India's progress towards achieving SDGs so far

- **SDG 1 (No Poverty):** India has made significant progress in reducing poverty, with the poverty rate declining from 21.9% in 2011-12 to 4.4% in 2020. The government's efforts to provide financial inclusion and social protection schemes have contributed to this progress.

- **SDG 2 (Zero Hunger):** India has made progress in reducing hunger, with the prevalence of undernourishment declining from 17.3% in 2004-06 to 14% in 2017-19. The government's initiatives such as the National Food Security Act and the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana have contributed to this progress.
- **SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being):** India has made progress in improving maternal and child health, with maternal mortality ratio declining from 167 per 100,000 live births in 2011-13 to 113 in 2016-18. The government's efforts to strengthen health systems and increase access to healthcare services have contributed to this progress.
- **SDG 4 (Quality Education):** India has made progress in improving access to education, with the gross enrolment ratio for primary education increasing from 93.4% in 2014-15 to 94.3% in 2019-20. The government's initiatives such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the Right to Education Act have contributed to this progress.
- **SDG 5 (Gender Equality):** India has made progress in improving gender equality, with the sex ratio at birth increasing from 918 in 2011 to 934 in 2020. The government's initiatives such as the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao and the Maternity Benefit Programme have contributed to this progress.

Recent findings by National Family Health Survey

- **Multidimensional poverty declined:** At a compounded annual average rate of 4.8 per cent per year in 2005-2011 and more than double that pace at 10.3 per cent a year during 2011-2021.
- **Declining child mortality:** There are some issues with the 2011 child-mortality data, but for each of the 10 components of the MPI index, the rate of decline in 2011-2021 is considerably faster than in 2005-2011.
- **Average decline in overall indicators:** The average equally weighted decline for nine indicators was 1.9 per cent per annum in 2005-2011 and a rate of 16.6 per cent per annum, more than eight times higher in 2011-2021.
- **Consumption inequality decline:** Every single household survey or analysis has shown that consumption inequality declined during 2011-2021. This is consistent with the above finding of highly inclusive growth during 2011-2021.

Conclusion:

- The analysis provides a valuable tool for policymakers to address the gaps and focus on the indicators that require more attention, thereby improving the well-being of its citizens and creating a sustainable future for all.