

This article is related to General Studies-Paper-II (Social Issues) & III (Indian Economy)

The Hindu

02 Jan., 2020

"Even better performing States have not fared well in achieving gender equality."

The NITI Aayog's Sustainable Development Goals Index for 2019, released on Monday, does not reveal any surprising information. The South's Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka are joined by Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Goa as the best performers while the northern/north-central and north-eastern States have been laggardly in achieving the U.N.-mandated goals by 2030.

Poor performers such as Uttar Pradesh have shown discernible advances in the indices — measured between 2018-19 — especially in adopting cleaner energy and improving sanitation. But the regional divide is stark in basic livelihood goals such as “eradication of poverty”, and “good health and well being” or even in measures such as “industry, innovation and infrastructure”.

High-performing Union Territories

| Sustainable development goal | High UT scores |
|--|---|
| SDG 4: Quality education | Chandigarh (80) |
| SDG5: Gender equality | J&K (53), Ladakh (53) |
| SDG 6: Clean water & sanitation | Chandigarh (100), Daman & Diu (96) |
| SDG 7: Affordable & clean energy | Puducherry (97), Delhi (96) |
| SDG 9: Industry, innovation, infrastructure | Dadra & NH (100), Daman & Diu (100), Delhi (100) |
| SDG 10: Reduced inequalities | A&N Islands (94), Lakshadweep (93), Puducherry (92) |
| SDG 11: Sustainable cities & communities | Chandigarh (83) |
| SDG 13: Climate action | Lakshadweep (100), A&N Islands (72) |
| SDG 15: Life & land | Dadara & NH 100, Lakshadweep 100 |
| SDG 16: Peace, justice & strong institutions | Puducherry 96, Chandigarh 89 |

This points to variances in both State governance and in administrative structures and implementation of welfare policies. The South, led by Kerala and Tamil Nadu, has done much more in orienting administrative institutions to deliver on basic welfare, leading to actions on health care, education, poverty eradication and hunger, with a governance structure tuned to competitively monitoring actions on these fronts.

The converse is true of northern States — Bihar and Uttar Pradesh — where outcomes have remained relatively poor despite there not being much of a difference in the governance structure. The obvious answer to the puzzle could be the presence of historical socio-political movements that have resulted in greater circulation of elites in power and which have addressed issues related to welfare more thoroughly in the South — Kerala and T.N in particular.

Yet even these States need to go further in reaching the UN's SDGs and achieving the living standards of both the first world and other developing nations.

The western States, especially Gujarat and Maharashtra, are also better off in economic growth and industry, indicating a diversified economy, higher employment ratios, skilled labour and better entrepreneurial culture.

GOAL BY GOAL, THE STATES

| Sustainable development goal | Top score | 2nd place | Bottom rank |
|--|---|---------------|----------------|
| SDG 1: No poverty | Tamil Nadu (72) | Tripura (70) | Jharkhand (28) |
| SDG 2: Zero hunger | Goa (76) | Mizoram (75) | Jharkhand (22) |
| SDG 3: Good health | Kerala (82) | Andhra (76) | Nagaland (29) |
| SDG 4: Quality education | Himachal (81) | Kerala (74) | Bihar (19) |
| SDG 5: Gender equality | Himachal (52) | Kerala (51) | Telangana (26) |
| SDG 6: Clean water & sanitation | Andhra (96) | UP (94) | Tripura (69) |
| SDG 7: Affordable & clean energy | Sikkim (97) | Goa (95) | Odisha (50) |
| SDG 8: Decent work & economic growth | Telangana (82) | Andhra (78) | Manipur (27) |
| SDG 9: Industry, innovation, infrastructure | Gujarat (88) | Kerala (88) | Mizoram (8) |
| SDG 10: Reduced inequalities | Telangana (94) | Manipur (81) | Goa (19) |
| SDG 11: Sustainable cities & communities | Goa (79) | Himachal (79) | Meghalaya (22) |
| SDG 12: Sustainable consumption & production | Nagaland (100) | Tripura (92) | Rajasthan (30) |
| SDG 13: Climate action | Karnataka (71) | Andhra (70) | Jharkhand (27) |
| SDG 14: Marine ecosystems | Coastal states only, not counted in overall SDG | | |
| SDG 15: Life & land | Manipur (100) | Sikkim (100) | Haryana (40) |
| SDG 16: Peace, justice & strong institutions | Andhra (86) | Gujarat (86) | Assam (52) |

TOP 12, THE STATES

| | |
|-------------|----|
| Kerala | 70 |
| Himachal | 69 |
| Andhra | 67 |
| Tamil Nadu | 67 |
| Telangana | 67 |
| Karnataka | 66 |
| Goa | 65 |
| Sikkim | 65 |
| Gujarat | 64 |
| Maharashtra | 64 |
| Uttarakhand | 64 |
| Punjab | 62 |

BOTTOM 5, THE STATES

| | |
|-----------|----|
| Bihar | 50 |
| Jharkhand | 53 |
| Arunachal | 53 |
| Meghalaya | 54 |
| UP, Assam | 55 |

TOP 5, THE UTs

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Chandigarh | 70 |
| Puducherry | 66 |
| Dadra & NH | 63 |
| Lakshadweep | 63 |
| Delhi, A & N Islands, Daman & Diu | 61 |

A major fault-line in India is in achieving gender equality, where barring middling performers such as Himachal Pradesh, Kerala and Jammu & Kashmir, the rest of the country falls short. Low sex ratio (896 females per 1,000 males), poor labour force participation and presence in managerial positions (only 17.5% and 30%, according to the report), high level of informality of labour, a major gender pay gap (females earn 78% of wages earned by males in regular salaried employment), lack of adequate representation in governance (14.4% in Parliament, but 44.4% in local government) besides high crime rates against women and girls are among the major national level indicators that have contributed to this.

States need to climb a mountain to achieve gender equality, but immediate steps such as enhancing women's participation in governance through parliamentary reservations would go a long way in addressing several of the issues faced by them.

Expected Questions (Prelims Exams)

1. Consider the following statements in the context of the First Sustainable Development Goals Index 2019 released by NITI Aayog:

- 17 targets were included in this index
- The states of North-Central India remained in the top ten in this index.
- The most improving state in it was Uttar Pradesh

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 (b) Only 1
(c) 1 and 3 (d) Only 2

Note: Answer of Prelims Expected Question given on 30 Dec., is 1 (c)

Expected Questions (Mains Exams)

- Q.** The Sustainable Development Goals Index shows its commitment to the all-round development of a particular country. Review the performance of states in the Sustainable Development Goals Index recently released by NITI Aayog. (250 words)

Note: - The question of the main examination given for practice is designed keeping in mind the upcoming UPSC main examination. Therefore, to get an answer to this question, you can take the help of this source as well as other sources related to this topic.