



From MDGs to SDGs 1

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Dear Friends,

In this month, we shall introduce the SDGs, beginning with its evolution. This is a rather large topic, and we shall deal with it in a few instalments as under:

- The success of MDGs provided a clue as to how to implement Sustainable Development, even while the disagreements persisted.
- A Basic Insight: The Doughnut Principle: 'A Safe and Just Space for Humanity'.
- Three major contributions: SDSN, SRC and Kate Raworth
- Formulation of the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2016 – 2030
- Adoption of the SDGs



First, we shall discuss how the experience of implementation of the MDGs, some lessons learned and their relative success enabled some leading thinkers to propose a much more ambitious set of goals, even while the MDGs were being implemented.

We shall fall back to our own experience and try to draw our conclusions on this. Therefore, it is helpful to recall our own nation's progress on the MDGs here. We can see that the entire nation was involved, right from the central government, state governments and many of the progressive district administrations in implementing the different aspects of the program, and report results systematically year on year. There were more than 30 indicators, and each of them were very clearly defined, so that there was no doubt in measuring the outcomes.

This was a major lesson: If we want to achieve something, we must be able to define clearly how to measure our achievement, and have a system of making actual periodic measurements.

For example, let us consider the Indicator #9: Ratio of literate women to men, 15 to 24 year-old. Youth literacy among women was considered to be an important parameter for women empowerment and development, and this age bracket holds a key. Let me explain why, citing the example from our nearby village Ettimadai. A 2.2 Kms road from the highway, passes through this village, before we reach our campus at Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Coimbatore. Interestingly, this road divides the village community sharply. As one comes in, on the right side of the road, live all members of the land owners and other middle class families. On the left, a much larger number are crowded into small huts, and all of them belong to SC / ST category. Their colony was named as Ambedkar Colony. The living conditions were utterly unhygienic, and illiteracy and addiction to alcohol among men was rampant. Girls often

got married at the age of 15 or 16 and became mothers before even reaching adulthood. Two professors (wife and husband) started a voluntary scheme to support the education of the children and imbibe personal hygiene. After about 15 years, the colony boasts of 5 girls who have completed graduation and are self-reliant, and another 10 girls are enrolled in a University. They do not even think of marriage at the age of 15 – 20. Their parents are also with them, as they can see a brighter future for their girl children.

One can easily see the difference, education makes in the lives of women and eventually their children. An educated mother can coach a child at home and the child finds in her the best teacher.

| MDGs Progress at a Glance | | Achieved | Progress | Failed | Code |
|----------------------------------|--|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------|
| Sl. No. | Indicator | | | | |
| 1 | Poverty Head Count Ratio | | | | |
| 2 | Poverty Gap Ratio (PGR) | | | | |
| 3 | Share of poorest quintile in national consumption | | | | |
| 4 | Prevalence of Underweight Children under 3 years of age | | | | |
| 5 | Net Enrolment Ratio | | | | |
| 6 | Proportion of pupils starting Grade 1 who reach Grade 5 | | | | |
| 7 | Literacy rate of 15–24 year-olds | | | | |
| 8 | Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education | | | | |
| 9 | Ratio of literate women to men, 15-24 year old | | | | |
| 10 | Share of Women in Wage Employment in the Non-Agricultural Sector | | | | |
| 11 | Proportion of seats held by women in National Parliament | | | | |
| 12 | Under- Five Mortality Rate | | | | |
| 13 | Infant Mortality Rate | | | | |
| 14 | Proportion of one year old children immunised against measles. | | | | |
| 15 | Maternal Mortality Ratio | | | | |
| 16 | Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel | | | | |
| 17 | HIV prevalence among pregnant women aged 15-24 years (%) | | | | |
| 18 | Condom use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate | | | | |
| 19 | Condom use at last high-risk sex | | | | |
| 20 | Proportion of population aged 15-24 years knowledge of HIV / AIDS % | | | | |
| 21 | Prevalence and death rates associated with Tuberculosis | | | | |
| 22 | Proportion of land area covered by forests | | | | |
| 23 | Ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area | | | | |
| 24 | Energy use per unit of GDP (Rupee) | | | | |
| 25 | Carbon Dioxide emission per capita and consumption of ODS | | | | |
| 26 | Proportion of the Households using solid fuels | | | | |
| 27 | Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water | | | | |
| 28 | Slum population as percentage of urban population | | | | |
| 29 | Telephone lines and cellular subscribers per 100 population | | | | |
| 30 | Internet subscribers per 100 population | | | | |

Source: MDGs Final Country Report India

There were many other elements also to the implementation of the MDGs. Providing the required financial and human resources for fulfilling the goals is perhaps the most important among them. At the global level, the UN urged all rich nations to contribute funds for achieving the goals, and special mechanisms were created to channelize these funds to the governments in developing countries for facilitating the implementation. This was yet another lesson:

For achieving large scale developmental goals, financial and human resources are required, and there is a need to mobilise these resources in an organized manner.

A large number of programs adopted at the national level helped in the implementation process. For example, for TARGET 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015, the following initiatives of the central government were relevant*:

- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao
- Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidhyalaya Scheme
- Incentives to Girls for Secondary Education
- Rashtriya Madhyamic Shiksha Abhiyan
- Rashtriya Uchhtar Shiksha Abhiyan
- Mahila Samakhya Programme
- Saakshar Bharat
- Kishori Shakti Yojana and Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls – SABLA
- Support to Training and Empowerment Programme
- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

Source: MDG_Final_Country_report_of_India_27Nov17

We can draw the following lesson from above:

It is important that the national government develops and implement several independent programs, in order to achieve the goals.

The country report reported a major deficiency in our documentation system, leading to non-availability of adequate data. The report laments the non-availability of district level data. This is yet another important lesson:

In order to manage such large scale developmental efforts, it is essential to establish a well-designed machinery for collection of reliable data pertaining to each of the indicators.

Even though the overall outcome was mixed, (achieved – 6, in progress - 16 and failed – 8); overall, we find ourselves in a much better position compared to the state at the beginning of the period. The lessons learnt, some of which have been noted above, helped create a conducive environment for conceptualising the SDGs.

