Sustainable Development Goal-3

By
Dr.Sanjay Banerji
Founder Director/Dean of Amrita School of Business

Dear Friends,

This month we shall discuss the third Sustainable Development Goal: Good Health and Wellbeing. In this blog, we shall try to explain:

1. What it is and why is this relevant
2. What are its indicators
3. What are the targets
4. Where do we stand in India?
5. What can we do to support the goal?

As stated earlier, I have little to contribute on my own. I have attempted to provide a few references, so that if anyone is interested in probing deeper, you could do so.

1. What is SDG 3 and why is this relevant

As I write this blog, we are passing through the Covid-19 pandemic declared by the WHO, and the entire world is suffering from its impact. Here is evidence of how closely interconnected we have become, and why it is absolutely essential for everybody everywhere to live a healthy life.

This goal is designed to 'ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages'. As you might recall, the MDGs had 3 goals related to health and wellbeing: to reduce child mortality; to improve maternal health and to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases. In the SDGs, a more general view is adopted, in line with the overall motto of 'leave no one behind'. In addition, as we shall see later, water and sanitation was accorded the significance of a separate goal #6.

The MDGs witnessed an overall increase of 5.5 years in global average life expectancy. Life expectancy of females are approximately 4.5 years higher than males, and this trend has remained more or less constant during 2000 – 2016. The greatest gain was observed in Africa – an increase from 50.9 years to 61.2 years, a jump of 10.3 years.

These results were primarily driven by addressing the 'common killers associated with child and maternal mortality' as well facilitating treatment of communicable diseases like AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. These are to continue through 2030.

The SDG 3 also attempts to reduce premature deaths due to incommunicable diseases by 1/3rd by the year 2030. The latest report (2019) of UN Sustainable Development [3] notes the following:

> However, in the case of other diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis, progress has slowed or stalled. At least half the world's population are still without access to essential health services. In rich and poor countries alike, a health emergency can push people into

bankruptcy or poverty. Concerted efforts are required to achieve universal health coverage and sustainable financing for health; address the growing burden of non-communicable diseases, tackle antimicrobial resistance and environmental factors contributing to ill health.

The following infographics [4] show the latest global status. Major challenges remain (deep red) in most of Asia, Africa, South America and even in the Russian federation.
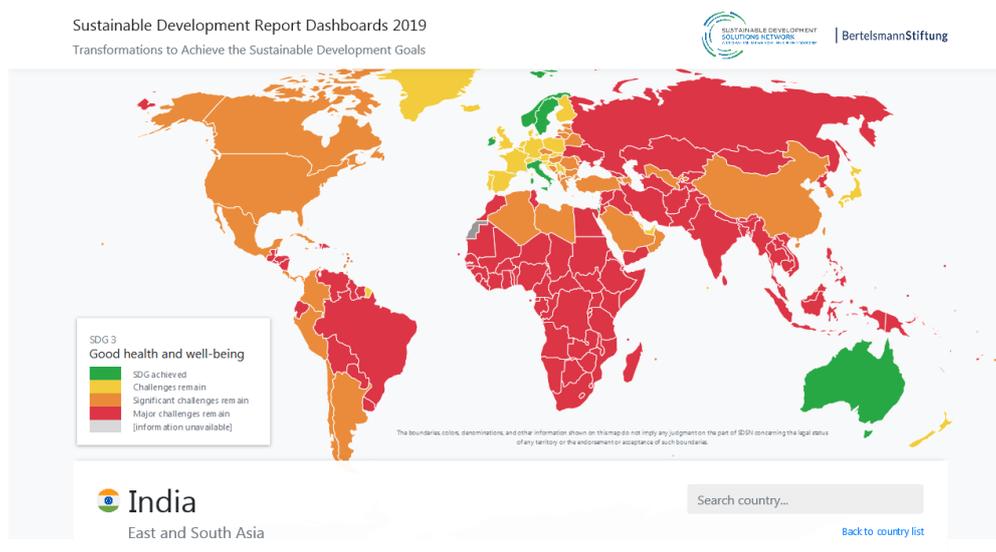
2 & 3. What are its indicators and targets?

i.   By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio (MMR) to less than 70 per 100 000 live births.

ii. By 2030, end preventable deaths of new-borns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1000 live births.

iii. By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases.

iv. By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being.

v.   Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol.

vi. By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents.

vii. By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes.

viii. Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.

ix. By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination.

x.   Strengthen the implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate.

xi. Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide

access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all.

xii. Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States.

xiii. Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks.
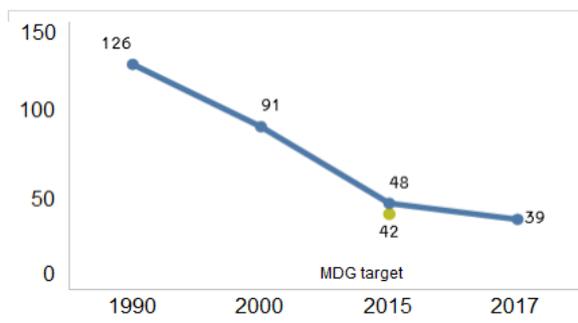
4. Where do we stand in India?

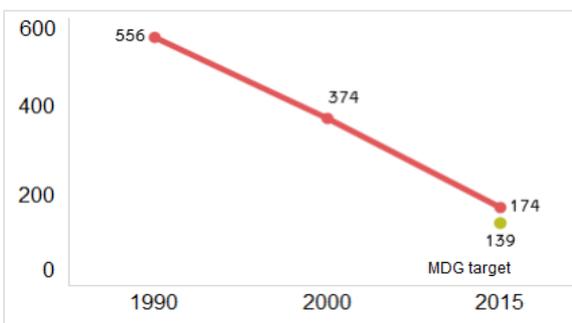The following infographics provide our latest available status as well as the 2030 goals:

INDIA

JUST MISSED MDG 4

62% reduction in under 5 mortality since 1990

SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS TOWARD MDG 5
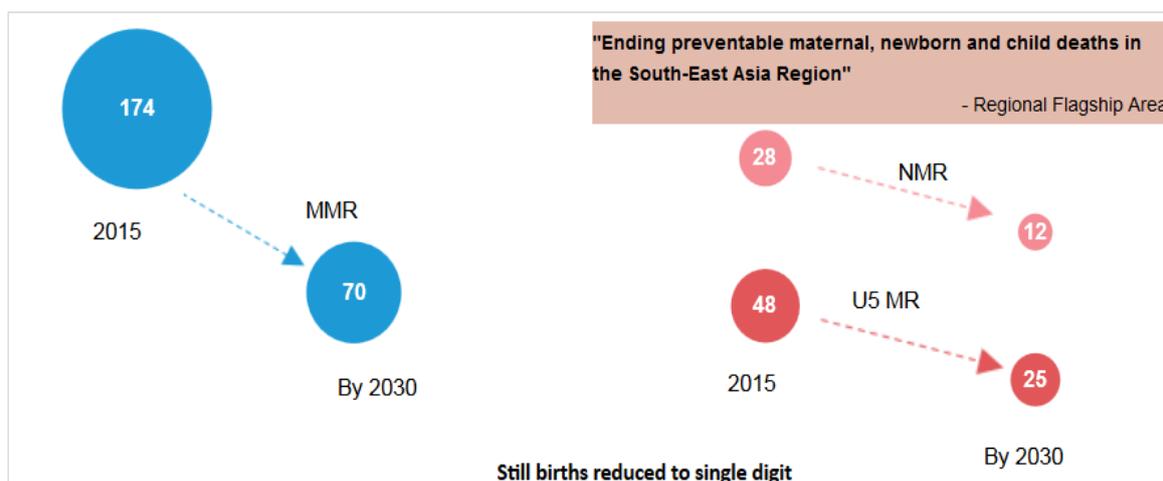
69% reduction in maternal mortality since 1990

Total population	1,366,418
Under-five mortality rate	39
Infant mortality rate	32
Neonatal mortality rate	24

Population under 5 (%)	9.0
Stunting in children under 5 (%)	38.0
Wasting in children under 5 (%)	21.0
Overweight in children under 5 (%)	2.0

Maternal mortality ratio	174
Adolescent 13-19 years (%)	13
Adolescent Birth Rate	51
Unmet need for FP	13

On SDG 3 our index is 58.8 out of 100 [4]

NEW HORIZONS

SDG targets

"Ending preventable maternal, newborn and child deaths in the South-East Asia Region"

- Regional Flagship Area

Still births reduced to single digit

5. What can we do to support the goal?

Like 'Charity begins at home', our efforts in supporting this goal must begin with our own family, and progressively we might spread the awareness and ask for necessary support from our local, state as well as central government. At home, following a healthy lifestyle, eating healthy food, maintaining proper personal hygiene, doing regular exercise, and finally sleeping early and getting up early can go a long way in ensuring good health. Indian ethos tells us that we are not the body-mind-intellect alone. All of us are endowed with the unique gift of God: the human life with a soul and a consciousness found only in human beings. We must develop a holistic approach to life that cares for all living and non-living on our Mother Earth. We are required to nourish not only our body and the intellect, but we must also regularly nourish our soul. Swami Vivekananda urged all of us to 'Do good and be good'. Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi urges all of us to pray 'Lokah samastah sukhino bhawantu', meaning 'may every being everywhere be happy'. Yes, sincere prayer for the wellbeing of the entire creation is a definite way of remaining healthy. Especially in times like this when the entire world is suffering from the Covid-19 threat, staying healthy and sincere prayers that others stay healthy can help a lot.

May everybody live a healthy life? Thank you.

References

Source:

1. https://www.who.int/gho/mortality_burden_disease/life_tables/situation_trends_text/en/
   Accessed on March 10, 11:26 a.m. IST.
2. Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages
   https://www.who.int/sdg/targets/en/
3. Why it matters?
   https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/ENGLISH_Why_it_Matters_Goal_3_Health.pdf
4. SDG Index Dashboard
   https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/#/IND

   Accessed on March 18, 2020 11:01 a.m. IST