



Sustainable Development Goal - 16

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Dear Friends,

This month we shall discuss the 16th Sustainable Development Goal: 'Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions'. In this blog, we shall try to explain:

- a. What it is and why is this relevant
- b. What are its indicators and targets
- c. Where do we stand in India
- d. 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.



What is SDG 16? [1]

The purpose of SDG 16 is to promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies. Violent conflicts (the opposite of peace) kill on an average 100 innocent lives, including women and children *every day*, and destroy decades of accumulated development, within hours. As I write this, I got the news of an unexpected death of a 23 year old son of my classmate. He choked in sleep, some food went into his lungs, and was declared brain dead after 3 days in hospital. His mother, herself a doctor, decides to pull the plug, and donated all organs. The utter futility of all conflicts is driven home, only when a calamity strikes us. Yet, as a poet has noted, the most wonderful phenomenon on earth is the fact that each one believes that death would not assail oneself!

Humanity has devised multiple methods of exclusion, preventing others from accessing even basic needs like drinking water, food, shelter, education and healthcare. These divisions are based upon wealth, religion, gender, race, ethnic background etc. Exclusions naturally lead to dissatisfactions, and offer a fertile ground for breeding extremism. Making societies inclusive attempts to correct this malady.

When one party feels aggrieved in a society, he / she / they seek justice. In all forms of governance, a good system for granting justice to one and all is seen as a sure sign of good governance. However, humanity has also attempted to deny proper justice, throughout history, again for narrow selfish ends. Denial of justice is yet another sure ground for conflict and violence. SDG 16 attempts to ensure just, peaceful and inclusive societies.

Why is this important? [2]

The above explanations should be enough justifications for SDG 16. However, the following facts would make the case for SDG 16 much stronger.

The number of people forced to leave behind their homes and flee from conflicts, war and systematic persecution has been steadily increasing, touching an all-time high of around 80 million in 2019. Almost 1% of humanity are forced to flee their homes, with children (including toddlers) being the worst affected.

Around 50% of refugees are children, separated from their families. Around 28 million children living in conflict zone are out of school. One-fourth of all new-born children are not registered at birth, depriving them of their fundamental rights outside their locality. Globally, a child dies due to violence, every seven minutes. The social cost of violence against children is estimated at USD 7 trillion annually.

More than 60% refugees live in urban areas as opposed to camps or rural areas. Poorest nations host 33% of all refugees, mostly in the neighbouring nations. More than 60% live in urban areas as opposed to camps or rural areas. Poorest nations host 33% of all refugees, mostly in the neighbouring nations.

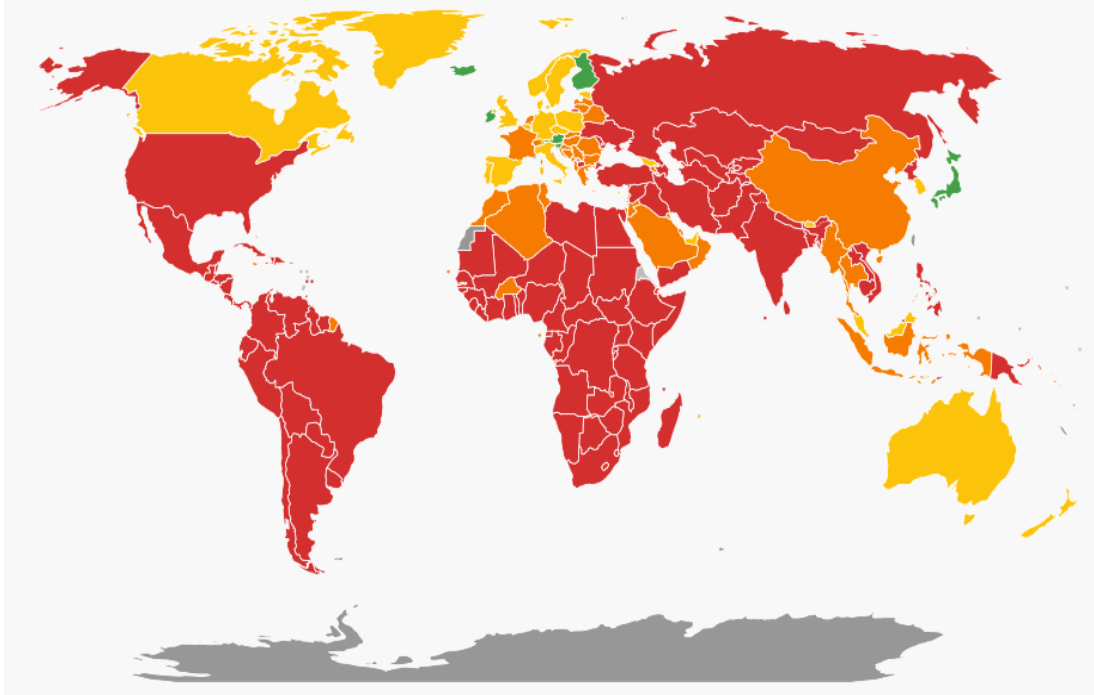
What are its indicators and targets? [3]

The targets for SDG-16 are as under:

- 16.1** Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere
- 16.2** End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children
- 16.3** Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all
- 16.4** By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime
- 16.5** Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms
- 16.6** Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels
- 16.7** Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels
- 16.8** Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance
- 16.9** By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration
- 16.10** Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements
- 16.A** Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime
- 16.B** Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

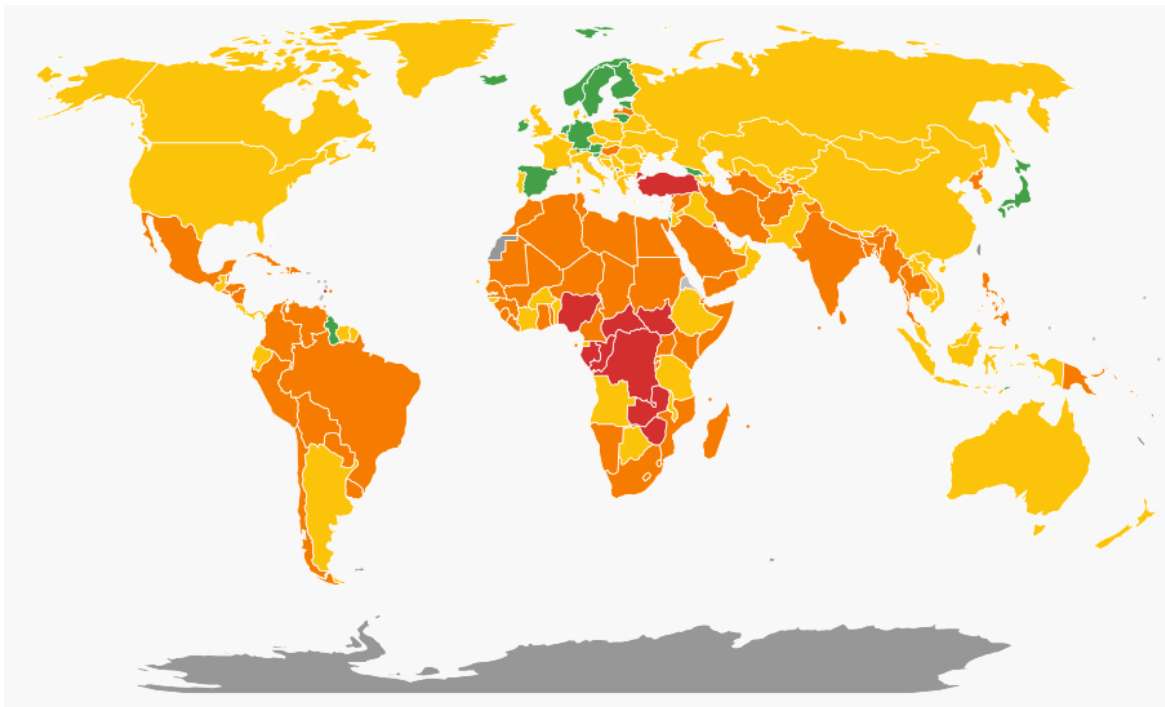
Where do we stand in India?

The following images offer some national as well as global status on SDG-16 and trends:



Status of SDG-16 in 2020

The above figure shows that the status in India comes under the category 'Major challenges remain' while the trend in India (below) shows that it is 'Stagnating'.



Trends SDG-16 in 2020

Specifically, India's standing in 2019 [5] is shown below:

SDG16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Homicides (per 100,000 population)	3.2	●	↗
Unsentenced detainees (%)	0.7	●	→
Population who feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where they live (%)	73.1	●	↑
Property Rights (1-7)	4.4	●	●●
Birth registrations with civil authority, children under 5 years of age (%)	71.9	●	●●
Corruption Perception Index (0-100)	41	●	↗
Children 5-14 years old involved in child labour (%)	11.8	●	●●
Transfers of major conventional weapons (exports) (constant 1990 US\$ million per 100,000 population)	0.0	●	●●
Freedom of Press Index (best 0-100 worst)	43.2	●	↓

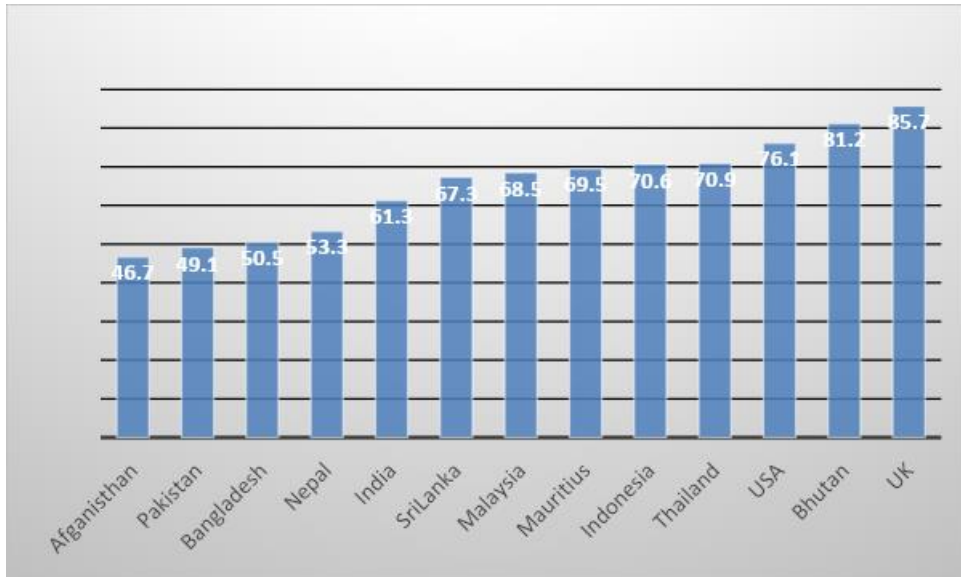
The standing in 2020 [6] is as under:

SDG16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Homicides (per 100,000 population)	3.2	2016	●	↑
Unsentenced detainees (% of prison population)	67.7	2018	●	↓
Percentage of population who feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where they live (%)	69.3	2018	●	↑
Property Rights (worst 1–7 best)	4.4	2019	●	●
Birth registrations with civil authority (% of children under age 5)	79.7	2018	●	●
Corruption Perception Index (worst 0–100 best)	41	2019	●	↗
Children involved in child labor (% of population aged 5 to 14)	11.8	2016	●	●
Exports of major conventional weapons (TIV constant million USD per 100,000 population)	0.0	2019	●	●
Press Freedom Index (best 0–100 worst)	45.7	2019	●	↓

■ Major challenges	■ Significant challenges	■ Challenges remain	■ SDG achieved	■ Information unavailable
↓ Decreasing	→ Stagnating	↗ Moderately improving	↑ On track or maintaining SDG achievement	

In the following graph we offer a comparison of SAARC nations, 3 ASEAN countries and UK, and USA on the performance on SDG-16 in 2019. India is ahead of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan. The key indicators are homicides, conflict-related deaths, (a) physical violence, (b) psychological violence and (c) sexual violence, victims of human trafficking and illicit financial flows.



If we look at the indicators level, the comparison is shown below [5]:

This data should be cited as: Sachs, J., Schmidt-Traub, G., Kroll, C., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G. (2019): Sustainable Development

Country	Normalized Score	Dashboard Color	Normalized Score	Dashboard Color	Normalized Score	Dashboard Color	Normalized Score	Dashboard Color	Normalized Score	Dashboard Color
	sdg16_homicides		sdg16_detain		sdg16_feel_safe		sdg16_property_rights		sdg16_u5_reg	
Afghanistan	83.96	red	64.28	yellow	0.00	red			34.95	red
Bangladesh	94.16	yellow	0.00	red	65.68	yellow	33.35	yellow	10.03	red
Bhutan	97.80	green			52.79	orange	63.34	green	99.89	green
India	92.24	orange	11.44	red	70.43	yellow	49.42	yellow	68.32	red
Mauritius	95.96	yellow	53.30	yellow	51.80	orange	58.74	green		
Nepal	95.06	yellow			42.50	orange	39.18	yellow	52.76	red
Pakistan	89.10	red	8.62	red	62.20	yellow	29.02	orange	25.14	red
Sri Lanka	94.03	yellow	32.63	red	53.15	orange	43.50	yellow	96.84	yellow
Indonesia	99.48	green	58.54	yellow	81.16	yellow	55.06	green	69.00	red
Malaysia	95.20	yellow	76.91	green	41.02	orange	74.72	green		
Thailand	92.20	orange	83.01	green	66.89	yellow	36.36	yellow	99.44	green
United Kingdom	97.61	green			81.27	yellow	98.88	green	100.00	green
United States	86.60	red	77.55	green	69.09	yellow	85.66	green	100.00	green
China	99.16	green			93.63	green	53.96	green		

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Country	Normalized Score	Dashboard Color	Normalized Score	Dashboard Color	Normalized Score	Dashboard Color	Normalized Score	Dashboard Color
	sdg16_cpi		sdg16_child_labour		sdg16_weapons_export		sdg16_freedom_of_press	
Afghanistan	3.97	red	25.19	red	100.00	green	61.03	yellow
Bangladesh	17.20	red	89.06	yellow	100.00	green	44.83	orange
Bhutan	72.75	green	92.62	yellow	100.00	green	70.39	yellow
India	37.04	orange	69.97	red	99.92	green	52.51	orange
Mauritius	50.26	yellow			100.00	green	76.50	yellow
Nepal	23.81	red	4.83	red	100.00	green	68.50	yellow
Pakistan	26.46	red			99.97	green	52.51	orange
Sri Lanka	33.07	red	97.46	green	100.00	green	55.19	orange
Indonesia	33.07	red	82.44	orange	98.91	green	57.60	orange
Malaysia	44.97	orange			100.00	green	46.56	orange
Thailand	30.42	red	78.88	orange	99.91	green	50.99	orange
United Kingdom	88.62	green	100.00	green	38.20	orange	81.07	green
United States	76.72	green	100.00	green	9.24	red	80.39	green
China	34.39	red			96.53	green	2.44	red

What can we do to support the goal?

We reproduce below some highlights of the steps taken by India, as reported in its Voluntary National Review 2020.

The largest constitutional democracy in the world, India is a shining contrast to several post-colonial nations in the world, especially the neighbouring People's Republic of China; in upholding the principles of justice, transparency and accountability. Beginning with the grassroots level village 'Panchayat System' up through the district, state and national governance systems, India has made sincere efforts at providing a life of equal opportunity for all, with provisions for special reservations for those left behind historically, e.g. the scheduled caste, scheduled tribe and other segments of society that faced discrimination during the pre-independence days. However, the challenge is not yet over, and new challenges are coming up, as economic development gives rise to new social power groups. The Voluntary National Review 2020 lists some of the major initiatives toward SDG 16, as under:

An independent judiciary at all levels beginning with the village Panchayat, and a vibrant media in all local languages helps. The overall crime rate has shown downward trends in recent years (2015 – 2018). India has ratified and upholds the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and has an effective 'National Policy for Children'.

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 is a relatively new initiative to ensure access for persons with disabilities. For example, the National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC) the standards body for Higher Education in India, has specific provisions for making HEIs accessible for persons with disabilities; and many cities have reserved seats for the elderly and the disable persons in public transport systems.

Accountability and transparency are maintained through several institutions like the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India, Lokpals, Lokayuktas, The Right to Information Act, 2005, Digital India campaign and the PRAGATI platform.

Ethical governance is promoted through Prevention of Corruption Act, the Whistle blowers Protection Act, Prevention of Money Laundering Act, Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 and Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets) and Imposition of Tax Act in 2015.

India has successfully developed its own indigenous citizen identity system – Aadhaar, and has issued these identity cards to 90% of its population. Aadhaar is now used to deliver targeted government benefits to 380 million beneficiaries directly into their bank accounts, plugging the leakages present earlier. A total amount of INR 11 trillion was transferred during 2014-20, leading to a cumulative saving of INR 1.7 trillion.

However, several challenges remain, as noted in the report:

“Challenges and Way Forward

“Goal 16 is essentially about ensuring good governance focused on justice, which requires the Government to take proactive steps to optimise people's participation, foster transparency and accountability, and build resilient institutions to sustain those steps. While taking very far-reaching measures in this direction, several challenges

need to be addressed. One of the biggest challenges besetting most of the targets of SDG 16 is the inadequacy of comprehensive and disaggregated data”.

As individual citizen, we can familiarise ourselves with these provisions, and if possible, support the delivery of justice and equal opportunity to one and all.

References:

1. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/peace-justice/> Accessed on October 2020 14:20 IST
2. 16_Why-it-matters.pdf
3. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/indicators-list/>
4. SDG Index Dashboard
<https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/#/IND> Accessed on May 28 2020 16:10 IST
5. Sachs, J., Schmidt-Traub, G., Kroll, C., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G. (2019): Sustainable Development Report 2019. New York: Bertelsmann Stiftung and Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN).
6. Sachs, J., Schmidt-Traub, G., Kroll, C., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., Woelm, F. 2020. The Sustainable Development Goals and COVID-19. Sustainable Development Report 2020. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
7. India Voluntary National Review 2020 – PDF.

