



The Millennium Development Goals

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Dear Friends,

This month we shall briefly talk on The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), how they were conceived and implemented. As we have seen so far, the movement for sustainable development started with the UN convention in 1972, and had a mixed scorecard. On the positive side, the movement brought to focus the need for sustainable development, and created a great deal of awareness and understanding about it. However, affirmative action towards sustainable development required major departures from the developmental path adopted by the developed nations of date, post-World War II. Their development rested on two main pillars: cheap fossil fuel based energy and advances in technology, enabling these countries to achieve significant growth in their economies, accompanied by a pretty high average standard of living.



However, the same period witnessed the end of the colonial era, and most of the erstwhile colonies gained independence between 1945 and 1960. These nations didn't want to be left behind, and embraced the same model of development, with a difference though. Cheap fossil fuel was not accessible to most of them, and technologically, they were dependent on the developed nations, and it came at significant costs. The demand on the limited resources of Mother Earth increased significantly, and as we saw, the end of the 20th century witnessed a mixed score-card towards sustainable development.

The UN organized a Millennium Summit in September 2000 which adopted the Millennium Declaration, DPI/2163. The MDGs were the outcome of this summit. The 8 MDGs are listed

below, along with the associated number of specific targets and corresponding measures or indicators.

<i>Goal</i>	<i># Targets</i>	<i># Indicators</i>
1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger by half relative to 1990;	2	4
2. to achieve universal primary education;	1	3
3. to promote gender equality and empower women;	1	4
4. to reduce child mortality by two thirds relative to 1990;	1	3
5. to improve maternal health, including reducing maternal mortality by three quarters relative to 1990;	1	2
6. to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases;	2	8
7. to ensure environmental sustainability; and	3	8
8. to develop a global partnership for development.	1	3

The global target date was set as December 31st, 2015. All nations agreed to pursue these goals in their respective countries, and the UN developed the MDG 2003 framework for appropriate monitoring of progress. In order to ensure real achievement, the goals were further subdivided into 18 targets, out of which 12 were applicable to India. A sample for Goal 1 with its two targets and 4 indicators is shown below.

INDIA'S MDG FRAMEWORK: GOALS, TARGETS AND INDICATORS

GOAL 1: ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER

TARGET 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day.

Indicator 1A: Poverty Headcount Ratio (percentage of population below the national poverty line)

Indicator 2: Poverty Gap Ratio

Indicator 3: Share of poorest quintile in national consumption

TARGET 2: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

Indicator 4: Prevalence of underweight children under three years of age

Source: MDGs Final Country Report India

It is interesting to note that goals 1, 2, 4 and 5 had quantified targets, using 1990 as the base year.

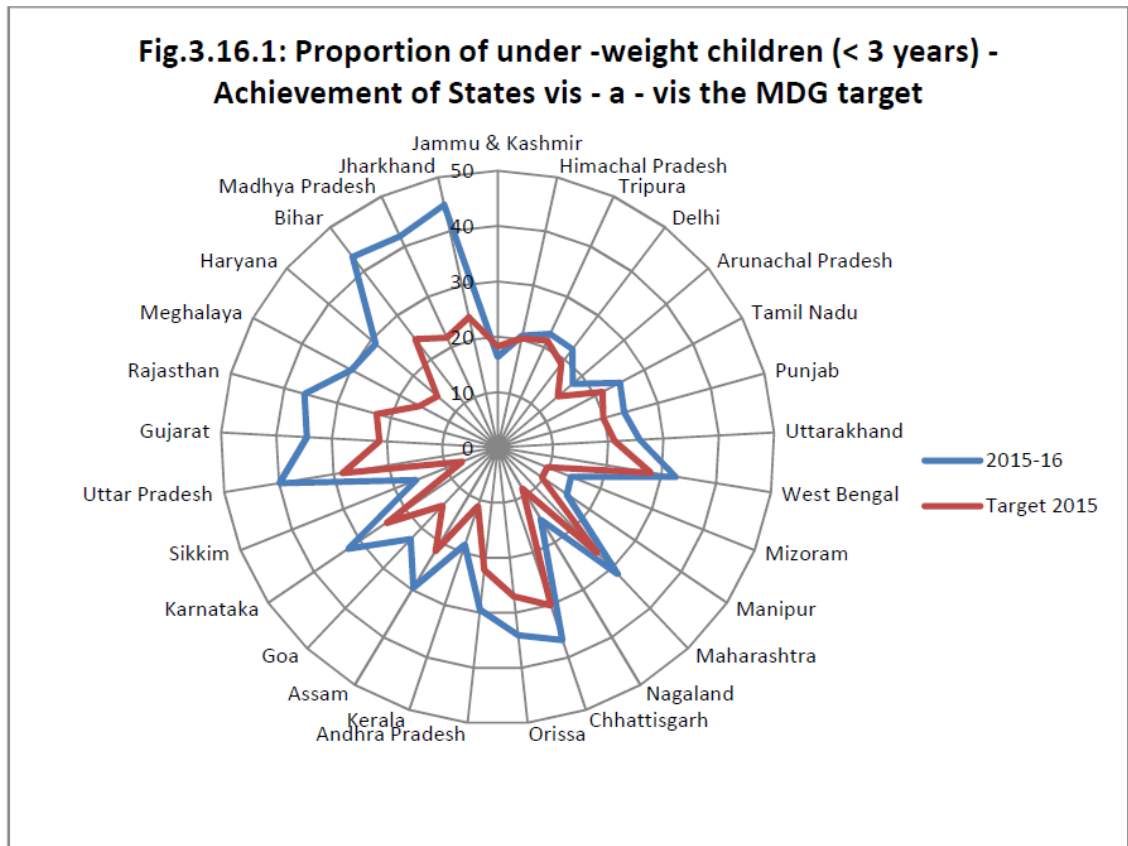
We shall now see how India fared in achieving these goals, based upon MDG Final Country report of India (27 Nov. 2017), published by the Government of India. But before we can do so, it is important to understand the complexities involved in such measurements. Regular and reliable data at the bottommost level of a block or even districts were not available, and national level surveys were not conducted regularly. In addition, ‘India’s MDG framework is based on UNDG’s MDG 2003 framework’ as ‘India did not endorse this revised framework of 2008’. Given these limitations, the following table provides an overview of India’s MDGs achievements, with respect to 30 specific indicators applicable to India.

MDGs Progress at a Glance				
Indicator	Achieved	Progress	Failed	Code
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

For a vast country like India, with a democratic system of governance, it may well be stated that the achievements are commendable, while the report also brings out the necessity of much more concerted efforts on several unfinished areas, particularly in addressing hunger. The specific indicator for this target is ‘Prevalence of underweight children under three years of age’, and this is a reflection of malnutrition of pregnant mothers as well as post-natal nutritional care.

The following figure shows the state-wise performance with respect to the indicator on Hunger. The red lines show the target and the blue line shows the achievement. Jharkhand had the worst scenario (target 24% actual 45%).



Source: National Family Health survey, M/o Health & Family Welfare

Let us resolve to remove this shortfall as soon as possible.

