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## RURAL EMPLOYMENT DIVERSIFICATION IN INDIA: PROGRESS TOWARDS THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN INDIA

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### ABSTRACT

*The Millennium Declaration adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 2000 reaffirmed its commitment to the right to development, peace, security and gender equality, to the eradication of many dimensions of poverty and to overall sustainable development. These are intended for the Member Countries to take efforts in the fight against poverty, illiteracy, hunger, lack of education, gender inequality, infant and maternal mortality, disease and environmental degradation. The Millennium Declaration adopted 8 development goals, 18 time-bound targets and 48 indicators. This paper will focus primarily on the progress in the India's achievement of Millennium Development goals and their targets relating to poverty, hunger, education and health. While India is on track to meet the goal of reducing extreme poverty by one half, over half of its population suffers from another type of poverty—hunger. India is on track to meet the goal of primary school completion rates and gender equality in education. Rates of child malnutrition are extremely high, leading to infection and disease. The country is severely off course in reducing its very high rates of infant, under five and maternal mortality. These shortfalls not only affect the lives of those presently living under harsh circumstances, but trap future generations in the cycle of poverty as well.*

### KEYWORDS

Maternal Mortality Rate, Millennium Development Goals, United Nations, Sustainable Development.

### INTRODUCTION

India is increasingly recognized as a global power in key economic sectors. There have also been positive trends on certain social indicators, particularly those that respond to vertical, campaign-like approaches: the near eradication of polio; a significant increase in literacy rates and the enrolment of both boys and girls in primary school.

However, progress has been slow in areas requiring systemic changes, such as in the provision of good quality services (i.e. primary health care and community-based nutrition services). There has also been limited change in the practice of key behaviors related to child well-being, such as hand washing and exclusive breastfeeding. The HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to spread and poses a significant threat. Issues related to child protection, including trafficking and child labor, are becoming more pronounced. Repeated and extensive emergencies such as the tsunami, flooding and earthquakes have also adversely affected the lives of children in India.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) bring to the forefront the importance of human development in the context of sustainable economic and social development. They join together the international community by creating a framework for advancement that can be measured by the progress on a number of targets and indicators and by creating an area for global partnerships in development. The goal aims for specific levels of achievement on a number of development indicators, such as ensuring that all children are in school and reducing infant mortality and improving maternal health.

The Millennium Declaration adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations at the Millennium Summit held in New York on 8 September 2000. These are intended for the Member Countries to take efforts in the fight against poverty, illiteracy, hunger, lack of education, gender inequality, infant and maternal mortality, disease and environmental degradation. All progress is measured using 1990 as the benchmark year and 2015 as the year by which the goals should be achieved.

The Millennium Declaration adopted 8 development goals, 18 time-bound targets and 48 indicators. In the Indian context, 12 of the 18 targets are relevant. The UN framework had 53 statistical indicators to measure the progress towards the 18 targets. India adopted 35 of the 53 indicators for the 12 targets concerning India.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To explain the progress in the respect of India's achievement of Millennium Development goals and their targets relating to poverty, hunger, education and health.

### DATA COLLECTION

CSO is the nodal agency for statistical tracking of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in India. It has published annually India country report on the MDGs. For the year 2009 it has published India country report in the form of Mid Term Statistical Appraisal Report towards achieving the targets. It is a major resource of data which is used for this research study. United Nation's various reports on millennium development goals and World Bank's study report on MDG these are also major data sources has been used in this study.

Below is a summary of the goals, their related targets and some selected indicators that India, along with much of the international community, is striving to achieve by 2015.

#### MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Millennium Development Goals are:

**MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;**

**MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education;**

**MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women;**

**MDG 4: Reduce child mortality;**

**MDG 5: Improve maternal health;**

**MDG 6: Combat HIV/ AIDS, malaria and other diseases;**

**MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability; and**

**MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development.**

This paper will focus primarily on the goals and their targets relating to poverty, hunger, education and health and India's progress in achievement them. The high percentage of Below Poverty Line people and hunger are become major hurdles in achieving the MDGs. Rates of child malnutrition are extremely high, leading to infection and disease. The country is trying to reduce its high rates of infant, under five and maternal mortality and is also behind target on primary school completion rates and gender equality in education.

#### PROGRESS TOWARDS THE GOALS

India's position with reference to the various Goals is given below:

##### GOAL 1: ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER

To achieve the Goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, India must reduce by 2015 the proportion of people below poverty line (the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day) from nearly 37.5 percent in 1990 to about 23.9 percent. The poverty ratio for India has declined from 37.5 percent in 1990-91 to 27.5 percent in 2004-05. As per the poverty estimates of 2011-12, the Poverty Head Count Ratio (PHCR) is 21.9% thus India has already achieved the target against the target of 23.9%. With the historical rate of decline in Poverty HCR, the Country is likely to achieve Poverty HCR level of 20.74% by 2015.

Poverty Gap Ratio which reflects the degree to which mean consumption of the poor falls short of the established poverty line, indicating the depth of poverty was 5.05 for Rural and 2.70 for Urban India in 2011-12.

Share of Poorest Quintile in National Consumption (MRP-Mixed Recall Period) is 9.75 in Rural India and 7.11 in Urban India in 2009-10.

##### HUNGER

The MD goal is to reduce the headcount ratio of calorie deficiency from 62.2 percent in 1990 to 31.1 percent in 2015. The proportion of the undernourished decreased to about 53 percent (World Bank, 2004). It is projected that 39.2 percent of the population will consume fewer calories than required in 2015, as opposed to the MDG target value of 31.1 percent, which still leaves almost one third of the population suffering from hunger.

All-India trend of the proportion of underweight (severe and moderate) children below 3 years of age shows India is going slow in eliminating the effect of malnourishment. According to the National Family Health Survey estimates, the proportion of underweight children was 53% in 1990-91. It has declined by 3 percentage points during 1998-99 to 2005-06, from about 43% to about 40%. At the historical rate of decline, it is expected to come down to about 33% only by 2015 vis-à-vis the target value of 26%.

Rates of child underweight in India are twice higher than the average figure in sub-Saharan Africa (22 per cent). Recently Prime Minister Manmohan Singh expressed his serious concern about India's child malnutrition problem, calling it a matter of "national shame."

##### GOAL 2: ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

To achieve universal primary education under Goal-2, India should increase the primary school enrolment rate to 100 percent and wipe out the drop-outs by 2015 against 41.96 percent in 1991-92.

A trend based on DISE (District Information System on education) data shows that the country is now well set to achieve cent percent primary education for children in the primary schooling age of 6-10 years ahead of 2015. DISE 2010-11 reports **Net Enrolment Ratio (NER)** at Primary level as 99.89.

**Apparent Survival Rate:** Grade V (Ratio of enrolment in grade V to grade 1) is the proportion of pupils starting Grade I who reach the last grade of primary. The DISE shows apparent survival rate at Primary level of 82 for 2010-11.

According to the trend exhibited during 1991-2001 (1991: 61.9% and 2001: 76.4 %), India is likely to attain 100% **Youth literacy** (Literacy rate of 15-24 year olds) by 2015. The literacy rate (7 years and above) has also increased from 52.2 percent in 1992-93 to 74.04 percent in 2011. But the drop-out rate for primary education during 2002-03 is 34.89 percent. It is clearly still very high.

India is on-track in terms of improving the proportion of girls to boys in primary education. The trend of national estimates suggests that the country is likely to achieve universal primary enrolment by the measure of NER well before 2015. The National Program of Universal Education, known as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was played the prominent role in this matter.

##### GOAL 3: PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Under the MDG 4<sup>th</sup> number target is that to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015. To ensure gender parity in education levels in Goal-3, India will have to promote female participation at all levels to reach a female male proportion of equal level by 2015. It is important to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education and in all levels of education.

India has achieved gender parity in primary education and the disparity in secondary education is set to disappear shortly. The gender parity in Primary education reached the target value of 1 in 2008-09 itself. The female: male literacy rate in the age group 15-24 years tends to reach 1 by 2015, implying attainment of gender parity by 2015.

The percentage share of females in wage employment in the non- agricultural sector, stood at 18.6% in 2009-10 (NSS) and 19.6% and 17.6% were the respective figures in Rural and Urban areas respectively. It is projected that with the historical rate of progression, the share of women in wage employment can reach a level of about 23.1% by 2015 which is much below target of 50%.

The Proportion of seats held by women in National Parliament (%) is 11.21% in 2013 vis-à-vis the target of 50% in 2015.

##### GOAL 4: REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY

One of the MDG goals is to reduce under five mortality rate (U5MR) from 125 deaths per thousand live births in 1988-92 to 42 in 2015. India tends to reach 50 by 2015 as per the historical trend, missing the target by 8 percentage points. However, considering the sharper decline in the recent years, the target is likely to be met.

The infant mortality rate (IMR) has also come down from 80 per thousand live births in 1990 to 44 per thousand at present against the MDG target of 27 in 2015. So India is likely to miss the target relating to IMR by 2015. However, the faster decline in recent years indicates to narrowing the gap between the target and the likely achievement in 2015.

The proportion of one-year old (12-23 months) children immunised against measles has registered an increase from 42.2% (1992-93) to 74.1% (2009) (UNICEF & GOI- Coverage Evaluation Survey 2009). However, expected to cover about 89% children in the age group 12-23 months for immunization against measles by 2015 and thus likely to fall short of universal immunisation by about 11 percentage points. So India is on-track in terms of improving the level of immunized child.

##### GOAL 5: IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH

To achieve Goal-5, India should reduce maternal mortality (MMR) from 437 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1991 to 109 by 2015. At the historical pace of decrease, India tends to reach MMR of 139 per 100,000 live births by 2015, against the target of 109. However, the bright line in the trend is the sharper decline i.e. 17% during 2006-09 and 16% during 2003-06 compared to 8% decline during 2001-2003.

Increase in the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel is also necessary to achieve the MDG. So India needs to hasten the pace under the National Rural Health Mission to achieve the related MDG. With the existing rate of increase in deliveries by skilled personnel, the achievement for 2015 is likely to be 62% only, which is far short of the targeted universal coverage.

##### GOAL 6: COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES

In so far as Goal-6 is concerned, though India has a low prevalence of HIV among pregnant women as compared to other developing countries. The prevalence rate has decline from 0.86 per thousand pregnant women in 2004 to 0.39 in 2010-11. This increasing trend needs to be reversed to achieve MDG 6.

In 2001, it was estimated that 0.79 percent of the adult population (age 15-49) was living with HIV/AIDS and that 170,000 children (age 0-14) were living with the disease as well.

The prevalence and death rates associated with malaria are consistently coming down. At present the death rate associated with malaria is 0.06 percent. The death rate associated with TB has come down from 67 deaths per 100,000 populations in 1990 to 26 per 100,000 populations in 2010 (WHO report 2011). The proportion of TB patients successfully treated has also risen from 81% in 1996 to 87% in 2010 with the help of National Tuberculosis Control Programme -RNTCP.



India accounts for almost a quarter of Tuberculosis (TB) cases in the world, with 2 million cases of this completely curable disease occurring on average per year in the country. TB causes more deaths annually in India – 421,000 deaths per year—than malaria, hepatitis, meningitis, nutritional deficiencies, sexually transmitted diseases, leprosy, and tropical diseases combined (WHO, 1999).

India's public spending (federal, state and local governments) in the health sector is a mere 0.9 percent of its GDP. India spends less than other Asian countries. India also spends significantly less than the three-percent average that developing countries spend on health as a percentage of GDP.

Sustaining the reversing trends in Prevalence of HIV/AIDS, Malaria and TB is continues needed. India's progress on the MDG of combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB is also satisfactory.

#### GOAL 7: ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Under the MDG 7 the target of 9<sup>th</sup> number is to integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources. Goal-7 aims at ensuring environmental sustainability. As per assessment made in 2003, total land area covered under different forests has been 20.64% due to Government's persistent efforts to preserve the natural resources. There is an increase in forest cover by about 1128 sq. km between 2007 and 2011. The reserved and protected forests together account for 19% of the total land area to maintain biological diversity.

As per Census 2011, 67.4% households are using solid fuels for cooking. The Energy Intensity (Amount of energy consumed for producing one unit of GDP) (KWH) per rupee is decreasing from 0.1594 in 1990-91 to 0.1355 in 2008-09.

The proportion of population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation is to be halved by 2015 and India is on track to achieve this target.

#### WATER AND SANITATION

Millions of people in India suffer from waterborne diseases as a result of lack of access to safe drinking water. The Government's Plan aims to ensure that all villages have sustained access to potable drinking water by 2007. The target of halving the proportion of households without access to safe drinking water sources from its 1990 level of about 34% to the order of 17%, to be reached by 2015, has already been attained by 2007-08, much before the target timeline.

The MDG target is 80.5 percent of rural population with access to improved water by 2015. The proportion of people with improved access to drinking water has raised from 76 per cent in 1990 to 89 per cent in 2010.

It is likely that India as a whole will meet the goal of halving the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water by 2015 including both rural and urban sectors (MDG 7, target 10).

Given the 1990 level for households without any sanitation facility at 76%, India is required to reduce the proportion of households having no access to improved sanitation to 38% by 2015. The NSS 2008-09 reports that, 49.2% households are not having sanitation facility. As per census 2011, 46.9% households have latrine facility within the premises, whereas the position at rural and urban are 30.7% and 81.4% respectively. It is expected that at the historical rate of decline, India may achieve to reduce the proportion of households without any sanitation to about 43% by 2015 missing the target by about 5 percentage points. As per Census 2001, 640 towns spread over 26 States/ UTs reported existence of Slums, with 42.6 million people consisting of 8.2 million households resided in slums of these towns. The share of slum population as percentage of urban population in respect of towns/ cities reporting slums stands at 23.1% in 2001.

#### GOAL 8: DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT

Goal-8 is regarding the developing global partnership for development. It is basically meant for the Developed Countries to provide development assistance to developing countries. The Government of India holds the following views regarding the role of the developed countries in achieving this goal:

The financial support needed to achieve the targets under this Goal However, a huge gap still exists for those countries between the development assistance required to meet the MDGs and what has been pledged by the developed countries so far.

With regard to one of the targets of the Goal 8, i.e. in cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications, India has made substantial progress in recent years.

Under MDG eighteen number target is to increase In co-operation with the Private Sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially Information and Communication.

Overall teledensity (Number of Telephones per 100 population) shows a slight dip recently, after the substantial progress made in the past. The overall teledensity has remarkably increased from 0.67 percent in 1991 to 73 percent in 2013. Use of Personal Computers has also increased from 5.4 million PCs in 2001 to 14.5 million in 2005 and there are 5.3 million internet subscribers as on March 2005 (2.3 internet users per 100 population and 0.5 per 100 internet subscribers). In the following table indicate that India's progress in achieving MDGs.

TABLE 1: PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE MDGS IN INDIA

S.N.	Indicator	Year 1990 (est. value)	MDG targetvalue	Year	Value	Year	Value	Status
1	Proportion of population below poverty line (%) <sup>2</sup>	47.8	23.9	1993-94	45.3	2011-12	21.92	Achieved
2	Proportion of under-weight children below 3 years (%)	52	26	1998-99	43	2005-06	40	Off-track
3	Net Enrolment Ratio in primary grade (%)	77	100.0	2004	87.4	2010-11	99.89	Achieved
4	Literacy rate of 15-24 year olds	61	100.0	1991	61.9	2007-08	86	Off-track
5	Ratio of girls to boys in primary education (Gender Parity Index of GER)	0.73	1.00	1991	0.76	2010-11	1.01	Achieved
6	Ratio of girls to boys in secondary education (Gender Parity Index of GER)		1.00	1991	0.60	2010-11	0.88	On-track
7	Ratio of girls to boys in tertiary education (Gender Parity Index of GER)		1.00	1991	0.54	2010-11	0.79	Off-track
8	Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector (%)	12.7	50	1995	15	2009-10	18.6	Off-track
9	Under five mortality rate (per 1000 live births)	126	42	1992-93	109	2011	55	Off-track
10	Infant Mortality rate (per 1000 live births)	80	27	1990	80	2012	42	Off-track
11	Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	437	109	1992-93	424	2007-09	212	Off-track
12	Households with sustainable access to an improved water source, (%)	66.4	83	1993	68	2008-09	91.4	Achieved
13	Households without access to sanitation (%)	76	38	1993	70	2008	49.2	Off-track

Source: Towards Achieving Millennium Development Goals India 2013, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India.

The above table shows that India has reached some goals such as proportion of population below poverty line, net enrolment ratio in primary education, ratio of girls to boys in primary education, supply of drinking water etc. and is on track to achieve others, but is lagging behind in many others.

#### CONCLUSION

India makes up only 2.4 percent of the world surface area of 135.79 million square kilometers, but accounts for almost 17 percent of the world's population and is home to over one third of the world's poor people. So India's progress towards meeting the goals will not only have a significant impact on its own people, but on the status of development in South Asia and the world at large.

But it is observed that India is fail to achieve some of the most important Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets like reduction in maternal and child deaths and increase in child immunization rates by 2015. The MDG targets will expire in 2015 and not all goals will be achieved by India.

WHO mentioned in its report that India has been effectively reducing its infant and maternal mortality figures, with the help of National Rural Health Mission (NRHM). But the pace hasn't been satisfactory enough, especially when it comes to infant and maternal deaths.

India has already achieved the targets in boosting primary education, reducing the prevalence of H.I.V., improving forest cover and providing safe drinking water. But India's performance is continues to be poor in reducing poverty and improving the nutritional status of children. Even Bangladesh, with lower per capita income, is showing better results than India in poverty reduction and health improvements. The United Nation's Millennium Development Goals Report of the U.N. Secretary-General, 2012, which assesses the regional progress on eight MDGs the world promised to meet, suggests that although progress has been made on improvements in maternal health, actual targets remain far from achieving the desired rate.

The report found that India is lagging in its effort to reach Millennium goals to reduce poverty and improve health and sanitation, but has shown significant progress boosting education, treating AIDS and addressing environmental concerns.

The rapid growth of the economy since the early 1990s, and the Government of India increased commitment to accelerating social and economic development, presents a unique opportunity for all people. But current rates of progress on many indicators are not sufficient to meet many of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. Some reports show many of these goals can still be reached with a redoubling of efforts.

Greater effort and focus must be directed to enrolling all children in the development process through improved management and provision of quality basic social services, promoting child-related behavior change within households, and mobilizing the community to become more involved in the management of services for children.

Centrally-sponsored schemes have increased public resources to key sectors. The challenge remains to convert these commitments and resources into measurable results for all, especially those belonging to socially disadvantaged and marginalized communities.

The National Employment Guarantee programme, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in education, Total Literacy Campaign of the National Literacy Mission, 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments providing reservation for women, National Rural Health Mission, Total Sanitation Campaign and Bharat Nirman are some of the important steps taken by the Government which will help in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

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