

## COMMENTARY

# Analysis of the 10th Sustainable Development Report (SDR) 2025: Global Progress, India's Milestones, and the Way Forward

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### ARTICLE CYCLE

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### ABSTRACT

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are only around 17% of their targets on track, and global progress toward them has stalled. However, significant progress has been made in the areas of social safety, energy, health, and access to education. With an SDG Index score of 67/100 in 2025, India earned its highest-ever ranking—99th globally—and debuted in the top 100. Significant national achievements include steep drops in maternal and infant mortality, almost universal access to electricity, and primary education. Nonetheless, India continues to lag in terms of SDG 2 (nutrition), SDG 4 (post-secondary education), and environmental targets. This article summarizes international trends, emphasizes India's advancements, and offers suggestions for accelerating action through partnerships, data systems, and funding.

### KEYWORDS

Data Systems; Electricity; Infant Mortality; Sustainable Development

### INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a global initiative to end poverty, protect the environment, and ensure peace and prosperity for all by 2030, are made up of 17 interrelated goals (169 targets) that were established in 2015 by all 193 UN Member States. The 10th Sustainable Development Report (SDR) 2025 provides a comprehensive summary of the advancements, challenges, and opportunities for achieving these national and international objectives. (1,2,3).

#### Global Progress on the SDGs-Key Findings

By 2030, only 17% of SDG targets are anticipated to be achieved, indicating a significant decline in progress and a failure to meet most goals. (2,4,3,5).

With over 45 nations having universal access to electricity, there have been notable global advancements in the areas of maternal and child health, education access, digital connectivity, and power access since 2015 (2,5).

Yet, difficulties continue since there has been little progress, which is shown in the ongoing extreme poverty that affects over 800 million people (2,6,7). Gender imbalances (women continue to conduct a disproportionate amount of unpaid care work) and shortages in water and sanitation. The impacts of climate change are becoming more pronounced, with 2024 being the hottest year on record and rising expenses from disasters (2,6,3), as well as

expanding inequality for underprivileged people (2,6,7).

**Regional and Country Performance**

Europe accounts for 19 of the top 20 achievers, with the Nordic nations (Denmark, Sweden, and Finland) dominating the top rankings. (3,5,8). In East and South Asia, investments in infrastructure, health, and education are propelling the fastest rate of regional development since 2015 (5). However, climatic effects, environmental degradation, and reversals in measures of corruption, obesity, and press freedom impede the progress of the SDGs (1,3,5).

**Priority Transformations**

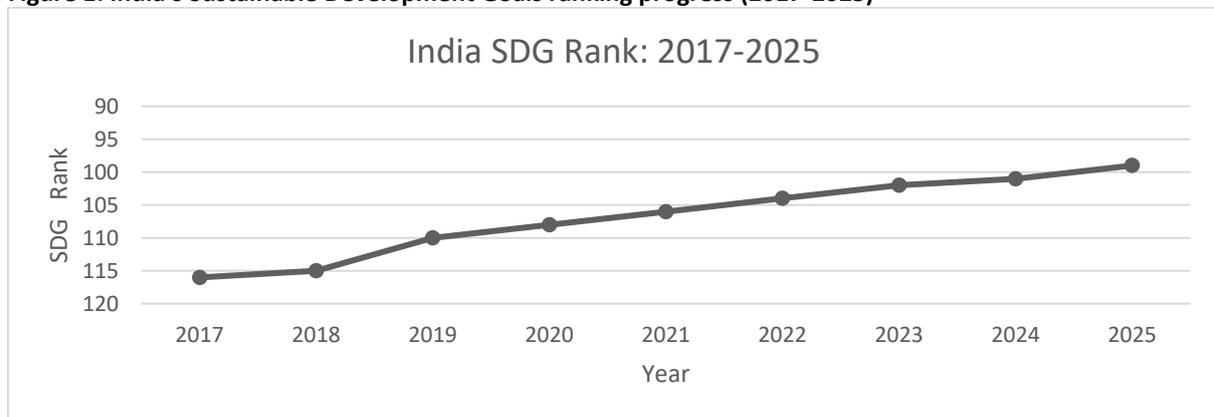
Six crucial transition areas for systemic transformation by 2030 are highlighted in the UN report:

1. Systems of food
2. Decarbonization and energy access
3. The shift to digital
4. Education
5. Employment and Social Security
6. Biodiversity and climate (2,6,5)

**India: SDG Performance, Milestones and Challenges**

After ranking 109th in 2024 and 112th in 2023, India steadily improved to rank 99th (score: 67/100) out of 167 countries in 2025, marking its first appearance in the top 100. (1,3,4,8,9,10,11). While it still lags Maldives (53rd), Sri Lanka (93rd), Nepal (85th), and Bhutan (74th), India is now ahead of Bangladesh (114th) and Pakistan (140th). (1,8,3,12).

**Figure 1: India’s Sustainable Development Goals ranking progress (2017-2025)**

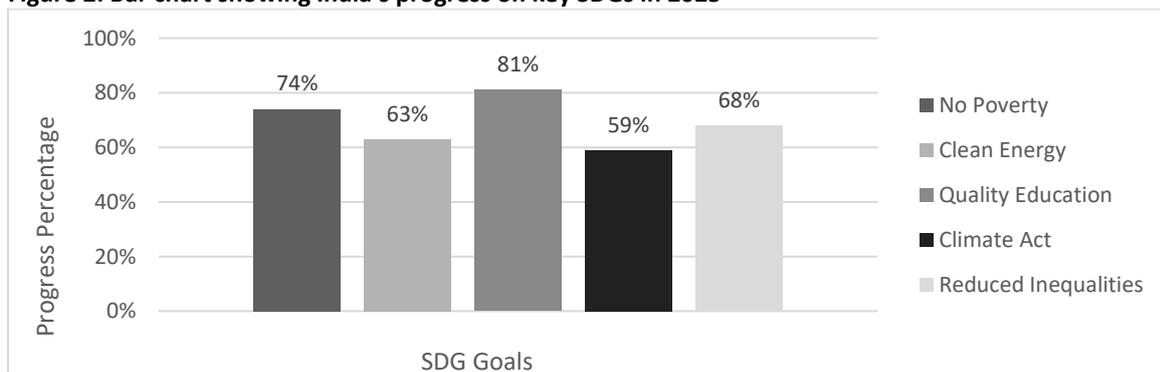


Access to clean energy, mobile and broadband infrastructure, electricity access, lowering neonatal and under-five mortality, and basic services and housing are the key sectors that have improved. (1,3,5,12,13)

India's main policy priorities and initiatives have significantly advanced the SDGs. The Swachh Bharat Mission, which aims to increase sanitation coverage and reduce open defecation (SDG 6); the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana provides affordable

housing (SDG 11); the Ujjwala Yojana provides clean cooking fuel (SDG 7); Ayushman Bharat, or universal health care (SDG 3); JAM Trinity (Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, Mobile) provides digital access and financial inclusion (SDGs 1, 9); the National Nutrition Mission addresses stunting and malnutrition (SDG 2); missions for renewable energy include expanding wind and solar power (SDG 7, 13); and Beti Bachao Beti Padhao supports gender equality and girls' education (SDG 5).

**Figure 2: Bar chart showing India’s progress on key SDGs in 2025**



Despite these successes, India still faces several challenges, including gender inequality and women's employment, stunting and malnutrition, and ongoing environmental degradation (pollution, biodiversity loss) (13) (3) (12), reversals of press freedom and corruption levels (1) (3), and the failure to accomplish the goals of sustainable cities, high-quality education, and the eradication of poverty (13,3), as well as disparities between rural and urban areas and between states (13,12) (14)

## WAY FORWARD

### Global Strategies

- More funding for SDG financing, policy alignment, and inclusive trade (1,2,5).
- To close the SDG funding gap, harmful subsidies must be redirected toward sustainable development, and blended financing and green bonds must be used more widely (1,2).
- Citizen audits, mandatory ESG disclosures for businesses, and real-time tracking are a few strategies to enhance data and accountability (1,5).
- Give communities and local governments the flexibility to adapt SDGs to oversight and context-specific needs (1,2,5).
- Strengthen partnerships, share ideas, and provide debt relief and climate justice for developing nations. (2,6,7).

## CONCLUSION

The Sustainable Development Report 2025 emphasises the global urgency that the momentum behind the SDGs is still insufficient, even with notable improvements in health, education, and infrastructure. This commentary's goals of analyzing global trends, India's achievements, and future directions are immediately fulfilled by India's rise to 99th place (score 67/100), which reflects policy triumphs in health (such as decreased maternal mortality), energy availability, and education. By placing India's top-100 debut in the context of regional peers and emphasising public health connections (such as Ayushman Bharat for SDG 3), this analysis advances current knowledge and informs community medicine efforts in the face of 2030 deadlines. Reliance on secondary 2025 reports devoid of primary data, possible reporting biases in SDG dashboards, and the lack of subnational variability notwithstanding national aggregates are some of the limitations. Therefore, to meet the 2030 Agenda, India and other nations

must accelerate progress in financial reforms, environmental sustainability, nutrition, and education quality, supported by stronger data systems and partnerships.

## RECOMMENDATION

From the standpoint of public health, these suggestions convert SDG performance gaps into workable plans for India's social protection, health systems, and climate-resilient development.

To accelerate inclusive growth, target lagging SDGs with integrated, cross-sector policies, particularly in the areas of nutrition, gender, and the environment.

To enhance data-driven governance, conduct thorough monitoring and frequent independent audits at the state and district levels (1,13).

To increase climate resilience, invest more in climate adaptation, sustainable agriculture, and renewable energy.

To increase capacity, make investments in education, training, and employment possibilities that correspond with future economic demands.

To broaden social safety nets, particularly for vulnerable groups impacted by crisis.

To advance justice and equity, make sure that programs "leave no one behind," with a focus on women, rural communities, and underrepresented groups.

Promote state-level SDG innovation labs, best-practice exchange, and fiscal empowerment. (13,12,14).

Strengthen the link between SDGs and resource allocation, policymaking, and budgeting. (1), (5).

## AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

All authors have contributed equally.

## DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

AI was not used in writing of this article.

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