

Social Progress Index (SPI) - A Complete Overview

Social Progress

The Social Progress Index is published by a non-profit entity called Social Progress Imperative, which is based out of the United States of America (USA). This article shares information on the mission, indicators used for rankings, some of the major findings of SPI and criticisms of this indicator.

Social Progress Index - Mission

To Improve the lives of the people across the globe with particular emphasis on least well off people; by providing a robust, innovative and holistic measurement tool.

Social Progressive Index (SPI) - Ranking Indicators

SPI ranks social performance of 149 countries over 51 different indicators. Some of the most prominent indicators are listed below.

1. Health
2. Personal Rights
3. Inclusiveness
4. Education
5. Nutrition
6. Shelter
7. Safety
8. Personal freedom
9. Sanitation

SPI - 3 Dimensions of Social Progress

In this Index, the social performance of a country is assessed independent of economic factors. The index is primarily based on social and environmental indicators capturing 3 major dimensions of social progress. The 3 dimensions are listed below.

1. Opportunity
2. Foundations of Well Being
3. Basic Human Needs

There are four components for each dimension. Also, there are some three or four specific outcome indicators for each component as well. Also, there are two special features of the Social Progress Index which are- the exclusion of economic variables and the use of outcome measures rather than inputs.

Social Progressive Index (SPI) 2019 - Major Findings & Conclusions

SPI compiled ranking of countries spread over 6 years from 2014 to 2019. The relative performance of each nation is displayed by this index. It is based on the works of renowned economists Amartya Sen, Joseph Stiglitz and Douglass North.

1. As per current trends, SPI concludes that the world will not be able to meet the targets of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) 2030.
2. As per current trends SPI forecasts that the SDG goals will be achieved only by 2073.
3. The progress in 17 Sustainable Development Goals is extremely low.
4. World is underperforming on 8 out of the 12 major sections of the SPI.
5. Norway is the best performing country
6. South Sudan is the bottom most ranked country

SPI 2019 - Biggest Areas of Underperformance of the World

1. Personal Rights - Out of 149 ranked countries, 91 countries have seen a deterioration. The countries that witnessed the major fall were Turkey, Serbia, Poland (in Europe) Columbia, Nicaragua (In Latin America) Mali (In Africa).
2. Nutrition
3. Sanitation
4. Basic Medical care
5. Shelter
6. Water

SPI 2019 - Biggest Areas of Improvement

Among all the ranked countries, the biggest improvements were in some indicators which are listed below.

1. Access to Advanced education
2. Access to Information & Communication
3. Water & Sanitation
4. Shelter

SPI 2019 - Suggestions for Improvement

Focus on indicators where GDP is not a binding constraint. Some of the focus areas that needs urgent improvements are listed below

1. Access to clean fuel and technology for cooking
2. Access to basic water and sanitation.

Criticism of Social Progressive Index (SPI)

Some of the criticism faced by Social Progressive Index are listed below

1. The index is more business inclusive than inclusive capitalism.
2. One of the criticisms is that the index ignores psychological well being, life satisfaction which is subjective.
3. Some important dimensions are not included in this indicator, such as transportation infrastructure, effective judicial system in a country, and concentration of wealth in the top 1% of the population.