

Gist of EPW August Week 3, 2021

1. Sustaining the Sustainable Development Goals

Context

The article highlights the Sustainable Development Goals achievements across India on a state to state basis converging to a national level analysis.

Introduction

- The [Sustainable Development Goals](#) represent a blueprint for the achievement of a better and more sustainable future for all by 2030, comprising 17 goals and a subset of 169 targets.
- NITI Aayog has been monitoring the performance in the attainment of SDGs across the states since 2018; it groups them in terms of their performance into four categories, namely aspirants, front runners, performers, and achievers.
 - Aspirants - With index value of 0–49
 - Front Runners - With index value of 50–64
 - Performers - With index value of 65–99
 - Achievers - With index value of 100

Performance Picture

- The SDG index value at the national level has moved up from 57 in 2018–19 to 60 in 2019–20 and further to 66 in 2020–21.
- Among the 28 states and eight union territories, there are 22 front runners with an index value ranging between 65 and 99 and 14 performers with an index value ranging between 50 and 64.
- The majority of states qualify to be front runners, with index values above the national benchmark.
- The maximum index value attained is 75 by Kerala.

Performance Disparity

- For goal 1 on poverty, many of the states qualify as front runners.
 - The goal on poverty comprises a range of six indicators, including headcount poverty, multidimensional poverty along with social protection, health insurance, type of house, etc, & perhaps represents the basic well-being domain wherein the accomplishment of targets looks positive.
- For goal 2 on hunger and comprising seven indicators, there seems to be a balanced distribution of states across three categories.
 - At the top is Kerala which is fast progressing towards realising the SDG targets.
 - Many of the most populous states are in the aspirant category which is worrisome as this may hinder the realisation of the target at the national level.
- For the goal of good health and well-being, a lot of states qualify as achievers and a few others as performers.

- This goal comprises a long list of 10 indicators. But there seems to be a better convergence between the indicators and also across the states.
- For the goal of quality education, eight states/union territories qualify as achievers.
 - Kerala and Tamil Nadu also get a place here.
 - A large number of states remain in the aspirant category for this goal which pulls down the overall national measure to the performer range.
- For the goal of gender inequality, only two states qualify to be achievers.
 - A majority of the states either remain in the performer or aspirant categories.
- For the goal of clean water and sanitation, Lakshadweep and Goa, have already qualified followed by many who qualify to be achievers.
- The national performance positioning is at about 83, with merely three states in the performer category.
 - The goal of clean water and sanitation comprises seven indicators, which happen to be another promising domain as regards compliance with the SDGs.

Overview

- There is a differentiation in performance across the states which is conditioned by the interstate variation in indicators.
 - The SDGs on the national level would require an all states approach in order to realize these objectives.
 - There is also a need to ensure scientific rigour in conducting the SDG Index exercise.
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