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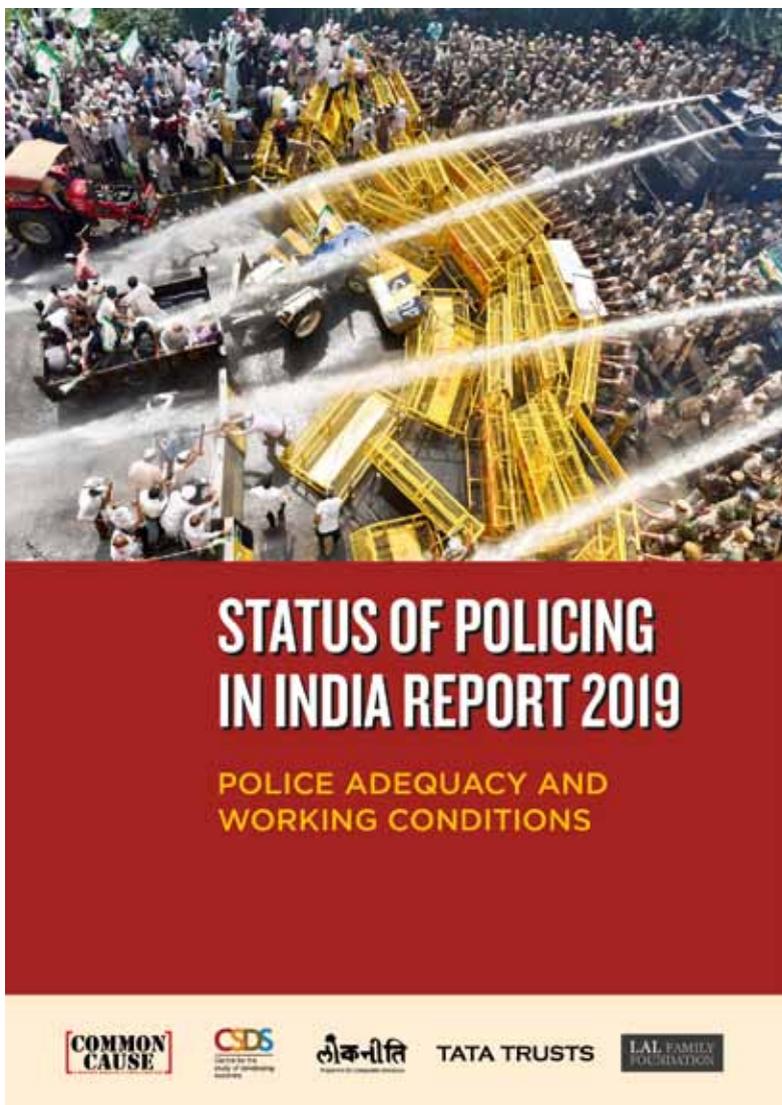
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Jointly prepared by Common Cause and its academic partner, CSDS, the report is a study of the trying working conditions of police personnel, their meagre resources and infrastructure, crime investigation, diversity, people-police contact and police violence. We interviewed about 12000 police personnel inside police stations or at their residences in 21 states as well as around another 11000 of their family members.

The SPIR 2019 studies the experiences of the police personnel and their attitudes towards incidents of crime, use of violence and torture, marginalised communities, juvenile delinquency and incidents of mob lynching.

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THE SDGs REQUIRE A NEW URGENCY

Humanity's Roadmap is Vital for a Better Tomorrow

Why are we talking about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) now when the world is grappling with the Covid-19 pandemic? Well, precisely for that reason. The Pandemic has resulted in endless miseries for millions of people but its most profound impact has been on mankind's battle against poverty. We are concerned because it disrupts the "roadmap of humanity" as SDGs are called.

The pandemic has halted the march of SDGs and shattered the status quo. It has also exposed the ugly side of every society across geographies and the brunt of the storm is faced by the weak and the vulnerable. At the receiving end of the health crisis are the same people whose lives were going to be improved by global goals. The SDGs cannot be postponed as they embrace every aspect of human well-being and their sustained progress is vital for our shared destinies.

If and when met—even substantially if not fully—the SDGs will bring stability and prosperity for every human being. But the moot question is if things are going to go as planned. What we know for sure is that the pandemic has affected every individual, organisation and government across the world. And the worst hit are the people who live on the margins and work in the informal economy and for whom SDGs matter the most. And that is why the issues central to the SDGs and the health crisis are entangled. Seen from this perspective, the pandemic is a human development crisis.

The gravity of the situation could be gauged by the fact that global human development could decline this year for the first time since the 1990s when the very idea of a Human Development was introduced, UNDP has warned. What is even more worrying is that the trend of a decline in core areas of human development applies to both rich and poor countries across regions. Hence the urgency to achieve the SDG targets with a renewed vigour.

Lingering Consequences

It is worrying that the virus is coming back in the form of new strains. These are already spreading in parts of Europe, particularly in the UK and in areas of Colorado and California in the US. While the scientists are trying to make sense of the resurgent new strains, it is clear that the pandemic is not going to go away just because it is showing a downward trend. This raises the spectre of its ugly aftereffects and lingering economic consequences much beyond the anticipated timelines.

According to a UNDP assessment of the pandemic, based on the findings of more than 70 countries and five reports from different regions of the world, the negative effects of the pandemic are already afflicting the developing countries. The UN's Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to the COVID 19 Crisis warns that the pandemic is affecting societies and economies at their core. While the impact varies from country to country, one thing is certain: it will increase poverty and inequalities at a global scale.

The World Bank has already warned of a 'lost decade' in terms of the prospects ahead. While the Bank has slashed its forecast for 2021, its half-yearly Global Economic Prospects report is concerned about several new and alarming developments. Some of these are lower global trade and investment, more uncertainties and huge disruptions in education and health that will hamper gains in labour productivity.

“If history is any guide, unless there is substantial reform, we think the global economy is headed for a decade of disappointing growth outcomes,” the report warns. But this is not all. Many other types of adverse impacts, such as on domestic violence, mental health and child abuse are still being calculated.

Hardest Hit: Health, Education, Incomes

It is true that the world was off-track on the goals of education and healthcare for all, even without the pandemic. According to UNDP, over 800 million people are still chronically undernourished in the world. What the pandemic has done is that it has exposed the absurdities in the global food supply chains. “On some dimensions of human development, conditions today are equivalent to levels of deprivation last seen in the mid-1980s,” says a UNDP report titled “Covid-19 and Human Development: Assessing the Crisis, Envisioning the Recovery.” This means that the pandemic may have wiped out the gains of several decades. The report further warns:

“The world has seen many crises over the past 30 years, including the Global Financial Crisis of 2007-09. Each has hit human development hard but, overall, development gains accrued globally year-on-year. COVID-19, with its triple hit to health, education, and income, may change this trend.”

Another important report by Oxfam titled “Dignity Not Destitution: An Economic Rescue Package for All” warns that the crisis could push into poverty nearly half a billion people. The Oxfam report endorses the World Bank’s finding that the impact could setback the global fight against poverty by a decade, but it goes further by stating that in some regions, the time loss could go up to three decades. It strongly recommends an ‘Emergency Rescue Package for All’ in order to allow the poorer countries to bail out small businesses and to provide cash grants to the most vulnerable people who have lost their incomes. It advocates cancellation of debt payments of developing countries for the year 2020 and creation of new international reserves.

Every threat, it is believed, offers an opportunity and the COVID-19 crisis is no exception. It shows us the inadequacies in our approaches to tackling poverty and inequalities. It cautions us that the business as usual will be a recipe for disaster; it will not only push people further into poverty but will also incite violence and unrest. The UN framework for dealing with the crisis recommends ramping up public health and social security, protecting jobs and small businesses, introducing inclusive economic policies, good governance and building peace and social cohesion. Without a global resolve and commitment like SDGs, this framework will be easier said than done.

At a time when the middle-class folks are increasingly working from home and adopting digital technologies for everything from food delivery to mobile banking, the poor are getting left behind even faster because they cannot access smartphones or Wi-Fi connections. The crisis also shows that the emerging technologies like telemedicine or digital classrooms can transform lives provided we doggedly harness technology for the underprivileged. An emerging IT hub like India can herald a fresh beginning by making the Internet accessible and affordable for the vulnerable. Renewing our commitment to the SDGs will be a step in the right direction.

Like always, your views and comments are welcome. Please write to us at commoncauseindia@gmail.com

Vipul Mudgal
Editor

A WORLD WHERE EVERYONE THRIVES

Fiscal Expansion to Achieve the SDGs

Shambhu Ghatak*

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in New York during its 70th Session, held on September 25, 2015, are a comprehensive list of global goals integrating social, economic and environmental dimensions of development. The 17 SDGs and associated 169 targets came into force with effect from January 1, 2016 after the document 'Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' was unanimously adopted by the 193 UN Member States in September 2015.

The SDGs build on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and their eight anti-poverty targets which the world committed to achieving by 2015. The MDGs, adopted in 2000, aimed at addressing several issues, including slashing poverty, hunger, disease, gender inequality, and access to water and sanitation. Although enormous progress was made by mankind towards attaining the MDGs, poverty could not end for all.

The idea of SDGs was conceived at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20, in 2012. The objective behind the SDGs was to produce a set of



A creche facility run by the migrant community focussed non-profit Aajeevika Bureau at Salumar in Udaipur district.

universally applicable goals that balances the three dimensions of sustainable development: environmental, social, and economic.

The first two SDGs, which are meant to guide global development efforts between 2016 and 2030 are as follows:

Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

In this article, I will discuss how difficult it would be for India to achieve the first goal of the 17

SDGs, against the backdrop of Covid-19 crisis. As we all know, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in the early months of this year has snowballed into a major global economic and health crisis across the globe. As of December 20, 2020 there have been over 75.0 million cases and about 1.7 million deaths reported globally, according to the World Health Organisation estimates. In the same time frame, India has reported over 10 million cases and nearly 1.5 lakh deaths.

Experts argue that the developing as well as the underdeveloped countries may not be able to

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A child is being weighed to measure nutritional outcomes like wasting

achieve the targets that were once set under the SDGs due to the slowing down of economic growth. In the *Foreword to the World Economic Outlook* that was released in October 2020, Ms. Gita Gopinath, Chief Economist and Director of the Research Department, International Monetary Fund (IMF), has said that due to the recession this year, the incidence of extreme poverty would rise for the first time in over two decades. The economic crisis, a direct fallout of the pandemic would precipitate further rise in inequality across populations. This disconcerting scenario will be the aftermath of the pandemic-induced economic distress disproportionately impacting women, besides those employed in the informal sector as well as individuals with relatively lower educational qualifications and skill sets.

The IMF's *World Economic Outlook* released in October 2020 also predicts that the economic progress made by the countries since the last three decades to reduce poverty would be reversed by the pandemic. Economic disparity would also rise in the post-COVID world. The daily wage workers and informal workers, a majority of whom are without formal safety nets, witnessed income losses when mobility restrictions were imposed during the lockdowns. The migrant workers from far away villages (i.e. *places of origin*) could not access traditional support networks in the cities when the lockdowns were imposed in countries like India. Nearly 90 million people could fall below the \$1.90 a day income threshold of extreme deprivation this year, anticipates IMF. Human capital accumulation would be severely affected as well, owing to pandemic-related school closures.

Role of MoSPI

Adoption of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development necessitates that countries produce quality, reliable and disaggregated data to measure their progress on the SDG targets. This data also secures that 'No One is Left Behind.' To integrate SDGs into our ongoing national and sub-national policies and programmes, the NITI Aayog has mapped the SDGs with centrally sponsored programmes of concerned

“***The economic progress made by the countries since the last three decades to reduce poverty would be reversed by the pandemic.***”

Central Ministries/ Departments at the national level. In addition, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) developed a National Indicator Framework (NIF). This originally comprises 306 national indicators, along with identified data sources and periodicity, following due consultation process with the concerned Ministries/ Departments, UN Agencies and other stakeholders.

At present, data flow from Official Statistical System and various data source Ministries/ Departments are involved in the process of providing data on SDGs at the national level. The MoSPI coordinates with these line Ministries for institutionalising the data flow for SDG indicators. The NIF is the backbone of SDG monitoring at the national level and provides appropriate direction to policy makers and the implementing agencies on various schemes and programmes. The states/ UTs are also involved in similar exercises at their levels, their objective being the localisation of SDGs.

The goal-wise distribution of NIF (original as well as version 2.1, which is the latest revised version) is shown in the following table-1:

Extreme deprivation is not just about lack of wellbeing and opportunity, it is a question of survival too.

everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than USD1.25 a day

Target 1.2: By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions

Target 1.3: Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable

Target 1.4: By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance

Target 1.5: By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters

Target 1.a: Ensure significant mobilisation of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular least developed

| Goal | Number of indicators in NIF (original) | Number of indicators in NIF (version 2.1) |
|---|--|---|
| Goal 1: No Poverty | 19 | 21 |
| Goal 2: Zero Hunger | 19 | 19 |
| Goal 3: Good Health and Well Being | 41 | 42 |
| Goal 4: Quality Education | 20 | 19 |
| Goal 5: Gender Equality | 29 | 29 |
| Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation | 19 | 16 |
| Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy | 5 | 5 |
| Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth | 40 | 32 |
| Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure | 18 | 16 |
| Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities | 7 | 9 |
| Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities | 16 | 15 |
| Goal 12: Sustainable Consumption and Production | 17 | 15 |
| Goal 13: Climate Action | 4 | 5 |
| Goal 14: Life Below Water | 13 | 11 |
| Goal 15: Life on Land | 21 | 16 |
| Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions | 18 | 19 |
| Goal 17: Partnership for the Goals | 0 | 13 |
| Total Number of Indicators | 306 | 302 |

Source: Sustainable Development Goals National Indicator Framework Progress Report, 2020 (Version 2.1), page 14 of 396, National Statistical Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), https://www.im4change.org/upload/files/Sustainable_Development_Goals_National_Indicator_Framework_Progress_Report_2020_Version2.1.pdf

Table 1: Number of indicators in the original National Indicator Framework (NIF) and the revised NIF (version 2.1)

In the executive summary of the 'Sustainable Development Goals - National Indicator Framework Progress Report, 2020 (version 2.1),' it has been mentioned that poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Poverty eradication in all its forms remains one of the greatest challenges before mankind.

Targets under SDG 1

In all, SDG 1 has seven targets for measuring the progress made by India in ending multidimensional poverty. These targets are as follows:

Target 1.1: By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people



An anganwadi centre (ICDS) run by the government in a tribal hamlet at the Gogunda tehsil of Udaipur district.

capturing deprivations and denials.

Measuring and Reporting Poverty Officially

The “proportion of population living below the national poverty line” is also called the headcount ratio in economics. The poverty line is a common method used to measure poverty based on income or consumption levels. A person is considered poor if his or her consumption or income level falls below the minimum level necessary to meet basic needs. This minimum level is referred to as the poverty line. For a family of five, the national level poverty line in terms of consumption expenditure was about Rs. 4,080/- per month in rural areas and Rs. 5,000/- per month in urban areas in 2011-12. These poverty lines varied from state to state because of inter-state price differentials. The percentage of persons below the poverty line in 2011-12 has been estimated as 25.7 percent in rural areas, 13.7 percent in urban areas and 21.9 percent for the country as a whole (as per the Tendulkar Methodology, which was accepted by the erstwhile Planning Commission). In 2011-12, India had 270 million persons living below the Tendulkar Poverty Line.

Poverty gap ratio helps us to understand the severity of poverty. It is the mean shortfall of the total population from the poverty line (counting the non-

countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions

Target 1.b: Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions.

I will critically analyse in the following section Target 1.1 and Target 1.a of SDG 1. The most authentic document to know the status of India’s progress towards achieving the SDGs is the Sustainable Development Goals National Indicator Framework Progress Report, 2020 (Version 2.1), which has been produced by the MoSPI. As stated earlier, the MoSPI not only developed the NIF, it also coordinates with the line Ministries for establishing the flow of data for SDG indicators.

In its latest report on SDGs, the MoSPI has considered poverty as a multidimensional concept and stated that poverty “manifests in the form of diminished opportunities for education, hunger & malnutrition, social discrimination and the inability to participate in decision-making processes.” And yet it is found from the same document that that the two indicators chosen for measuring poverty are “1.1.1: Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, 2011-12 (in percentage)” and “1.1.2: Poverty Gap Ratio, 2011-12 (in percentage).”

Thus, it can be stated that India officially measures income or expenditure poverty and not non-income poverty. In other words, no composite index to measure poverty has been developed officially, which is based on various multidimensional indicators

poor as having zero shortfall), expressed as a percentage of the poverty line. Poverty gap ratio at national poverty lines (%) in India was reported at 5.05 percent in rural areas, 2.70 percent in urban areas and around 4.0 percent at the national level.

Based on the Consumption Expenditure Survey done by the erstwhile National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), income poverty was calculated last time in 2011-12. Although the periodicity for bringing out the figures related to the two indicators under target 1.1 is five years, the country does not have recent estimates about income poverty.

On the basis of the leaked National Statistical Office (NSO) survey report 'Key Indicators: Household Consumer Expenditure in India,' Somesh Jha of Business Standard reported that the real (*i.e. adjusted for inflation, keeping 2009-10 as the base year*) monthly per capita consumption expenditure fell by -3.7 percent to Rs. 1,446/- in 2017-18 from Rs. 1,501/- in 2011-12. Although monthly per capita consumption spending in rural areas declined by -8.8 percent in 2017-18, it rose by two percent over six years in the urban areas. Falling real per capita consumption expenditure indicated an increase in the prevalence of poverty, said the *Business Standard* news report.

The data obtained from the 75th round of survey by NSO

during the period July 2017 to June 2018 has been deemed unfit officially for constructing the new income poverty line and measuring the latest income or expenditure-based poverty. Because of discrepancies in the data and issues about data quality, the monthly per capita consumer expenditure data pertaining to 2017-18 has not been used by the central government. Although the government has thought about a Consumption Expenditure Survey in 2020-2021 and 2021-22, collection of household level data based on door-to-door, random sample survey (*and not telephonic data*) may be difficult due to the ongoing pandemic.

Measuring Multidimensional Poverty

Unlike the income-based or expenditure-based measures of poverty, multidimensional poverty is not necessarily expressed in money-metric terms. The poverty line method follows a unidimensional approach since it is based on money metric terms (poverty is measured in terms of income or expenditure--a sum of money) as opposed to non-money-metric indicators, such as prevalence of under-nutrition, access to toilets, etc. that captures the multiple dimensions of poverty.

Multidimensional poverty is about its non-monetary aspect and is strongly associated with the challenges of achieving

“ ***Although previously defined only in monetary terms, poverty is now understood to include the lived reality of people’s experiences and the multiple deprivations they face.*** ”

the SDGs. Although previously defined only in monetary terms, poverty is now understood to include the lived reality of people’s experiences and the multiple deprivations they face.

For long, economists have argued among themselves whether income should be the only criterion for measuring poverty. After all, in real life a person can face multiple deprivations, say, in terms of access to education, health and living standards, among others. The multidimensional poverty index (MPI), which offers a valuable complement to traditional income-based poverty measures, was first introduced in the 2010 Human Development Report (HDR). The MPI looks at both the number of deprived people and the intensity of their deprivations.

The Global MPI 2020 report, which has been co-produced by



Anganwadi centres like the one in Gogunda are aimed to keep child hunger and malnutrition at bay.

the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), reveals that the multidimensional headcount ratio (H) i.e. the proportion or incidence of people (within a given population) who experience multiple deprivations has

reduced from 55.1 percent to 27.9 percent during the last 10 years i.e. between 2005-06 and 2015-16.

The total number of poor people, who face multiple deprivations in education, health and living standards, has dropped by around 273 million

in the last one decade i.e. from 642.5 million to 369.6 million between 2005-06 and 2015-16. However, the same report by UNDP and OPHI has estimated that the total number of multidimensionally poor people in the country has increased by 7.9 million between 2015-16 and 2018.

Released in July 2020, the report by UNDP and OPHI indicates that multidimensional poverty index (MPI) of India, which is the product of multidimensional headcount ratio (H) and intensity (or breadth) of poverty (A), was 0.123 in 2015-16. In comparison to India, MPI values in Bangladesh (0.104) and Sri Lanka (0.011) were lower, whereas MPI values for Afghanistan (0.272), Myanmar (0.176), Nepal (0.148) and Pakistan (0.198) were higher. A lower value of MPI is socially desirable since it shows reduction in multidimensional poverty.

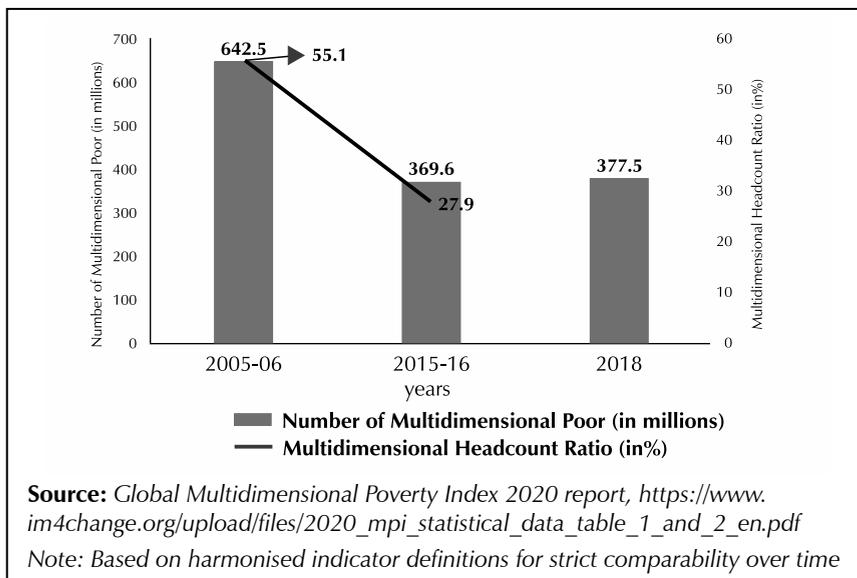


Figure 1: Multidimensional poverty in India

The intensity of poverty (A), which measures deprivations that multidimensionally poor people face on an average, has declined from 51.3 percent to 43.9 percent between 2005-06 and 2015-16.

The MPI-T value (i.e. multidimensional poverty index estimate that is based on harmonised indicator definitions for strict comparability over time) for India has decreased from 0.283 to 0.123 between 2005-06 and 2015-16.

Please note that MPI is a

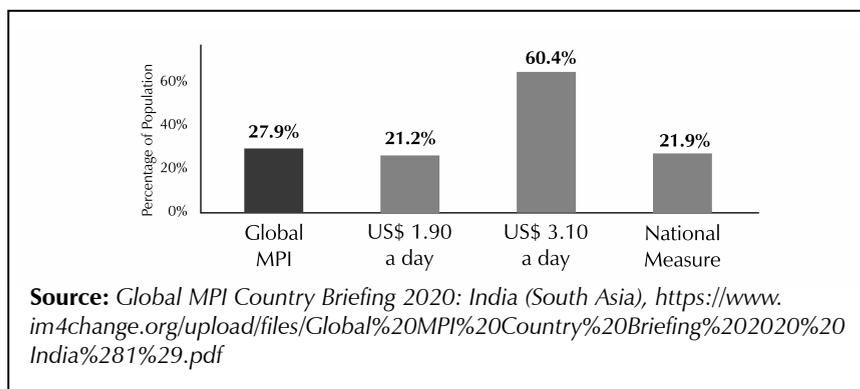


Figure 2: Headcount Ratios by Poverty Measures

measure that looks beyond income to include access to safe water, education, electricity, food and six other indicators.

Figure 2 compares the headcount ratios of the MPI and monetary poverty measures. The height of the first bar of figure 2 shows the proportion of people who are MPI poor. The second and third bars represent the percentage of people who are poor according to the World Bank’s \$1.90 a day and \$3.10 a day poverty lines. The last bar represents the percentage of people who are poor according to the national income or consumption expenditure poverty measures.

It is clear from figure 2 that a higher proportion of Indians suffer from multidimensional poverty vis-à-vis the monetary poverty that is nationally measured.

Also, note that multidimensional poverty index and related measures are calculated by UNDP and OPHI for 2005-06 and 2015-16 on the basis of data

collected during the National Family Health Surveys.

Policies and Programmes for Poverty Reduction

Although economic growth has been slowing down in the recent quarters prior to the lockdown (from Q4 of 2017-18 to Q2 of 2020-21; see

table-2), contraction in real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) during the first two quarters of the current fiscal year has led to a decline in the Gross Receipts of the government -- both the central government and the state governments/ UTs. As a result, spending by the central government and the state governments have been severely affected.

Latest available data of the Controller General of Accounts under Ministry of Finance shows that the Total Receipts of the Union Government (of which Tax Revenue, Non-Tax Revenue and Non-Debt Capital Receipts are parts) was Rs. 7.08 lakh crore during April-October 2020-21 against Rs. 9.34 lakh crore in the corresponding period last year. Hence, Total Receipts of the Union Government has dipped

| Year | GDP growth at 2011-12 prices | | | |
|---------|------------------------------|-------|------|------|
| | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
| 2020-21 | -23.92 | -7.54 | - | - |
| 2019-20 | 5.24 | 4.42 | 4.08 | 3.09 |
| 2018-19 | 7.10 | 6.20 | 5.59 | 5.67 |
| 2017-18 | 5.78 | 6.47 | 7.64 | 8.18 |
| 2016-17 | 8.68 | 9.67 | 8.58 | 6.29 |
| 2015-16 | 7.59 | 8.03 | 7.20 | 9.09 |
| 2014-15 | 8.02 | 8.70 | 5.92 | 7.11 |
| 2013-14 | 6.45 | 7.34 | 6.53 | 5.34 |
| 2012-13 | 4.87 | 7.49 | 5.38 | 4.30 |

Source: Statistics Times (accessed on 29th November, 2020), <http://statisticstimes.com/economy/quarterly-gdp-growth-of-india.php>

Table 2: Year-on-Year Growth in Quarterly GDP (in percent)

year-on-year by -24.2 percent.

The Total Expenditure of the Union Government (of which Revenue Expenditure and Capital Expenditure are parts) was Rs. 16.61 lakh crore during April-October 2020-21 against Rs. 16.55 lakh crore in the corresponding period last year. Hence, Total Expenditure (in nominal terms) of the Union Government has grown year-on-year by just +0.40 percent.

If the retail inflation of +7.61 percent in October, 2020 is taken into account, then one finds that the real expenditure of the Union Government has shrunk year-on-year by -7.21 percent. However, if the wholesale price inflation of +1.48 percent in October, 2020 is considered, then we see that the real expenditure of the Union Government has contracted year-on-year by -1.08 percent.

Target 1.a of the SDG 1 is about ensuring significant mobilisation of resources from a variety of sources to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions. However, the Gross Expenditure of the central government (in real terms i.e. expenditure adjusted against inflation whether retail or wholesale) has been down this fiscal year on account of its low receipts (as we saw above). Due to its commitment to the Fiscal Responsibility & Budget Management (FRBM) Act, the union government has not

“***A variety of policy instruments can be used by the government to increase its spending, including monetisation of deficit through borrowing from the RBI and spending financed by borrowing from the IMF and the World Bank.***”

opened its purse to the extent that is required to move the economy out of recession. The government did not agree to the demand for a monthly cash transfer of Rs. 7,000 or so for the poor and the needy, which was suggested by civil society members. In order to help the poor during the Covid-19 lockdown, the government had on March 26, 2020 declared that an ex-gratia monthly payment of Rs. 500 would be given to women Jan Dhan account holders for the next three months, starting from April. Data collected between April 13, 2020 and May 20, 2020 for the *Azim Premji University COVID-19 Livelihoods Survey* indicates that nearly 33 percent of the Jan Dhan account holders had received the cash transfers, whereas 7 percent of them did

not receive the amount, despite having Jan Dhan accounts. Nearly 60 percent of households surveyed did not have these accounts. Incomplete financial inclusion and technical issues (like aadhaar seeding not being done and mismatch in name spellings between bank passbook and aadhaar) have also hampered whatever little benefits the government disbursed to the poor in terms of cash during the lockdown.

Without adequate spending by the government during the pandemic struck year, which is over and above what it spends in a normal year, the purchasing power (measured in terms of wages and remunerations) of not only the self-employed and the casual workers but also the regular and salaried employees has been adversely affected. International Labour Organisation's flagship *Global Wage Report 2020–21*, citing a study by Estupinan and Sharma (2020), mentions that formal workers' wages (at 2017-18 prices) in the organised sector were slashed by -3.66 percent, whereas informal sector workers witnessed a much sharper fall in their wages (at 2017-18 prices) to the tune of -22.62 percent during the period between March 24, 2020 and May 3, 2020. Lack of social protection among the self-employed and the casual workers made them more income-insecure during the period of lockdown in comparison to the formal sector employees.

The recently released GDP estimates show that the share of Private Final Consumption Expenditure (i.e. aggregate consumer spending on final goods and services domestically at constant prices) in the total GDP (at constant prices) has fallen to 54.2 percent in Q2 of 2020-21 (i.e. July-September this year) from 56.5 percent during the corresponding period last year. The value of this share in July-September (i.e. 54.2 percent) was marginally lower than that of the first quarter (54.3 percent) of the current fiscal year.

There has been a year-on-year contraction in the Private Final Consumption Expenditure (at 2011-12 prices i.e. in real terms) by -18.9 percent during April-September, 2020. Similarly, Government Final Consumption Expenditure (in real terms) has shrunk year-on-year by -3.9 percent during the first half of 2020-21. With both private consumer expenditure and Government expenditure falling in the first half of the current fiscal (in real terms) vis-à-vis the corresponding period last year, private investment may be disappointingly low in the near future. Excess capacity will prevail due to low effective demand in the economy. Thus, overall GDP growth may be affected in the second half of 2020-21 and possibly next year.

Growth in real GDP provides the government with additional revenue to spend. However, with low growth in the foreseeable

future, the government may have little money to spend from its empty coffers unless it violates the FRBM Act or amends it. A variety of policy instruments can be used by the government to increase its spending, including monetisation of deficit through borrowing from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and spending financed by borrowing from the IMF and the World Bank, which will prevent wasteful expenditure usually associated with spending financed through monetisation of deficit (i.e. printing of notes or money by the RBI). There can also be the reintroduction of inheritance and wealth tax for those with wealth of Rs. 5 crore and above. The tax net can also be cast wider to effectively tap e-commerce, etc.

Target 1.b of the SDG 1 talks about creating sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions. However, in the absence of adequate financial resources being spent by the government on account of its low revenue collection and its adherence to the FRBM Act, most poverty reduction policies may not be implemented properly and, thus would remain just on paper. Similarly, it will be difficult for the government to implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, which comes under Target 1.3 of SDG 1 unless it is

committed to spend more.

Dearth of financial resources with the government will make it difficult to not only reduce multidimensional poverty but also achieve the other SDGs such as the ones related to 'hunger, food security and nutrition' (Goal-2) and 'productive employment and decent work' (Goal-8). Since the SDGs are not legally binding, it is possible that they will remain only on paper in the post-Covid world unless the civil society pushes the government to go for adequate social sector spending.

**Photographs courtesy:
Shambhu Ghatak**

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I have the audacity to believe that people everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for the minds and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits.

Martin Luther King, Jr.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

SDGs and India's Progress So Far

Anshi Beohar*

What are the SDGs?

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a comprehensive list of global goals, a blueprint for development detailed in the document 'Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.' It was adopted on September 25, 2015 at the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly by the member states. It envisages peace and prosperity for people and the planet, building upon on decades of work by the UN as well as all sectors of the society. This document recognises that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests. It lists 17 SDGs and 169 associated targets for integrating social, economic and environmental dimensions of development that came into force with effect from January 1, 2016. These are meant to stimulate action over the next 15 years to create a world where everyone thrives.

The 17 SDGs are:

Goal 1 - End poverty in all its

forms everywhere

Goal 2 - End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 3 - Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Goal 4 - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Goal 5 - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Goal 6 - Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Goal 7 - Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Goal 8 - Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Goal 9 - Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation

Goal 10 - Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goal 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive,

safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 12 - Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Goal 13 - Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (including acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change)

Goal 14 - Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

“SDGs are **universal, (for all developed, developing and under-developed nations), interconnected and indivisible, encouraging global partnership, multilateralism and a step towards shaping international policies.**”

* Anshi Beohar is Legal Consultant (Research) at Common Cause

Goal 15 - Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Goal 16 - Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Goal 17 - Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

SDGs are universal, (for all developed, developing and under-developed nations), interconnected and indivisible, encouraging global partnership, multilateralism and a step towards shaping international policies. Their objective is to move upwards with everyone so that no one is left behind. The 2030 Agenda also emphasised on quality, reliable and disaggregated data for measuring the progress of the national targets.

Can anyone be held accountable for fulfilling the SDG targets?

While the SDGs are not legally binding, they are international obligations. Countries are expected to take ownership of following through and implementing the 2030 Agenda. A set of 231 distinct global indicators were identified

“***While the SDGs are not legally binding, they are international obligations.***”

by the United Nations for monitoring the progress of SDGs and associated targets but the countries are primarily responsible for following up and reviewing the progress made. Countries will succeed based on their national orientation towards sustainable development. To measure the progress of SDGs at the national level, a base value was identified to act as a reference point for evaluating the performance and progress of countries against the value of indicators in subsequent years. The base-year is taken as the year 2015-16 or the year close to it for which the data is available.

What anchors the SDG across the globe?

The Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) in the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) provides substantive support and capacity-building for the SDGs and related thematic issues, including water, energy, climate, oceans, urbanisation, transport, science and technology, the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR), partnerships and Small Island Developing States. DSDG also plays a key role in the

evaluation of the UN's system-wide implementation of the 2030 Agenda and on advocacy and outreach activities relating to the SDGs. In order to make the 2030 Agenda a reality, DSDG aims to help facilitate this stakeholder engagement to implement the global goals.

Additionally, a High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development was mandated in 2012 by 'The Future We Want,' the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). The Forum meets annually and provides a dynamic platform for regular dialogue, stocktaking and agenda-setting to advance sustainable development. It offers political leadership, guidance and recommendations for sustainable development, follow up and review progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments. It also helps enhance the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic and cross-sectoral manner at all levels so that there is a focused, dynamic and action-oriented agenda, ensuring the appropriate consideration of new and emerging sustainable development challenges. The Forum plays a central role in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda at the global level and it adopts inter-governmentally negotiated political declarations.

“**From the development-centric MDGs, SDGs moved into multidimensional development.**”

How did the SDGs take off from the Millennium Development Goals?

In September 2000, the Millennium Declaration was adopted by the member states unanimously, at the Millennium Summit in the UN Headquarters in New York. The Summit led to the following eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 191 states, and over 22 international organisations:

- To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
- To achieve universal primary education.
- To promote gender equality.
- To reduce child mortality.
- To improve maternal health.
- To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases.
- To ensure environmental sustainability.
- To develop a global partnership for development.

In 2007, a Millennium Development Goals Gap Task Force was created to monitor the progress of MDGs.

In June 2012, at the United

Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, member states adopted ‘The Future We Want,’ the outcome document to launch the development of a set of global SDGs. The idea was to build upon the MDGs and establish the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The Rio+20 outcome document also contained other measures for implementing sustainable development, including mandates for future programmes

of work in development financing, small island developing states and more.

The forum meets annually and continues to play a significant role in monitoring the progress of the SDGs.

What role did the UN General Assembly play in the transition from the MDGs to SDGs?

In 2013, the General Assembly set up a 30-member Open Working Group to develop a

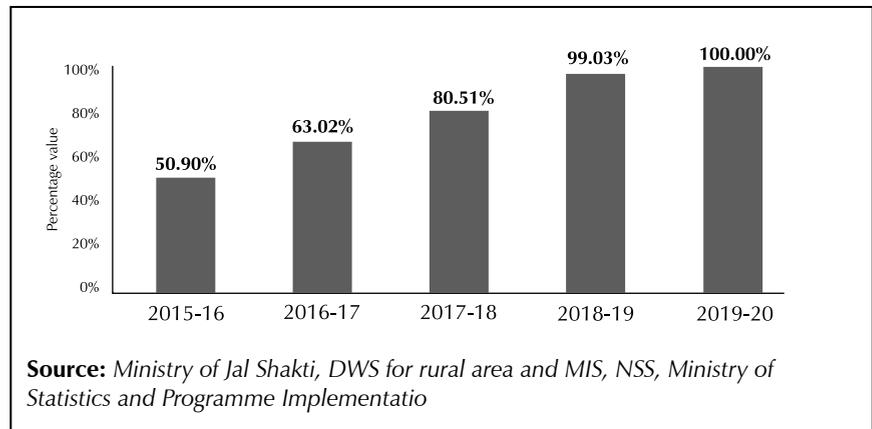


Figure 1: Proportion of households having access to toilet facility - Rural (in percentage)

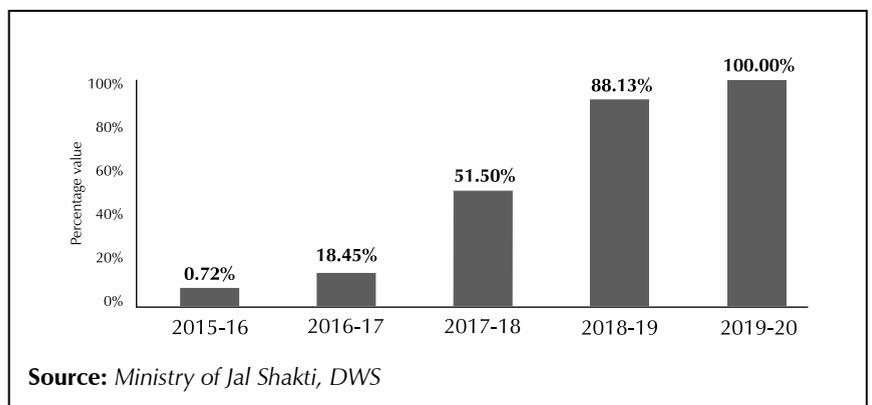


Figure 2: Percentage of Districts achieving Open Defecation Free (ODF) target

proposal on the SDGs. This group had representatives from 70 countries, including the developing countries. It also received inputs from local and subnational governments, civil society and the private sector. All the stakeholder viewpoints were taken into consideration during the negotiations to initiate the drafting of the SDGs in their current form.

In January 2015, the General Assembly began the negotiation process on the post-2015 development agenda. The process culminated in the subsequent adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with 17 SDGs at its core, at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015.

From the development-centric MDGs, SDGs moved into multidimensional development i.e. keeping in mind sustainability and equality, while achieving economic, social and environmental targets. MDGs got

| | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Electricity | 62.81 | 60.81 | 67.57 |
| Computers for pedagogical purposes | 27.34 | 28.24 | 29.57 |
| Adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities/ disabled friendly ramp and toilets | Ramp 61 | Ramp 61.31 Toilets 22.44 | |
| Basic drinking water | 96.81 | 97.12 | 95.83 |
| Single-sex basic sanitation facilities | Boys 97.02 Girls 97.52 | Boys 96.82 Girls 97.43 | Boys 95.44 Girls 97.84 |
| Basic hand washing facilities (as per the WASH indicator definitions) | 52.41 | 55.55 | 59.34 |

Table 1: Proportion of schools with access to: (a) electricity; (b) computers for pedagogical purposes; (c) adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities/ disabled friendly ramp and toilets; (d) basic drinking water; (e) single-sex basic sanitation facilities; and (f) basic hand washing facilities (as per the WASH indicator definitions), (in percentage)

the ball rolling and SDGs were aimed to take it a step further.

What was the motivation behind the MDGs and what kind of progress did they make before giving way to the SDGs?

Sustainable Development emerged as a concept in the World Charter for Nature (1982)

concerning the environment. Over 178 countries adopted Agenda 21, a comprehensive plan of action to build a global partnership for sustainable development to improve human lives and protect the environment, at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992.

MDGs came into being at the Millennium Summit in

“
Over time, eradication of poverty, education and food security have merged with other needs like an eco-friendly, peaceful and inclusive world.
 ”

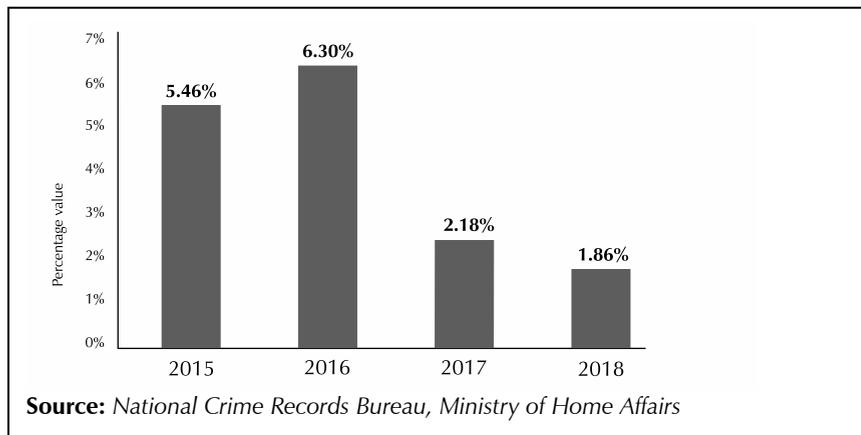


Figure 3: Human trafficking cases per 10,00,000 population

September 2000. The Summit led to the elaboration of the eight MDGs to reduce extreme poverty by 2015 in the Millennium Declaration, unanimously adopted by the UN member states in New York. The MDG Gap Task Force was created in 2007 to monitor Millennium Development Goal 8, Global Partnership for Development, specifically its five core domains such as official development assistance (ODA), market access (trade), debt sustainability, access to affordable essential medicines and access to new technologies.

Meanwhile in 2002, the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Plan of Implementation, adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in South Africa, built further on Agenda 21 and the Millennium Declaration. It focussed on global partnerships, eradicating poverty and conservation of the environment.

In 2015, the MDG Gap Task Force published a report that discussed some major lacunae like lack of monitoring, data to track real-time progress, quantitative time-bound targets, mismatch between targets set and indicators chosen to identify progress, etc. Additionally, there was a lack of individual country data to draw any national trends.

MDGs were largely successful, despite all the criticisms. They have played a role in uplifting

the lives of billions across the world. But with time, global priorities have evolved. Certain basic needs have integrated. For instance, eradication of poverty,

education and food security have merged with other needs like an eco-friendly, peaceful and inclusive world. Although all the member states signed the

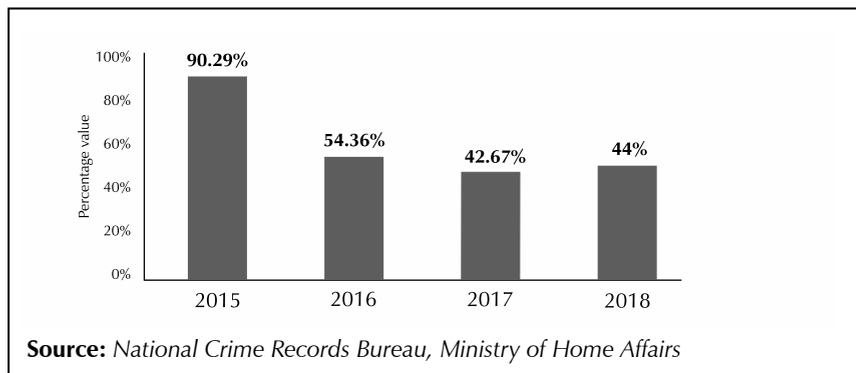


Figure 4: Proportion of trafficking of girl children to total children trafficked during the calendar year, (in percentage)

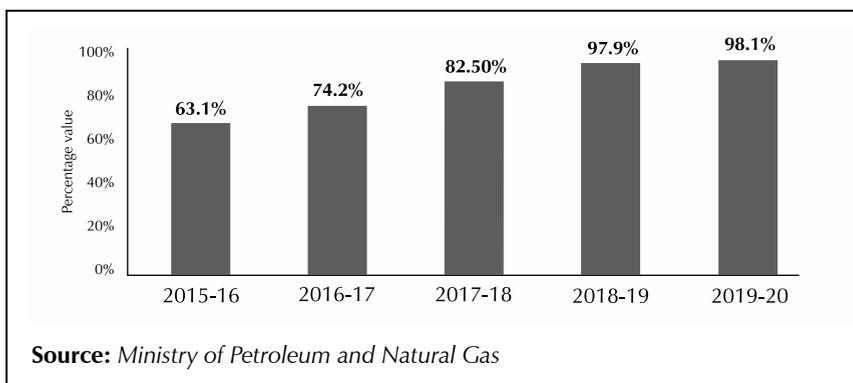


Figure 5: Percentage of household using clean cooking fuel

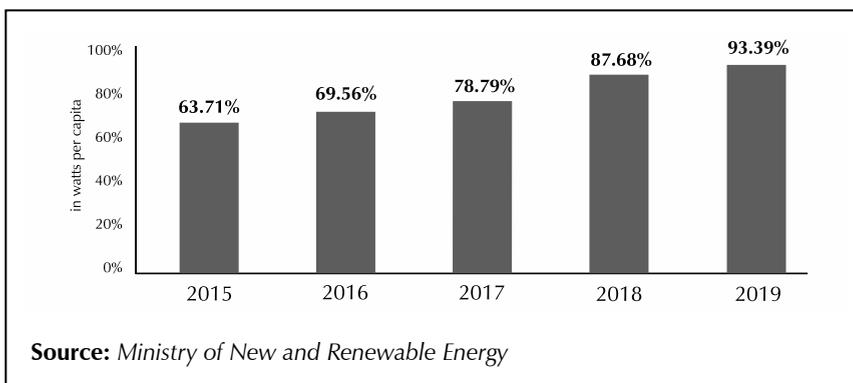


Figure 6: Installed renewable energy generating capacity in developing countries (in watts per capita)

MDGs, they followed them up with targets which aligned with the country's own goals. Also, the MDGs were more centred towards the developing or the least developed nations. As opposed to that, all countries have to work on the SDGs, owing to their ambitions for a better future. It is also safe to say that the SDGs are much more comprehensive and aspirational than the MDGs. While the MDGs were built on the foundation of global development, the SDGs seek to realise it through sustainable means.

Which are the SDG sectors in which India has done better among the 17 goals?

To map the progress of the SDGs in India, the Niti Aayog has an eye on the centrally sponsored programmes of concerned Central Ministries/Departments. Further, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) developed a National Indicator Framework (NIF) consisting of 306 national indicators (originally) along with identified data sources. This was drawn up following due consultation process with concerned national authorities, UN Agencies and other stakeholders. NIF provides appropriate direction to the policy makers and the implementing agencies of various schemes and programmes and monitors India's SDG achievements.

As of March 2020, MoSPI published the National Indicator Framework Progress Report 2020 (version 2.0), the first formal progress report of India

on the SDGs. It later released the updated version 2.1. Information pertaining to the 17 SDGs and 169 associated targets were collected and analysed with the

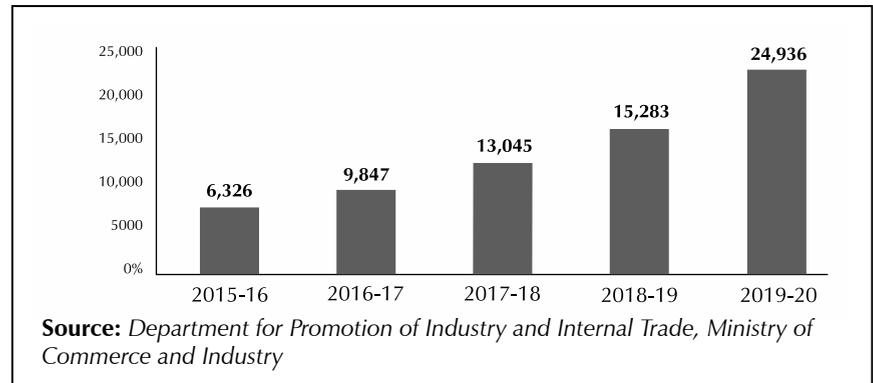


Figure 7: Total number of patents issued (granted)

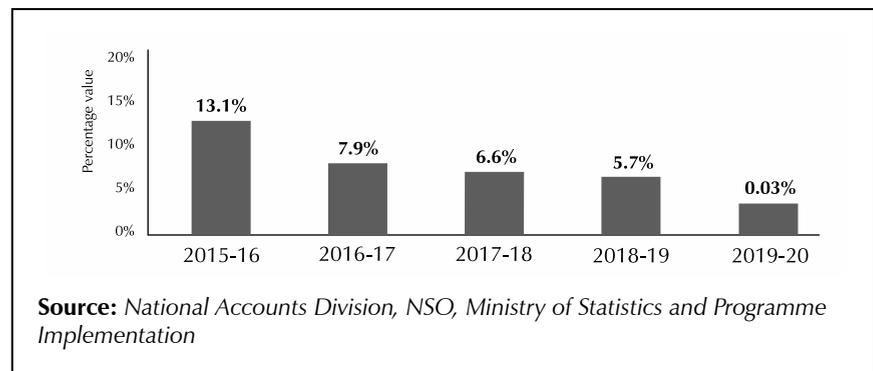


Figure 8: Annual growth in manufacturing sector, (in percentage)

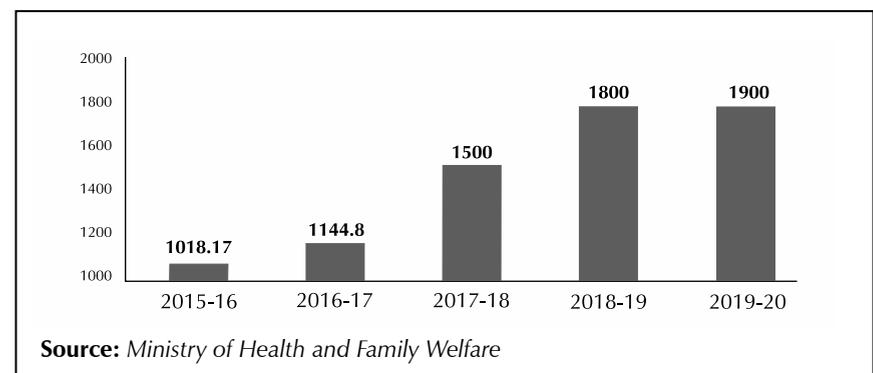


Figure 9: Budgetary allocation for Department of Health Research, (in Rs. crore)

time series data from 2015-16 (baseline) to 2018-19 (latest available data).

It must be noted that 2020 marked the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the SDGs. Going by the statistics, India has progressed well on certain indicators, but there is a long way to go. At present, data flow from Official Statistical System and various data source Ministries/Departments are involved in the process of providing data on SDGs at the national level.

While in 2018 13 SDGs were covered with a composite score of 57, in 2019 16 SDGs were covered with a composite score of 60, and showed a marked improvement in India's SDG achievements. Although there have been minor ups and downs over the last five years in several indicators, the biggest concern is the absence of information on certain fronts, despite the presence of a comprehensive system. In fact, several indicators reported that urban data was unavailable.

What has been India's progress so far?

According to the data presented by MoSPI, 100% districts are open defecation free and 100% households have access to toilet facilities. Over 99% citizens have been covered as beneficiaries under the National Food Security Act, 2013. Additionally, over 99% households are electrified

as of 2019-20. The percentage of households using clean cooking fuel has increased to 98.10% in 2018-19 from 63.10% in 2015-16. In 2019-20, over 95% wards have 100% door to door waste collection system as compared to 40.91% wards in 2015-16.

Gradual decrease can be observed in maternal and under-five mortality rates as well as in diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria. Even before the pandemic, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) almost doubled the funds allocated to the Department of Health Research in 2019-20, as compared to 2015-16. Also, there's been a hike in government spending in the health sector to GDP in 2018-19, compared to 2015-16.

India has also made headway in innovation and entrepreneurship. The total number of patents issued (granted) increased to 24,936 in 2019-20 from 6,326 in 2015-16 and the total number of start-ups recognised under Start-up India increased to 8,724 in 2017-18 from 503 in 2015-16. In the last five years, the percentage of population with internet subscriptions has also doubly increased, from 26.98% in 2015-16 to 54.29% in 2019-20.

The report also says that there has been an increase in the number of applications filed with institutions coming under the Right To Information Act from 11,65,217 in 2015-16 to

“ All the SDGs have targets dependent on the responsibilities of local and regional governments. ”

16,30,048 in 2018-19 as well as the RTI queries responded to. For instance, RTI queries responded to went up from 81.80% in 2015-16 to 82.10% in 2017-18.

While the representation of women in the Lok Sabha has increased by almost 3% from 2014 to 2019, India still lags behind in gender equality. The wages earned in regular/salaried employment by female workers in July-September 2017 were Rs. 13,029 per month, which reduced to Rs. 12,851 per month in April-June 2019. Wages for male workers, on the other hand, has increased from Rs. 16,602 in July-September 2017 to Rs. 17,161 in April-June 2019.

MoSPI's data paints a very optimistic future. However, the strange absence of urban data continues to rankle.

What are the new and emerging challenges in India regarding the SDGs?

Like any developing country, India's biggest challenges are financial and technological resources to realise the SDGs. The fallouts of the pandemic, including the contraction in the Indian economy, unstable agrarian incomes and rising vulnerabilities of the working population, have stretched government resources. This poses to be a concern in the progress of sustainable development for all. In fact, lack of domestic data was a huge failing even in the realisation of the MDGs.

COVID-19 has also exposed India's institutional deficiencies. The health and education sectors have been hit hard. Also, collection and analysis of reliable, disaggregated data require physical and financial capacity which is likely to have

been compromised due to the pandemic. These concerns need to be addressed proactively.

What can be the way forward towards a sustainable approach to human development in India?

SDGs are created with an emphasis on five Ps – People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership. To realise the full potential of the SDGs, these five Ps need to function in coordination. For effective implementation of strategies at the local level, a certain level of decentralisation is the need of the hour through action from the bottom up. Although the SDGs are global, their successful achievement is largely

dependent on our capacity to make them happen in remote corners of the country. Also, all the SDGs have targets dependent on the responsibilities of local and regional governments. Smaller regions can actually fit the global SDGs in their own particular context and facilitate the citizen's understanding of how local action can accelerate their achievement.

As India is the only country to recognise state-level efforts and provide a national-level ranking to the states and UTs on their performance on the SDGs, perhaps the best practices could be culled out from the exercise. Subsequently, they may be prescribed to the other states/ UTs for ensuring the successful achievement of SDGs.



Human development, as an approach, is concerned with what I take to be the basic development idea: namely, advancing the richness of human life, rather than the richness of the economy in which human beings live, which is only a part of it."

Amartya Sen



NOTICE FOR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

To,

All members of COMMON CAUSE SOCIETY

The Annual General Meeting of COMMON CAUSE Society will be held on March 20, 2021 at 11.00 A.M. (at Common Cause House, 5- Institutional Area, Nelson Mandela Marg, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi 11 00 70, or virtually with meeting id and password to be shared later)

The agenda will be as follows:

1. Consideration of Annual Report and adoption of the Annual Accounts along with the Auditor's Report for the year 2019-20
2. Appointment of Auditors for the year 2020-21
3. Activities and Programmes of the Society
4. Elections
5. Any other item with the permission of the chair

It may kindly be noted that in accordance with Rule 15 of the Rules & Regulations of the society, if within 15 minutes of the beginning of the meeting, the quorum is not present, the meeting would stand adjourned and be held after half an hour of the original scheduled time, and the members present in the adjourned meeting shall form the quorum of that meeting.

Copies of the Balance Sheet and Income & Expenditure statement will be circulated (or screen shared) during the AGM.

We look forward to your participation in the meeting.

A line in confirmation will be highly appreciated.

Vipul Mudgal

Director
COMMON CAUSE

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

To the Members of
Common Cause

Report on the Financial Statements

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Common Cause

("the Society"), which comprise the Balance Sheet as at March 31, 2020 and the Income & Expenditure Account for the year then ended and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation of these financial statements that give a true and fair view of the financial position, and financial performance

of the Society in accordance with the accounting principles generally accepted in India. This responsibility includes the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and presentation of the financial statements that give a true and fair view and are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditors' Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with the Standards on Auditing issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India. Those Standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatements.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the

auditor considers internal control relevant to the Society's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of the accounting estimates made by management, as well as valuating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion

In our opinion and to the best of our information and according to the explanations given to us, the aforesaid financial statements give the information required in the manner so required and give a true and fair view in conformity with the accounting principles generally accepted in India:

- (a) In the case of the Balance Sheet, of the state of affairs of the Society as at March 31, 2020; and
- (b) In the case of the Income & Expenditure Account, of the surplus (excess of Income over Expenditure) for the year ended on that date.

Report on Other Legal and Regulatory Requirements

We report that:

- a. we have obtained all the information and explanations which to the best of our knowledge and belief were necessary for the purpose of our audit;
- b. in our opinion, proper books of account as required by law have been kept by the Society so far as appears from our examination of those books;
- c. the Balance Sheet and the Income & Expenditure Account dealt with by this Report are in agreement with the books of account; and
- d. in our opinion, the Balance Sheet, and the Income & Expenditure Account comply with the applicable Accounting Standards issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India.

For VKGN & Associates
Chartered Accountants
ICAI Firm Regn. No. 012897N

Vijay Gupta
Partner
Membership No. 081986
UDIN: 19081986AAAAGS1330
Place: New Delhi
Date: December 28 , 2020

COMMON CAUSE

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2019-2020

The year 2020 has been one of the most unusual years of the century. It started with the scare of a contagion which, in a matter of weeks, became a pandemic touching every human life. For us in India, its most abiding image was of millions of scared and exhausted workers and their families walking, cycling or trudging long distances in sweltering summer. The pandemic has left close to two million dead around the world and devastated families, businesses, trade and economies. It has also changed the way we work, travel or communicate with each other.

Common Cause team also adjusted to the 'new normal' after the lockdown. We took to working remotely while doing our best to minimise the sufferings of fellow citizens. The staff donated one day's wages and the organisation gave three lakh rupees for relief out of its already stretched funds. Our activities continued as usual except for face-to-face surveys for the Status of Policing in India Report (SPIR 2020) which had to be postponed. Common Cause journal, our link with members and well-wishers, went digital to overcome logistical challenges.

During the year, our external funding from the Tata Trusts has ended and is unlikely to be

renewed in its present form. We have asserted that the time series data compiled by the SPIR series needs to be continued on a long-term basis as envisaged at the beginning of the project. We are waiting to hear from them. Common Cause was shortlisted by two other funders who showered praises on our proposals but finally shied away from making a grant. The society's finances were further stressed as the tenant of our building demanded a rent waiver due to adverse market conditions.

1. Advocacy and Research Initiatives

(a) Police Reforms

Status of Policing in India Report (SPIR 2020-21):

Common Cause, along with the Lokniti team of the Centre for Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) is working on the SPIR 2020-21. The study will be the third in the series of SPIR, with the previous two studies focusing on citizens' perception of police in SPIR 2018 and the working conditions of police personnel in SPIR 2019. SPIR 2020-21 will explore the twin themes of policing in extraordinary circumstances, through its two separate sections, (a) Policing in conflict areas, i.e., in locations where some form of internal unrest, militancy or Naxalism exists and (b) Policing during the pandemic, focusing on policing after the nationwide lockdown. Perspectives of key stakeholders, including common citizens and police personnel, are being captured through a survey in the



A woman police officer being interviewed at the Melaghar police station in West Tripura, as part of the SPIR 2020 survey



Apart from the theme of policing in conflict areas, SPIR 2020 is also focussing on policing during the pandemic, where perspectives of key stakeholders, including police personnel, are being captured.

selected districts.

Conducting surveys for SPIR has been extremely challenging this year. Face-to-face interviews were not allowed in many regions even after the lockdowns were lifted. While Covid-19 cases were still on the rise, we had to first postpone surveys from March to August and then again to September and October due to continuation of restrictions imposed by the central, state governments or the local authorities. Closure of colleges, universities and the general atmosphere of fear posed further challenges. Fortunately, the fieldwork finally started in all the states except part of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir in October 2020. As of now, data has been collected in all the shortlisted districts, except in Srinagar, and a truncated provisional report has been

submitted to the funders in order to meet the deadline.

Study on Policing during the Pandemic: During the nationwide lockdown, the police

force became virtually the face of the state. Apart from health workers, whose work directly concerns dealing with patients and matters of public health, the police were tasked to perform a range of duties which do not strictly fall within the purview of their routine functions. Their role was also central to the nation's disaster management strategy—from enforcing the lockdown to maintaining the law and order and even ensuring the distribution of rations, among many other defined and undefined duties.

Common Cause undertook a rapid study to evaluate the role of the police --- their attitude, preparedness and overall performance during the 50-day lockdown in India. The dipstick study is based on interactions



Common Cause undertook a rapid study to evaluate the role of the police during the 50-day lockdown in India.

PHOTO CREDIT: Rahul Kotiyal



PHOTO CREDIT: Rahul Kotiyal

The Rapid Study sheds light on a range of duties the police were tasked to perform which do not strictly fall within the purview of their routine functions.

with various stakeholders, including aid workers at the grassroots, migrant workers, civil society organisations etc. and on an analysis of news reports. Funded by the Lal Family Foundation in response to a Tata Trust initiative, the project also aims to identify and encourage good practice in the justice delivery system. It is part of a collaborative effort to analyse the functioning of the four pillars of the justice system. Our collaborators in this include civil society organisations across the country.

(b) India Justice Report 2020

Common Cause, in collaboration with other organisations working on reforms in the different pillars

of the criminal justice system, such as the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), Daksh, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, TISS-Prayas, Centre for Social Justice and the Tata Trusts is working on a second study in the series of the India Justice Report (IJR). IJR 2020 builds on the framework of the 2019 report to rank individual Indian states in relation to their capacity to deliver access to justice.

Along with contributing towards developing a framework for the analysis of the 2020 report, Common Cause has also been part of the core team on the policing pillar for the study. Several new indicators for improving the ranking of states have been added. The release

of the IJR 2020 was delayed on account of the national lockdown as well as the delay in the release of official statistics from the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD) which was crucial for updating the 2020 report. It is currently due for release in January 2021.

(c) #CheckYourChallan - A Public Interest Campaign

Alerted by many leading citizens of Delhi, Common Cause initiated #CheckYourChallan campaign to promote awareness about the asymmetry in the issuance of e-challans for traffic violations. Already reeling under Covid-19 losses, ordinary citizens have been facing severe



Car driver gets e-challan for 'not wearing helmet'

If you have encountered or know about any impropriety in the issuance of challans, then write to us at checkyourchallan@gmail.com

Alerted by many leading citizens of Delhi, Common Cause initiated the #CheckYourChallan campaign to promote awareness about e-challans.

distress by the introduction of the new e-challan systems and e-payment gateways in various states. Common citizens have faced numerous obstacles in dealing with technology-driven processes despite these being aimed at simplifying things. The campaign can be joined at <https://bit.ly/3aAPsDk> or at the Common Cause website <https://bit.ly/3avi80x>

Common Cause is concerned with the way citizens have been caught unawares by the online mechanism of monitoring traffic violations. The digital-first process has disproportionately affected vehicle drivers and owners, particularly from the lower and middle-income groups. The non-delivery of challans may not only lead to non-payment of penalties and crippling fines but also in jail

terms in certain cases. Common Cause has filed representations to the Commissioner of Police, Delhi, as well as the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. In a subsequent one-on-one discussions with the Joint Commissioner of Delhi Traffic Police, Common Cause has suggested that the authorities carry out an awareness campaign with the participation of citizens.

The current campaign is aimed at generating awareness across social media platforms about the exact procedure of checking e-challans. We are trying to reach out to a wider audience through digital channels.

(d) Webinars, podcasts, virtual discussions on Policing

India's Policing Challenges—Carnegie Endowment, Grand

Tamasha, June 9, 2020: Milan Vaishnav, the Director and Senior Fellow of the Carnegie Endowment, Washington DC, featured Common Cause in a special programme of 40 minutes to discuss aspects of policing in India including its colonial legacy, attitudes, adequacies, competencies, and operational challenges faced by the police officers on the ground. The podcast, based on an interview with the Director, highlighted the findings of the Status of Policing in India Reports and a blueprint for reforms. The podcast is available at <https://bit.ly/3mC4yef>

Policing a Pandemic: July 9, 2020. Zoom Webinar: Policing: Past, Present and Future series: Another discussion on policing was organised by the India chapter of Carnegie Endowment and Tata Trusts to discuss the



The webinar 'Policing a Pandemic', part of the 'Policing: Past, Present and Future' series, focussed on the unique set of challenges facing the police establishment today.

emerging challenges in the midst of the pandemic in India. Common Cause Director was joined by Mr. N. Ramachandran, President, Indian Police Foundation & Institute, Mr V.N. Rai, former Director-General, UP Police and Shireen Vakil, head of policy and advocacy, Tata Trusts. The discussion which was livestreamed on many channels focused on the unique set of challenges facing the police establishment today. The discussion, moderated by Rudra Chaudhuri, director of Carnegie India, looked at how institutions and personnel on the ground grapple with the ongoing health emergency. The webinar can be accessed at <https://bit.ly/3he7sVt>

Police Dialogues: Is Policing a Thankless Job? September 8, 2020: A very well-attended virtual discussion was live-streamed on YouTube, Facebook etc. and moderated by TV personality Faye D’Souza. Organised by a Mumbai-based think tank dedicated to police reforms, the discussion featured

Common Cause Director along with the Indian Police Foundation President Mr. N. Ramachandran and Former Commissioner of Police, Pune, Ms Meeran Chadha Borwankar. The discussion can be accessed at <https://bit.ly/3rl1Ayy>

‘Reforms in Police and Criminal Justice are crucial to safeguard the democratic rights of citizens’: IPF-Common Cause Collaborative Event on Police Reforms Day, September 22, 2020: Justice (Retd.) Madan

Bhimarao Lokur delivered the Indian Police Foundation’s annual day lecture, organised by IPF in partnership with Common Cause, on September 22, 2020. Titled ‘Reforms in Police and Criminal Justice are crucial to safeguard the democratic rights of citizens,’ the lecture was followed by a spirited discussion moderated by Common Cause Director. Speaking on the occasion, Justice Lokur pointed out that “Everybody, including state govt, UTs and the Govt of India, agreed that



The annual day lecture at the IPF Common Cause Collaborative Event on Police Reforms Day by Justice (Retd.) Madan Bhimarao Lokur was followed by a spirited discussion moderated by Common Cause Director.



‘Police Dialogues: Is Policing a Thankless Job?’, a very well-attended virtual discussion was live-streamed on YouTube and Facebook.

the recommendations of the National Police Commission should be implemented. Yet, 14 years down the line, no progress has been made.”

Justice Lokur also underscored how it is the democratic right of every citizen to report and register a crime, particularly when they are a victim. “It is the obligation of the police to

follow the law laid down by the Supreme Court but we see that even after the Constitution Bench decision, the law is not necessarily being followed," he said. IPF Chairman Mr Prakash Singh, former DGP, UP, Assam and BSE, asked whether "anybody tried to work out the cost of an inefficient and incompetent police?" He explained that the steep price of an insensitive and incompetent police force is more crime, bad internal security situation, incidents of terrorism, Naxalism and insurgency, among other things.

'Police, Adalat Aur Insaf,' A major podcast on Apple, Spotify, Google Podcast, Amazon Music, Jio Saavn and other networks: Common Cause has collaborated with Cine Ink to start the Podcast Series 'Police, Adalat Aur Insaf,' in Hindi. Based on the key pillars of the criminal justice system --- the police, prisons, legal aid, and the judiciary, it draws heavily on the SPIR and the IJR. Presented by Pervaiz Alam, senior broadcast journalist and a former BBC anchor, the podcast series is based on interviews with experts, analysts and researchers in India, working in the areas related to police and judicial reforms. Besides Ms Radhika Jha and Dr Mudgal from Common Cause, the other experts include Ms Maja Daruwala, Mr. Harish Narasappa, Prof. Vijay Raghavan, Ms Sugandha Shankar, and Mr. Vibhuti Narayan Rai.

All episodes are also available on www.cineink.com/podcast

(e) Common Cause Journal:

The digital format of the journal continues to engage with the society's members, well-wishers and public-spirited individuals on a range of issues to improve governance, to deepen democracy and to reinforce probity in public life. Our engaged set of readers keep sharing their viewpoints on the critical issues discussed in the journal articles. The digital format allows us to present the journal in colour which we could not earlier afford in the printed version. The only disadvantage of this format of the journal is that it does not reach those members who have not shared their email ids with us and who prefer to get a printed copy.

(f) Initiatives on the Right to Education

Making the Right to Education Act a Reality: Common Cause launched its ambitious booklet in Hindi 'Humara School, Humari Rakhwali,' in July 2018, aimed at empowering members of the School Management Committees (SMCs) to improve community participation in the running of schools, particularly in slums and urban villages. The pandemic related restrictions prevented the physical distribution of our SMC booklets, as schools remain shut and education-related discussions migrated online. However, Ms tSusmita Saha represented Common Cause at

several webinars organised by civil society coalition RTE Forum on issues faced by children after the school shut down. Common Cause team continues to be in touch with the groups and coalitions working on the Right to Education.

(g) Applications filed under the Right to Information Act

e-Challans: Common Cause has filed an RTI application before the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways on September 20, 2020, to seek information about the grounds of issuing challans, methods through which e challans are communicated to violators and the number of challans issued between September 1, 2019, and September 1, 2020, among other things. These questions were asked as part of our campaign #checkyourchallan, which aims to promote awareness of e-challans among common citizens.

Rapid Study on Policing:

We have also filed four RTI applications before the Commissioners of Police for Delhi, Mumbai, Gujarat and Rajasthan, between, September 2020 and October 2020. This was done as part of the data collection exercise undertaken for the Rapid Study on Policing during the pandemic. We sought information on the legal frameworks in place to enforce the lockdown restrictions.

Illegal Mining in Odisha case:

Common Cause filed an RTI application on November 26, 2020, before the Public Information Officer, Rural Development Department of the Government of Odisha. We sought information pertaining to the operation of the Odisha Mineral Bearing Areas Development Corporation, a special purpose vehicle (SPV) set up to work for the benefit of the afflicted tribal communities, post the judgment in the *Common Cause vs. Union of India and Another W.P. (Civil) No. 114 of 2014*.

(h) Miscellaneous Representations

Representation to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs: In response to the ministry's Draft Companies (CSR Policy) Amendment Rules, 2020, Common Cause submitted its comments and suggestions on March 25, 2020. The main provision of concern was Rule 4 (2), which made registered trusts and societies ineligible to receive CSR funds once the Act comes in force. Common Cause highlighted the unprecedented nature of the move, citing past committee reports initiated by the ministry. This included the High-Level Committee on CSR, set up on September 28, 2018, in which there was no mention of removing registered trusts and societies from the CSR funding pool. We also underlined the negative impact this move would have on the civil society activity portfolio and CSO- government

collaborations. We requested the govt to reconsider this provision so that registered trusts and societies continue to receive CSR funds.

Comments Submitted to the Election Commission of India:

In response to the call for comments/suggestions for recommendations of the ECI Working Groups on Various Aspects of Electoral Management, Common Cause submitted both general and specific comments on March 30, 2020. We also submitted a 'call to action' document titled 'Safeguarding Democracy from Digital Platforms,' for increased regulation on the use of digital platforms for electoral campaigning. (This was a follow up to the press conference held on April 5, 2019, by the Constitutional Conduct Group, Common Cause, Internet Freedom Foundation, Free Software Movement of India, Association for Democratic Reforms, and former Chief Election Commissioners, Dr N. Gopalaswami and Dr S. Y. Quraishi). We stressed on the need to monitor and regulate expenditure and use of digital news media platforms by political parties. We also appealed for the repeal of Electoral Bonds to ensure elections remain free, fair and autonomous from undue corporate deal-making and foreign influence.

Representation to the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution: On May

4, 2020, Common Cause sent a representation to the Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Ram Vilas Paswan, providing suggestions to address the mounting food insecurity among vulnerable populations after the coronavirus lockdown. Underscoring the need for urgent action to mitigate hunger and distress, we pointed out how crores of people were going hungry despite the surplus buffer stocks in government granaries. Common Cause also suggested a bevy of measures to address the food security crisis, including the addition of all eligible persons under the National Food Security Act as per the estimated population of 2020-21, instead of still using the outdated 2011 census data.

Representation to the Prime Minister: Common Cause, along with Right to Education Forum, several academicians and civil society organisations, urged the government on May 11, 2020, to take steps to ensure that children enjoy their rights to survival, protection, education and development during and after the COVID-19 pandemic without any discrimination based on religion, gender, class and caste. We suggested that in order to safeguard food security of India's children, the government should ensure smooth implementation of the notification for home delivery of mid-day meals and the Supreme Court's suo moto order for providing nutritious food to

children and lactating mothers through the Anganwadi Centres on an urgent basis.

Representation to the Ministry of Home Affairs: On May 12, 2020, Common Cause submitted a representation to Mr. Amit Shah, Union Minister of Home Affairs, highlighting the plight of domestic workers during the COVID-19 crisis. It requested the Government of India to issue a specific order to include domestic workers in the category of 'migrant workers' and 'daily wagers' so that they receive at least 50% of their monthly wages under the aegis of the urban local bodies and the residents' welfare societies. This was in response to a circular issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs on March 29, 2020, detailing protections for migrant workers as a specific category.

Representation to the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change: On June 24, 2020, Common Cause submitted its response to the Draft Environmental Impact Assessment 2020 Notification to Mr. C.K. Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change. Our representation stated how the Draft Notification significantly dilutes the provisions of the EIA Notification, 2006, and waters down several provisions of the parent legislation, the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. This results in the erasure of long-standing principles of environmental jurisprudence,

such as the Polluter Pays Principle, Precautionary Principle, Public Trust Doctrine and the standards set out in international conventions such as the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, 1992, and the Paris Agreement, 2015. We emphasised, among other things, on how the notification went against precedents set by the Indian courts and the National Green Tribunal.

Response to Committee for Reforms in Criminal Laws Consultation: Common Cause has been sending its submissions to the questionnaire-based consultation started by the five-member Committee for Reforms in Criminal Laws, set up by the Ministry of Home Affairs. The questionnaire has been divided into six tranches and it concluded on October 9, 2020. The Committee has also been tasked with looking into the possibility of newer legislation on varied subjects, right from sedition to marital rape. In addition, it was scheduled to weigh in on myriad issues, including whether mob lynching should be penalised as a separate offence. We have submitted our detailed comments on two instalments of the questionnaire related to the reforms process. The responses to the First Consultation on Substantive Criminal Law, submitted on July 17, 2020, dealt with Strict Liability Offences, Offences Against the State, Offences Affecting Human Body, Sexual

Offences, and many other issues. We offered our responses to the Second Consultation on Substantive Criminal Law on August 11, 2020, which focused on Offences By or Relating to Public Servants, Offences Relating to Public Tranquility, Offences Affecting the Public Health, Safety, Convenience, Decency and Morals, among other things.

Representation to the Ministry of Labour and Employment:

On August 20, 2020, Common Cause sent a representation to the Deputy Director, Union Ministry of Labour and Employment, on the Draft Code on Wages (Central) Rules 2020, which is aimed at providing the base and procedures to implement the Code on Wages, 2019. We stressed on the necessity for having eight hours of work in a day and 48 hours in a week, as well as one or more intervals of rest. In addition, we pointed out how the number of work hours in a normal working day, including rest intervals, should not exceed 10 ½ hours. We also recommended that the rest day should be treated as leave with wages.

UNEP Mineral Resource Governance Resolution: In response to UNEP's Regional Consultative Meetings on the UN Environment Assembly resolution on Mineral Resource Governance, Common Cause submitted its comments and recommendations on September 3, 2020. We suggested that since

minerals represent great national wealth, a global wealth asset management system is in order to ensure that mineral wealth is not depleted with the present generation. We also stressed that the IMF and similar bodies must amend their standards to treat extraction and the State must be held responsible and liable for preservation of the mineral resources (not just limited to the prohibition of illegal/unsustainable mining).

Representation to the Chief Executive Officer, National Health Authority: Common Cause sent a representation to the CEO, National Health Authority, in response to the draft Health Data Management Policy on September 21, 2020. The draft policy claims to protect citizens' health data by regulating its collection and storage. However, we put forward our specific concerns in the representation and highlighted that unless there is an overarching data protection law in place, citizens must not be asked to disclose their health data against their interests.

Representations to the Principal Secretary to Govt of Odisha, Department of Steel & Mines, Director of Mines, and the PS to the Chief Minister of Odisha: Common Cause sent a representation to above mentioned authorities on December 8, 2020, to initiate action against mining companies for their non-compliance of the legal mandate of Rule-12A

of Mineral Concession Rules, 2016 and Mine Development and Production Agreements. The non-compliant mining companies failed to maintain minimum dispatch of 80% of the average annual production of iron ore of two immediately preceding years on a pro-rata basis. Common Cause highlighted how the law does not provide any room to cover up the shortfall in the minimum production/dispatch by ramping up iron ore mining towards the end of the year.

(i) Miscellaneous Webinars/ Online Consultations/ Workshops

ResiLens Stress Test Workshop, July 6, 2020

Radhika Jha of Common Cause attended the online 'ResiLens Stress Test Workshop' organised by Dasra, a Mumbai-based non-profit organisation, for assisting NGOs to streamline their projects and teams during the pandemic and overcome the consequent hurdles such as the requirement to shift to digital space, financial crunch, etc.

Adani & the Godda Coal Power Plant, August 10, 2020

Swapna Jha and Anshi Beohar of Common Cause participated in a deep dive session focusing on the impacts of Adani's Godda Coal Power Plant. The session was organised by INSAF (Indian Social Action Forum)

and Bangladesh Working Group on External Debt (BWGED) and featured several speakers, including the affected community representatives, campaigners, lawmakers, lawyers and researchers from Australia, Bangladesh and India.

Tata Trusts -- 'INDIA JUSTICE REPORT, September 5, 2020

Common Cause Director was part of the panel discussion on "The Indian states in relation to their capacity to deliver access to justice." Organised by Citizens' Forum India, the discussion also had other speakers, including Ms Maja Daruwala, Mr. Sanjoy Hazarika, Mr. Surya Prakash BS, Prof Vijay Raghavan, and Mr GaganSethi.

Roundtable - FCRA, 80G, funding strategies, October 16, 2020

Swapna Jha and Anshi Beohar of Common Cause participated in a roundtable discussion around the latest legislative changes affecting the NGOs. The discussion was organised by i-probono, an organisation dedicated to providing quality legal assistance for social causes. The interactive session featured legal and accounting experts, including Mr. Noshir H. Dadrawala, lawyer and Chief Executive, Centre for Advancement of Philanthropy and Chartered Accountant, and Mr. Anil Goyal of AKG Advisory LLP.

Democracy around the World: Social Inequality at Home and

Abroad, October 21, 2020

Common Cause Director was a panelist at a discussion on rising economic, racial, and gender inequalities around the world. The well-attended global discussion was organised by Indiana University and had other speakers like Prof Birgit Pfau-Effinger, Research Professor for Cultural and Institutional Change, Universität Hamburg and Ms Gretchen Kuhner, Director of the Institute for Women in Migration (IMUMI) - a non-profit organisation based in Mexico City. The discussion, also featured on social media platforms, is available at <https://bit.ly/3nHVOzU>

Electoral Bonds: Boon or Bane for Democracy, November 1, 2020

The webinar was organised by Forum for Fast Justice, Mumbai and National Federation of Societies for Fast Justice, New Delhi on November 1, 2020. The webinar discussed if the Electoral Bonds constitute a form of legalising political corruption. The webinar featured Maj. Gen. Anil Verma (Retd.), the head of the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and Dr Vipul Mudgal. The discussion carried forward the concerns of the plea filed by the ADR and Common Cause in the Supreme Court in 2017. The webinar can be accessed at <https://bit.ly/3h5503w>

National seminar and workshop on 'Social Audits in

India Today and An Agenda for Action, November 5-7, 2020

The Common Cause team (Ms Radhika Jha, Ms Anshi Beohar and the Director) participated as resource persons in a workshop organised by a consortium of NGOs that aimed at providing a platform to hear and learn about social audits from different perspectives. The seminar addressed the concerns of civil society activists, representatives of judiciary and government, social audit units, and researchers. The discussion provided an opportunity to reflect on the unique set of challenges and opportunities that the pandemic and ensuing lockdown have thrown at social audits.

2. Public interest litigation

Supreme Court Cases

Petition Challenging Re-appointment of the ED Director:

Common Cause has filed a PIL in the Supreme Court seeking a direction for the appointment of the Director, Enforcement Directorate (ED), in a fair and transparent manner and strictly in accordance with law as mandated by Section 25 of the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003. The writ petition has prayed for the quashing of the central government's order dated November 13, 2020, to retrospectively amend the tenure of Mr Sanjay Kumar Mishra as

ED Director. The petition points out that the order, extending the tenure of the Director, ED, is in violation of the CVC Act. It states that a circuitous route has been employed to give the ED Director one more year in the same position, by way of retrospectively modifying the appointment order dated November 19, 2018.

Mr Mishra was appointed as the Director on November 19, 2018, for a period of two years, which ended on November 18, 2020. An office order, dated November 13, 2020, modifies the order appointing him to the effect that the period of "two years" in the 2018 order shall be altered to "three years". As of May 2020, he has reached the retirement age of 60 years, yet his tenure has been extended by a year in violation of the provisions of the CVC Act, 2003, the petition states.

Writ for Police Reforms: This matter was taken up on June 12, 2020, when the Court, as an exception, allowed Tripura to give relaxation of five years in the appointment of Director General of Police (DGP). The Apex Court held that the reduction in the period of experience for the appointment as DGP from 30 years of service to 25 years was a one-time exception, and maintained that the original rule will stay intact. It stated in its order that "as a result of the Union of India declining to release one eligible candidate, Mr Amitabha Ranjan, IPS, for

appointment as DGP, there was only one other candidate available for appointment as DGP in the State of Tripura.” The amicus curiae suggested that the monitoring of the implementation of the guidelines resulting from the present case be relegated to the jurisdictional High Courts. In response, the Court felt that the matter required further consideration and directed it to be listed after four weeks. However, there have been no hearings on it so far.

Illegal Mining in Odisha: In its final judgment on August 2, 2017, the Supreme Court had imposed 100 per cent penalty on illegal mining (i.e., without forest and environmental clearances, mining outside lease/permitted area and mining in excess of permissions). This matter was taken up twice on March 23

and 27, 2020, when the Court granted relief to an applicant for sale of iron ore based on certain circumstances. In August 2020, the Court granted relief to Orrisa Minerals Development Company Ltd (OMDC) which had approached the Supreme Court requesting condonation of delay in compensation payment and other ancillary issues. Since then the OMDC had paid the compensation along with interest.

Hence, the Court condoned the delay as requested by OMDC. The company was also permitted to resume its mining operations, subject to all clearances. It was also allowed to sell its undisposed stock, subsequent to a joint verification by competent officers of the State of Orissa, vide order dated August 11, 2020.

3. Finance and Accounts (2019-20)

The Audit Report on the Annual Accounts of Common Cause for the year ending March 31, 2020 has been received. The Governing Council has been requested to go through the report and accord its approval on December 28, 2020. Briefly, the expenditure during the year was Rs 166.69 lakh against Rs 192.99 lakh recorded in the previous year. The income during the year was Rs 191.57 lakh compared to Rs 203.67 lakh during 2018-19. Thus, there was a surplus of Rs 24.88 lakh during the year as against a surplus of Rs 10.68 lakh in the previous year. Overall, the financial results have been satisfactory.



The belief that the world is getting worse, that we can't solve extreme poverty and disease, isn't just mistaken. It is harmful.

Bill Gates



DONATE FOR A BETTER INDIA! DONATE FOR COMMON CAUSE!

Common Cause is a non-profit organisation which makes democratic interventions for a better India. Established in 1980 by the legendary Mr H D Shourie, Common Cause also works on judicial, police, electoral and administrative reforms, environment, human development and good governance.

Its very first Public Interest Litigation benefitted millions of pensioners. Subsequent PILs transformed the way natural resources are allocated in India. Its landmark cases include those regarding criminalisation of politics; cancellation (and re-auction) of the arbitrary 2G telecom licences and captive coal block allocations; quashing of Section 66A of the IT Act; prohibiting misuse of public money through self-congratulatory advertisements by politicians in power, to name only a few. Our other prominent petitions pertain to imposing penalties on rampant illegal mining in Odisha, the appointment of Lokpal and seeking human beings' right to die with dignity through a 'Living Will.'

The impact: Re-auctions leading to earning of several thousand crores, and counting. Even though that is a lot of money for a poor country, the earnings are a smaller gain when compared to the institutional integrity built in the process. From spectrum to coal to mines, today no government can 'gift' precious resources to cronies thanks to these two PILs.

(For more details about cases, please visit www.commoncause.in)

Common Cause runs mainly on donations and contributions from members and well-wishers. Your donations enable us to research and pursue more ideas for a better India. Common Cause believes that no donation is too small. Donations are exempt under Section 80-G of the Income Tax Act. Please send your cheques with your personal info at the address given below. You may also deposit directly into our bank account (details are given below) and send us an email at commoncauseindia@gmail.com, providing information such as donor's name, address and PAN number for issuance of donation receipt.

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COMMON CAUSE VISION

An India where every citizen is respected and fairly treated

MISSION

To champion vital public causes

OBJECTIVES

To defend and fight for the rights and entitlements of all groups of citizens

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