

6. India and The SDGs – Environment

India has completed a decade of implementing the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. Over the last decade, India has embedded Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in its governance through national frameworks, state initiatives, and grassroots planning, making them a tool of transformation.

How India Integrated SDGs into its Development Planning?

Pioneering SDG India Index

Example – The SDG India Index, launched by NITI Aayog in 2018, ranks States/UTs based on 100+ indicators aligned with SDGs.

Impact – Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh consistently topped the rankings, while states like Bihar and Jharkhand identified education and health gaps for targeted action.

Relevance – The Index converted SDGs into measurable state-level goals, encouraging cooperative and competitive federalism.

Localization of SDGs

Example – Over 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats now prepare Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDs) aligned with SDG priorities.

Tool – The Panchayat Advancement Index was developed to monitor and guide Panchayat-level planning.

Case Study – States like Kerala and Rajasthan have integrated SDGs into local planning manuals, ensuring community-driven development at the grassroots. Kerala's Kerala Institute for Local Administration (KILA) has developed local planning guidelines that incorporate SDGs, supported by real-time dashboards for monitoring progress.

Institutionalisation of SDGs – Several states established SDG Coordination and Acceleration Centres for systematic monitoring. Budgets worth billions of rupees are mapped to SDG targets, making planning more transparent and accountable.

Example – Haryana and Odisha have aligned their state budgets with SDG outcomes.

Targeted Programmes for Inclusion

Example – The Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) (2018) covers 112 districts lagging in health, education, and infrastructure.

Impact – Districts like Mewat (Haryana) improved institutional deliveries by over 30% within three years due to focused monitoring.

Expansion – The Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP) extended the model to 500+ blocks, strengthening last-mile delivery.

Whole-of-Society Approach

India adopted an inclusive strategy by engaging civil society, academia, and the private sector in SDG implementation.

Example – India presented three Voluntary National Reviews (2017, 2020, 2025) at the UN High-Level Political Forum.

Civil Society Engagement – More than 1,000 CSOs participated in consultations each year. For instance, NGOs in Maharashtra worked with NITI Aayog to integrate SDG targets into local education and nutrition programmes.

Private Sector Role – Companies such as Tata Group and ITC aligned CSR initiatives with SDGs like clean energy (SDG 7) and sustainable livelihoods (SDG 8).

India's Progress on SDGs

International Ranking – India ranked 112 out of 166 countries in the Sustainable Development Report 2024, with strong gains in poverty reduction, renewable energy, and digital inclusion

SDG 1 – No Poverty –

1. **Progress** – Multidimensional poverty reduced from 29.17% (2013-14) to 11.28% (2022-23).
2. **Initiatives** – Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) providing free foodgrains to 80 crore people; PM-KISAN for income support to farmers.

SDG 2 – Zero Hunger –

1. **Progress** – Malnutrition still a concern, but stunting reduced to 35.5% (NFHS-5, 2019-21) from 48% (2005-06).
2. **Initiatives** – POSHAN Abhiyaan (2018) for nutrition; Mid-Day Meal (PM Poshan) scheme; National Food Security Act (2013) ensuring subsidised food.

SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-being

1. **Progress** – Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) fell from 39 per 1000 live births in 2014 to 28 per 1000 live births in 2020.
2. **Initiatives** – Ayushman Bharat (Health and Wellness Centres + PM-JAY); Mission Indradhanush for immunisation; National AYUSH Mission.

SDG 4 – Quality Education

1. **Progress** – Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education rose to 28.4% (2022). Digital platforms like DIKSHA expanded access during COVID-19.
2. **Initiatives** – Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan; NEP 2020 reforms; PM e-VIDYA.

SDG 5 – Gender Equality

1. **Progress** – Female Labour Force Participation improved from 23.3% (2017-18) to 37% (2023) (PLFS).
2. **Initiatives** – Beti Bachao Beti Padhao; Mahila Shakti Kendra; reservation for women in Parliament (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam 2023).

SDG 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation

1. **Progress** – Over 12 crore toilets constructed; rural sanitation coverage increased from 39% (2014) to nearly 100% (2020).
2. **Initiatives** – Jal Jeevan Mission (tap water to every household by 2024); Swachh Bharat Mission.

SDG 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy

1. **Progress** – 100% household electrification achieved; India's renewable energy capacity crossed 180 GW (2023).
2. **Initiatives** – UJWALA Yojana (LPG to 9.6 crore households); International Solar Alliance.

SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth

1. **Progress** – India became the fourth-largest economy (2025) with 7%+ GDP growth.
2. **Initiatives** – Startup India, Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, PM Mudra Yojana (loans to 40+ crore beneficiaries).

SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities

1. **Progress** – JAM Trinity (Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, Mobile) enabled direct benefit transfer to 48 crore accounts, reducing leakages.
2. **Initiatives** – One Nation, One Ration Card; Stand-Up India Scheme.