

# **Towards Sustainability: An Overview of Sustainable Development Goals in India**

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**Abstract:** *This paper studies India's performance and progress towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2019 and 2020. The SDG progress of India's states and Union Territories shows wide disparities. Bihar ranks lowest at 52, Kerala consistently scores high at 75, while Mizoram notably improves from 56 to 68. Some states show significant strides, while others lag, signaling areas requiring attention. This paper will help policymakers to improve SDG's performance. Also, this study will further add to the sustainable development literature in the context of India.*

**Keywords:** Sustainable development

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The concept of "sustainable development" was first used in the 1987 Brundtland Commission report "Our Common Future." The definition of Sustainable development is, "Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future"(Orsini et al., 1987). The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), known as the Rio Conference or Earth Summit, was one of the first significant conferences on sustainability, held in 1992. The outcome of this conference was the formation of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the United Nations to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 interrelated goals in the document titled "Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" that the UN adopted in September 2015 with the overriding purpose of promoting sustainable development by 2030(Krehbiel et al., 2017). The SDGs build upon the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) but extend their scope by addressing not only poverty and basic human needs but also broader issues such as inequality, climate change, sustainable consumption, and peace(United Nations, 2015). It is important to study the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in India to track progress, address pressing socio-economic and environmental issues, promote inclusive development, and promote international cooperation.

## **II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

India has adopted the SDG framework since 2015 at all levels of government, from the central and state governments to the village panchayat level. The Government of India provides overall guidance for achieving the national SDGs by setting national-level standards and benchmarks such as the National Indicator Framework (NIF) and the SDG India Index (SGDII)(NITI Aayog, 2023). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) target policy implementation that leads to poverty eradication and the socio-economic development of poor people (Niaz, 2022). Sustainable development is positively related to happiness. However, specific goals related to responsible production, consumption and climate action show a negative impact on happiness levels (De Neve & Sachs, 2020).India Critical off-target indicators include access to basic services, wasting and overweight children, anemia, child marriage, intimate partner violence, tobacco use and use of modern contraceptives. For these indicators, more than 75% of the districts were out of target (Subramanian et al., 2023). India has to achieve SDGs by 2030 and considering all the above reviews it is necessary to study the following objectives.

**Objectives of the study**

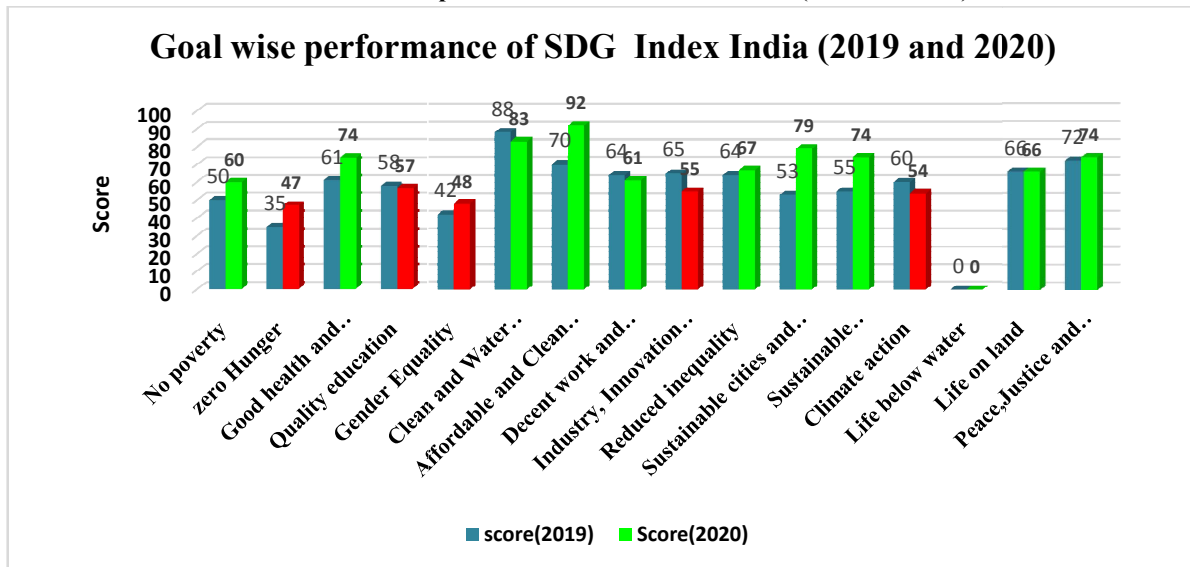
1. To study the performance SDGs of India.
2. To study the progress of SDG in various states in India.

**III. METHODOLOGY**

The study based on secondary data. The present study gathered information from national and international sources such as government reports, United Nations databases and reputed research institutes. India has adopted the SDGs in 2015. The study collected data on key indicators relevant to each of the SDGs from 2015 to the present.

**Status of Sustainable Development Goals in India**

**Chart 1: Goal-wise performance of SDG Index India (2019 and 2020)**

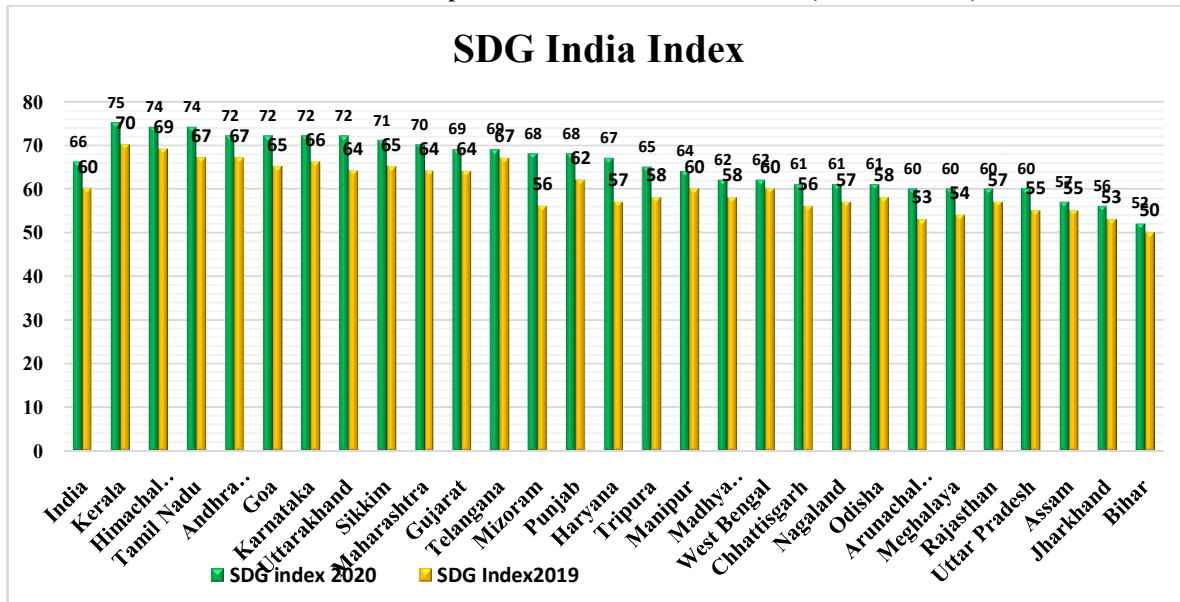


Source: <https://sdgindiaindex.niti.gov.in/#/ranking>

The above chart shows the progress of various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the years 2019 and 2020. Goals such as no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, gender equality, affordable and clean energy, reduced inequality, sustainable cities and communities, and sustainable consumption and production saw growth from 2019 to 2020. This indicates progress in these areas. In contrast, sectors such as quality education, clean water and sanitation, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure and climate action have seen a decline in the index, indicating potential challenges or obstacles in these areas. Life on Land maintained the same score in both years, indicating stability in progress towards this goal.

This data shows the SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) Index scores for various states in India for the years 2019 and 2020. Which indicates how far the country has come toward achieving UN sustainability targets. Bihar ranks lowest (52 in 2020), whereas Kerala continuously ranks high (75 in 2020). Mizoram showed considerable improvement, rising from 56 in 2019 to 68 in 2020. Punjab and Haryana made notable progress as well, finishing in 2020 with scores of 68 and 67, respectively. While Uttar Pradesh kept its score at 60, Telangana saw a small decrease to 69 in 2020, indicating the need for more concentrated efforts. With a score of 57, Assam requires development. While Uttarakhand, Haryana, and Mizoram show notable advances, states like Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu demonstrate steady advancement. Assam, West Bengal, and Telangana have made less development, suggesting areas that require greater attention.

Chart 2: State-wise performance of SDG Index India (2019 and 2020)



Source: <https://sdgindiaindex.niti.gov.in/#/ranking>

Table: 1 State-wise performance of SDG Index India (2019 and 2020).

State	SDG index 2020	SDG Index 2019	Changes in SDG Index	State	SDG index 2020	SDG Index 2019	Changes in SDG Index
Kerala	75	70	5	Tripura	65	58	7
Himachal P.	74	69	5	Manipur	64	60	4
Tamil Nadu	74	67	7	Madhya P.	62	58	4
Andhra Pradesh	72	67	5	West Bengal	62	60	2
Goa	72	65	7	Chhattisgarh	61	56	5
Karnataka	72	66	6	Nagaland	61	57	4
Uttarakhand	72	64	8	Odisha	61	58	3
Sikkim	71	65	6	Arunachal P.	60	53	7
Maharashtra	70	64	6	Meghalaya	60	54	6
Gujarat	69	64	5	Rajasthan	60	57	3
Telangana	69	67	2	Uttar P.	60	55	5
Mizoram	68	56	12	Assam	57	55	2
Punjab	68	62	6	Jharkhand	56	53	3
Haryana	67	57	10	Bihar	52	50	2

Source: <https://sdgindiaindex.niti.gov.in/#/ranking>

Many states in India have improved in SDG index scores from 2019 to 2020 including Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Karnataka, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab, Tripura, Manipur, Madhya Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Uttar Pradesh. Their scores from 2 to 8 show consistent and positive progress. Some states like Mizoram (12), Haryana (10) have shown significant improvement in their SDG index scores. Whereas Telangana, West Bengal, Nagaland, Odisha, Rajasthan, Assam, Jharkhand and Bihar all showed relatively minimal improvement in their scores ranging from 2 to 4 points (MOSPI, 2022).

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that India and its states are performing variations while they pertain to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Some areas like poverty reduction, health, gender equality, and clean energy improved from 2019 to 2020. Yet, education, clean water, economic growth, and climate action faced challenges. Kerala excels while Bihar needs more development. States like Mizoram, Punjab, and Haryana improved, but others like Telangana and West Bengal lag behind, needing more attention.

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