

INDIA UP ONE RANK IN UN DEVELOPMENT INDEX

Relevant for: Indian Economy | Topic: Issues relating to Growth & Development - Demographic Economics & Various Indexes

India ranks 129 out of 189 countries on the 2019 Human Development Index (HDI) — up one slot from the 130th position last year — according to the Human Development Report (HDR) released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on Monday.

The HDI measures average achievement in three basic dimensions of human development — life expectancy, education and per capita income.

Norway, Switzerland and Ireland occupied the top three positions in that order. Germany is placed fourth along with Hong Kong, and Australia secured the fifth rank on the global ranking.

Among India's neighbours, Sri Lanka (71) and China (85) are higher up the rank scale while Bhutan (134), Bangladesh (135), Myanmar (145), Nepal (147), Pakistan (152) and Afghanistan (170) were ranked lower on the list.

46% growth in S.Asia

As per the report, South Asia was the fastest growing region in human development progress witnessing a 46% growth over 1990-2018, followed by East Asia and the Pacific at 43%. India's HDI value increased by 50% (from 0.431 to 0.647), which places it above the average for other South Asian countries (0.642).

However, for inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI), India's position drops by one position to 130, losing nearly half the progress (.647 to .477) made in the past 30 years. The IHDI indicates percentage loss in HDI due to inequalities.

The report notes that group-based inequalities persist, especially affecting women and girls and no place in the world has gender equality. In the Gender Inequality Index (GII), India is at 122 out of 162 countries. Neighbours China (39), Sri Lanka (86), Bhutan (99), Myanmar (106) were placed above India.

The report notes that the world is not on track to achieve gender equality by 2030 as per the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. It forecasts that it may take 202 years to close the gender gap in economic opportunity — one of the three indicators of the GII.

Increasing bias

The report presents a new index indicating how prejudices and social beliefs obstruct gender equality, which shows that only 14% of women and 10% of men worldwide have no gender bias.

The report notes that this indicates a backlash to women's empowerment as these biases have shown a growth especially in areas where more power is involved, including in India.

The report also highlights that new forms of inequalities will manifest in future through climate change and technological transformation which have the potential to deepen existing social and economic fault lines.

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