



## HDI Ranking by UNDP

India is ranked 130 out of 189 countries in the latest human development Index (HDI) released recently by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

### What is HDI?

- The Human Development Index (HDI) is a tool developed by the United Nations and was **introduced in the first Human Development Report in 1990** to measure and rank countries' levels of social and economic development.
- The HDI is the composite measure of every country's attainment in three basic dimensions:
  - **standard of living** measured by the gross national income (GNI) per capita;
  - **health** measured by the life expectancy at birth;
  - **education** levels calculated by mean years of education among the adult population and the expected years of schooling for children.
- This index makes it possible to follow changes in development levels over time and to compare the development levels of different countries.

### Key Points

- **Global Scenario**
  - Norway at 0.95 has been ranked the highest on the HDI scale while Niger is the bottom at 0.35. The greatest increase in HDI rank over the last five years is by Ireland followed by Turkey while the **worst decline** was seen in **conflict-hit countries of Syria, Libya, and Yemen**.
  - **Norway, Switzerland**, Australia, Ireland and Germany lead the ranking, while **Niger, the Central African Republic, South Sudan**, Chad and Burundi have the lowest scores in the HDI's measurement of national achievements in health, education and income.
  - Within South Asia, **India's HDI** value is above the average of 0.638 for the region, with Bangladesh and Pakistan, countries with similar population size, being ranked 136 and 150 respectively.
  - The overall trend globally is toward continued human development improvements, with many countries moving up through the human development categories: out of the 189 countries for which the HDI is calculated, 59 countries are today in the very high human development group and only 38 countries fall in the low HDI group.
  - **Inequality manifests in the massive differences across the world in people's well-being** with a child born in a low HDI country expected to live just over 60 years as compared to a very high HDI country where a child could live up to 80 years. Likewise, children in low HDI countries are expected to be in school seven years fewer than children in very high HDI countries.
- **Indian Scenario**
  - India climbed one spot to 130 out of 189 countries in the latest HDI ranking as compared to 131st out of 188 countries in the 2017 Human Development Index (HDI).
  - India's Human Development Index (HDI) value for 2017 is 0.640, which puts the country in the **medium human development category**. Between 1990 and 2017, India's HDI value rose from 0.427 to 0.640, an increase of nearly 50%, indicating rapid progress in poverty eradication.
  - People are living longer, are more educated, and have greater income today as seen in the

rise in average HDI levels since 1990 at 22 per cent globally. The least developed countries registered a 51 per cent increase. In keeping with the global trend, in the last 17 years since 1990, India registered a 50 per cent increase.

- Life expectancy at birth in the country has increased by 11 years and children have been predicted to stay in school for 4.7 years longer than in 1990. Further, the highest leap has been in GNI per capita which registered more than 200 percent increase between 1990 and 2017.
- At the same time the value of **India's Inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI) falls by more than 25%** to 0.468, far worse than the global average decrease in the global HDI value due to the stark inequality in access to education, health, and income.
- India ranks 127 out of 160 countries on the Gender Inequality Index which reflects gender-based inequalities in reproductive health, empowerment (political and educational), and economic activity.
- The report notes that in **India women hold only about 11 per cent of parliamentary seats** which implies that women hardly have a role in policy making, while only about 40 percent of adult women have reached at least a secondary level of education as compared to more than 60 percent men .
- India's worst performance on the gender scale is with regards to its **female participation in the labour market** which is about 30 per cent compared to 80 per cent for men even as globally about 50 per cent women are part of the labour force as compared to 75 per cent men.

## Limitations of HDI

- It provides a limited evaluation of human development which is much beyond the parameters considered for its measurement.
- It does not specifically reflect quality of life factors, such as empowerment movements or overall feelings of security.
- In recognition of these facts, the Human Development Report Office (HDRO) provides additional composite indices to evaluate other life aspects, including inequality issues such as gender disparity or racial inequality.
- So, examination and evaluation of a country's HDI is best done in coordination with examining other factors, such as the country's rate of economic growth, expansion of employment opportunities, success of initiatives etc undertaken to improve the overall quality of life within a country.

## Way Forward

- India's HDI has increased tremendously in the last two and half decades. However, we **need to focus on inequality and the pockets of deprivation** that are dragging the HDI down for achieving development for all and the key principle of the **Sustainable Development Goals** to leave no one behind.
- Gender inequality is another big issue which adversely affects human development. So the development schemes like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, Stand-up India etc. would be crucial in ensuring the upward trend of human development.
- Deteriorating air quality in major Indian cities and its impacts on human health are also worrying. There should be more **sensitization towards eco-friendly solutions** for mobility like the recent [Global Mobility Summit](#) to make transition towards sustainable alternatives for transport.
- **Climate change** is likely to increase migration, displacement and negatively affect livelihoods. As the **solution lies in innovation**, so the government with all the stake holders including community participation should create an ecosystem that fosters creative thinking and innovation to make India climate change resilient.

