

Significant progress in SDGs on clean energy, health: NITI index

Goalposts changed on inequality, with omission of key economic indicators

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India saw significant improvement in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to clean energy, urban development and health in 2020, according to the NITI Aayog's 2020 SDG Index. However, there has been a major decline in the areas of industry, innovation and infrastructure as well as decent work and economic growth.

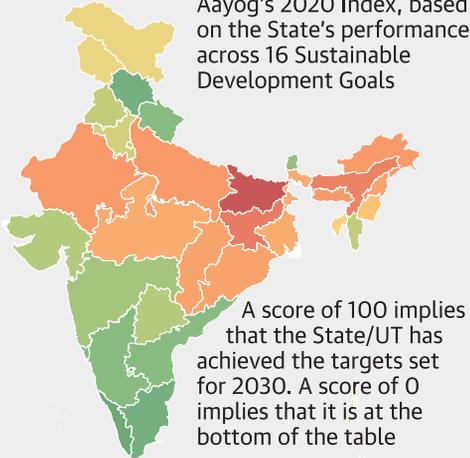
Although the index shows improvement on the inequality SDGs, the NITI Aayog has omitted key economic indicators used to measure inequality in income and expenditure last year and given greater weightage to social indicators instead.

Kerala retained its position at the top of the rankings in the third edition of the index, with a score of 75, followed by Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh, both scoring 72. At the other end of the scale, Bihar, Jharkhand and Assam were the worst performing States. However, all the States showed some improvement from last year's scores, with Mizoram and Haryana seeing the biggest gains.

Developed by a global consultative process on holistic development, the 17

KERALA ON TOP AGAIN

With a composite score of 75, Kerala topped the NITI Aayog's 2020 Index, based on the State's performance across 16 Sustainable Development Goals



A score of 100 implies that the State/UT has achieved the targets set for 2030. A score of 0 implies that it is at the bottom of the table

52 2020 INDEX SCORE 79

SDGs have a 2030 deadline.

The NITI Aayog launched its index in 2018 to monitor the country's progress on the goals through data-driven assessment and to foster a competitive spirit among the States and Union Territories in achieving them.

In March, an assessment by the UN of the impact of COVID-19 on the SDGs said the region India is part of may see rising inequality due to the pandemic.

The NITI Aayog Index shows some improvement in the SDG on inequality, but a look at the indicators used to

assess this goal shows that the think tank has changed the goalposts.

Thrust on social equality

In 2019, the indicators for inequality included the growth rates for household expenditure per capita among the bottom 40% of rural and urban populations, as well as the Gini coefficient – a measure of the distribution of income – in rural and urban India. The 2018 indicators included the Palma ratio, another metric for income inequality.

Such economic measures

have been omitted from the indicators used for this SDG in the 2020 edition of the Index. Instead, it gives greater weightage to social equality indicators, such as the percentage of women and Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe representatives in State Legislatures and the panchayati raj institutions and the levels of crime against the SC/ST communities. The only economic indicator this year is the percentage of population in the lowest two wealth quintiles.

Goal	Top States
No poverty	Tamil Nadu
Zero hunger	Kerala
Good health and well-being	Gujarat
Quality education	Kerala
Gender equality	Chhattisgarh
Clean water and sanitation	Goa
Decent work and economic growth	Himachal Pradesh
Industry, innovation and infrastructure	Gujarat
Reduced inequality	Meghalaya
Sustainable cities and communities	Punjab
Responsible consumption and production	Tripura
Climate action	Odisha
Life below water	Odisha
Life on land	Arunachal Pradesh
Peace, justice and strong institutions	Uttarakhand

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 10