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MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS, INDIA'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN ACCOMPLISHING THE GOALS, AND THE ROLE OF THE INDIAN PARLIAMENT IN THIS REGARD

Introduction

The Millennium Development Summit, 2000, coined the concept of *Millennium Development Goals*, with the enviable goals of achieving better gender equity, better development and for ridding the world population from the scourges of poverty, illiteracy, healthcare-challenges, etc and to move towards equitable growth and sustainable development. In order to realize this laudable objective, the Summit committed itself to achieving a number of goals, necessitating the member-countries to formulate their policies in a manner that they could reach these set goals by the year 2015. The UN General Assembly adopted the road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration during its fifty sixth session in September 2001, thereby firming up its resolve to ensure basic developmental rights for people across the world.

The original formulation of the *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs) included 8 goals, comprising 18 targets to be achieved meeting 48 indicators. Other selected indicators of development, which are not related to specific targets, include population, total fertility rate, life expectancy at birth, adult literacy rate and gross national income per capita. It also envisaged that where relevant, indicators should be calculated for sub-national levels *i.e.*, by urban and rural area, by region, by socio-economic group, and by age and gender. As a measure to supplement these goals, it espoused the need for integrating the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes. It also stressed on a more fair and open financial system, committed to good governance at both national and international levels, thus seeking to usher in a development-oriented world order.

In this noble endeavour, India has been playing a pro-active role much on the lines of these goals, even before these were formally codified in the year 2000. We have followed a planned system of development since independence. All the Plans and Programmes are statutorily and structurally supported. At the national level, the Planning Commission draws up Five-Year Plans reflecting the nation's developmental priorities in consultation with the various Union Ministries and the State Governments. The country has a fairly uniform pattern of devolution of responsibility between the Centre and the States and between the States and the local bodies. The 11th Five-year Plan (2007-2012) has set several targets for socio economic development by the end of the Plan period in keeping with the MDGs and has put Government's commitment to a more inclusive development agenda to test.

MDGs: A Global Perspective

Needless to say, the *Millennium Development Goals* aim at achieving specific objectives in order to strengthen mankind's need for having a better world and greater opportunities for living a happy and contented life. These goals, *inter alia*, call for reducing by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day; reducing by half by 2015 the proportion of people who suffer from hunger; ensuring that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling; eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005 and at all levels by 2015; reducing by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate; reducing by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio; halting and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS and incidence

of malaria and other major diseases by 2015. Significant strides have already been made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals across the world. However, meeting all the goals by the 2015 deadline remains challenging, as the world's poorest are being left behind, according to the MDG Report 2011, the UN's annual progress report. Speaking on this theme at the launch of the UN Millennium Development Goals Report 2011 in Geneva on 7 July 2011, the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said : "The MDGs have helped lift millions of people out of poverty, save countless children's lives and ensure that they attend school; at the same time, we still have a long way to go in empowering women and girls, and promoting sustainable development, and protecting the most vulnerable."

Continuing its mission to accomplish a compatible environment, it also emphasized on making individual country's policies and programmes more sustainable in the long run. Development and poverty reduction – nationally and internationally, thus, got the prime attention while addressing the least developed countries' special needs. Emphasis was also laid on enhancing debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries and more generous official development assistance for countries committed to poverty reduction. It also addressed the special needs of landlocked and small island developing States.

India: MDG Tracking

India has been following an indicator-framework given in the United Nations Development Group UNDG (2003) which emphasises on monitoring the Millennium Development Goals for the purpose of statistical tracking of the MDGs. Subsequently, a revised indicator-framework drawn up by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group (IAEG) on MDGs in keeping with the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report to the 61st Session of the UN General Assembly for inclusion of four new targets came into being in 2007. However, India has not endorsed this revised framework. As per the original framework adopted by India, there are 18 targets corresponding to the 8 Millennium Development Goals. For India, only 12 out of the 18 targets (Targets 1 to 11 and Target 18) are relevant and are statistically monitored. The remaining ones are related to land-locked/island/least developed countries. Corresponding to the 12 monitorable targets, India has adopted 35 of the 48 indicators prescribed by the United Nations as relevant for statistical tracking.

Numerous reports from the UN, NGOs, and the International Financial Institutions (IFI) have painted a contrasting picture of the progress achieved. Those specific to the South Asia Region, or developing countries, are greatly influenced by the conditions in India due to its large population size compared to other countries in the region. These reports clearly show that in the current state of affairs, and despite the progress achieved, all of the MDGs will not be met by 2015.

India's position for the MDG targets is summarized in the table given below:

Goal and Target	Status
MDG 1: Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger	
Target 1: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the Percentage of Population below the National Poverty Line	Moderately or almost nearly on-track
Target 2: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.	Slow or almost off-track
MDG 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education	
Target 3: Ensure that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary education.	On track or fast
MDG 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women	
Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than by 2015.	Moderately or almost nearly on track
MDG 4: Reduce Child Mortality	
Target 5: Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five Mortality Rate	Slow or off-track by some indicators and fast by others
MDG 5: Improve Maternal Health	
Target 6: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the Maternal Mortality Ratio.	Slow or off-track by some indicators and fast by others
MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases	
Target 7: Have halted by 2015 and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	Moderately or almost nearly on track

Target 8: Have halted by 2015 and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases	Slow or off-track by some indicators and fast by others
MDG 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability	
Target 9: Integrate the Principles of Sustainable Development into Country Policies and Programmes and Reverse the loss of Environmental Resources	On-track or fast
Target 10: Halve, by 2015, the Proportion of People without Sustainable Access to Safe Drinking Water and Basic Sanitation	On-track or fast by one main indicator but slow by another main indicator
Target 11: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers	The pattern not statistically discernible
MDG 8 : Develop a Global Partnership for Development	
Target 12: In co-operation with the Private Sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially Information and Communication	On-track or fast

India's position with reference to the various Goals are indicated as below:

MDG 1 : Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger

Target 1 : Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the Percentage of Population below the National Poverty Line.

Target 2 : Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

The poverty ratio according to the definition of Government of India is not the same as the international definition. Thus reporting of proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day is not relevant in the Indian context. Similarly, Hunger is not easy to define. However, the UNDP uses the proportion of underweight children as one of the criteria to measure progress towards this target. With reference to the 1990 level of the proportion of underweight children below 3 years estimated at 53.51 per cent, the target level for India works out to be 26.76 per cent. The prevalence of underweight children below 3-years of age was of the order of 46 per cent in 2005-06 as against 47 per cent in 1998-99 which shows only marginal improvement in nourishment.

To achieve the Goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, India has to reduce the proportion of people below the national poverty line from nearly 37.5 per cent in 1990 to about 18.6 per cent by 2015. The incidence of poverty declined from 55 per cent in 1973-74 to 36 per cent in 1993-94 and further to 27.5 per cent in 2004-05 (rural 28.3 per cent and urban 25.7 per cent). These estimates are based on Uniform Recall Period (URP) followed for the Consumption Distribution Data of the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO). If the improvement in the rate of decline in the poverty as observed during 2004-05 to 2005-06 is maintained in the subsequent years or further improved, it is expected that India will be able to achieve the 2015 target. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act enacted by India is a major step taken by the Government of India to help reduce the poverty ratio further.

*All-India trend of the **proportion of underweight (severe and moderate) children below 3 years of age**¹ shows India is going slow in eliminating the effect of malnourishment. From estimated 52% in 1990, the proportion of underweight children below 3 years is required to be reduced to 26% by 2015. According to the officially acclaimed estimates by the new standard, the proportion of underweight has declined by 3 percentage points during 1998-99 to 2005-06, from about 43% to about 40% and at this rate of decline is expected to come down to about 33% only by 2015.*

MDG 2 : Achieve Universal Primary Education

Target 3 : Ensure that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary education.

To achieve universal primary education, India has to increase the primary school enrolment rate to 100 per cent by 2015 and wipe out at the same time the dropouts. The Net Enrolment Ratio (NER), which is the proportion of students of official school age of 6-10 years enrolled in the Grades I-V to the population of children of age group 6-10 years, is the MDG 2 indicator for primary enrolment. **Universal primary education is within our reach as the net enrolment ratio in primary education is likely to reach the 100 per cent mark for both boys and girls before 2015.** For girls, it stands at 90.9 per cent in 2005, showing an increase of nearly 12.7 percentage points in the six years since the year 2000. The corresponding increase for boys is only about 2 percentage points. The overall NER of 98 per cent in 2009-10 against 87.4 per cent in 2000 indicates that 100 per cent NER should be achievable before 2015. The dropout rate in primary grades during 2007-08 is 9.36 per cent. The youth literacy rate (15-24 years) has also increased from 61.9 per cent in 1991 to

83 per cent in 2007-08. Towards achieving 100 per cent Youth Literacy by 2015, another target for MDG 2, India is well on track going by the rate of decline observed during 1991-2008. **By the trend of literacy of 15-24 years old population, India is likely to attain 100 per cent youth literacy before 2015.**

MDG 3 : Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

Target 4 : Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

To ensure gender parity in all education levels, India will have to promote female participation at all levels to reach a female male proportion of equal level by 2015. The female - male proportion in respect of primary education was 76:100 in 1990-91 which has increased to 98:100 in 2007-08. During the same period, the proportion has increased from 60:100 to 85:100 in case of secondary education. **Gender parity in the primary and secondary levels is expected to be achieved by 2015** going by the rate of change observed between 1990 and 2008. **The same is however, not true about tertiary education which has moved from 0.54 in 1991 to 0.7 in 2007-08.** Another indicator under MDG 3 is the ratio of literate women to men, 15-24 years old (literacy gender parity index) which is defined as the ratio of the female literacy rate to the male literacy rate for the age group 15-24 years. The ratio of literate women to men in the age group 15-24 years, which was observed to be 0.67 in 1991, 0.80 in 2001, and 0.86 in 2007-08 tends to exceed 1 (one) by 2015, implying attainment of gender parity in literacy in the age-group 15-24 years by 2015.

The third important indicator for Target 4 under MDG 3 is share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector, which is defined as the share of female workers in the non-agricultural sector (expressed as a percentage of total employment in the sector). The rate of change over time in India in respect of the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector is rather slow. A rise of about 5 percentage points over a period of 5 years has been realized in the recent past and the proportion has moved from 12.7 in 1990 to 17.9 in 2004-05. **It is projected that at this rate of progression the share of women in wage employment can at best reach a level of about 24 per cent by 2015.** Labour markets in industry and services sectors in India are heavily male-dominated and a 50:50 situation for men and women is too ideal to be true, given the market dynamics and existing socio-cultural framework.

MDG 4 : Reduce Child Mortality

Target 5 : Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the Under-five Mortality Rate.

The Under-five Mortality Rate is the probability (expressed as a rate per 1,000 live births) of a child born in a specified year dying before reaching the age of five if subjected to current age-specific mortality rates. The Goal aims at reducing under-five mortality rate (U5MR) from about 125 deaths per thousand live births in 1990 as estimated, to 42 in 2015. NFHS data for 1992-93, 1998-99 and 2005-06 indicate that the U5MR has decreased from 109.3 per thousand live births in 1992-93 to 74.3 per thousand live births in 2005-06 while SRS 2008 data puts it at 69 (per thousand live births) and **by this trend, India is not likely to reach the target by 2015.** More children are surviving their first year of life as the infant mortality rate (IMR) has also come down from 80 per thousand live births in 1990 to 50 per thousand live births in 2009. It has to come down to 26.7 per thousand live births by 2015. By the trend so far, IMR is likely to be 45.9 per thousand live births by 2015. The proportion of 1 year old children immunised against measles has increased from 42.2 per cent in 1992-93 to 69.6 per cent in 2007-08.

MDG 5 : Improve Maternal Health

Target 6 : Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the Maternal Mortality Ratio.

To achieve this Goal, India has to reduce Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) from 437 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1991 to 109 by 2015. The value of MMR for 1997-98 stands reassessed at 398 against the recently assessed value of 301 for the period 2001-03 and 212 for the period 2007-09. **Achieving the 2015 target for MMR is an uphill task, though the rate of decline from 1997-98 to 2007-09 is quite impressive and close to the required rate of decline for achieving the target.** The proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel has been continuously increasing, (from 33.0 per cent in 1992-93 to 52 per cent in 2007-08), thereby reducing the chances of occurrence of maternal deaths. However, acceleration in institutional deliveries and deliveries assisted by skilled/professional personnel will continue to have direct bearing upon reduction in MMR.

MDG 6 : Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases

Target 7 : Have halted by 2015 and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Target 8 : Have halted by 2015 and begin to reverse the incidence of Malaria and other major diseases.

India has a low prevalence of HIV among pregnant women as compared to other developing countries; the increase in prevalence rate from 0.74 per thousand pregnant women aged 15-24 years in 2002 to 0.86 in 2003 has been reversed and

has come down to 0.49 in 2007. Similarly, for pregnant women aged 25-49 years, the rate per thousand pregnant women has come down from 0.80 in 2002 to 0.52 in 2007. The prevalence and death rates associated with Malaria are also declining. The annual parasite incidence rate has declined from 2.57 in 1990 to 1.59 in 2008 and 1.52 in 2009 (up to September). Death rate associated with Malaria per 100 cases diagnosed with the disease has come down from 0.05 in 2005 to 0.07 in 2009 (up to September). The death rate associated with Tuberculosis (TB) has come down from 44 deaths per 1,00,000 population in 1990 to 27 per 1,00,000 population in 2007. The proportion of TB patients successfully treated has also risen from 79 per cent in 1996 to 87 per cent in 2007. **India is on track in respect of the target for these indicators.**

MDG 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability

Target 9 : Integrate the Principles of Sustainable Development into Country Policies and Programmes and Reverse the loss of Environmental Resources.

Target 10: Halve, by 2015, the Proportion of People without Sustainable Access to Safe Drinking Water and Basic Sanitation.

Target 11: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

The Goal aims at ensuring environmental sustainability. As per assessment made in 2003, total land area covered under different forests has been 20.62 per cent, which has gone up to 21.02 per cent as per assessment for the year 2007. As a result of persistent efforts to preserve this natural resource, net loss of forest area has been arrested. The reserved and protected forests together account for 19 per cent of the total land area, some reserved forest areas were converted to protected areas during 2003-05 keeping the total of the two almost the same during the period.

The energy use has become efficient as there is a decline from about 36 kilogram oil equivalent in 1991-92 to about 32 kilogram oil equivalent in 2003-04 per GDP worth Rs. 1000. The proportion of population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation has to be halved by 2015. Proportion of rural households with sustainable access to improved drinking water sources was 55.5 per cent in 1991 and is required to be raised to 78 per cent by 2015. The proportion of rural households having sustainable access to improved drinking water sources has reached 79.6 per cent by 2007-08. Similarly, for urban areas, the proportion of households with sustainable access to improved drinking water sources was 81.4 per cent in 1991 and is required to be raised to 90 per cent by 2015 whereas the proportion has reached 95 per cent by 2007-08. **Thus, India is an early achiever of this target.** Given the 1990 level for households without any sanitation facility at 76 per cent, India is required to reduce the proportion of households having no access to improved sanitation to 38 per cent by 2015. The proportion of households having no sanitation facility has declined from about 70 per cent in 1992-93 (24 per cent urban and 87 per cent rural) to about 51 per cent in 2007-08 (19 per cent urban and 66 per cent rural). It is expected that at this rate of decline, India may succeed in reducing the proportion of households without any sanitation to about 46% by 2015, missing the target by about eight percentage points. However, given the high level of deprivation to begin with, halving the level is not enough. In India, slum data have been collected for the first time in Census 2001 for towns/cities having urban population of 50,000 or more. 640 towns spread over 26 States/UTs reported existence of slums, with 42.6 million people consisting of 8.2 million households residing in slums of these towns in 2001. The share of slum population as percentage of urban population in respect of towns/cities reporting slums, stands at 23.1% in 2001. Comparative figures for any other period is not available for assessing any progress in the situation.

MDG 8 : Develop a Global Partnership for Development

Target 12-18: In co-operation with the Private Sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially Information and Communication.

Goal-8 is regarding developing global partnership for development. It is basically meant for the developed countries to provide development assistance to developing countries. It is a matter of satisfaction that actual disbursements of Official Development Assistance (ODA), in recent years, have shown a welcome reversal of the declining trend that lasted for almost a decade since the early 1990s. In this regard, it is important to realize that unless aid commitments translate into actual delivery, securing MDGs will remain elusive. India does hope that all the developed countries would scale up the ODA to realize the goals reaffirmed at the 'Monterrey Consensus'².

With regard to one of the targets of the Goal 8, i.e. in cooperation with the private sector, in order to make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications, India has made substantial progress in recent years. The overall **tele-density** has remarkably increased from 0.67 per cent in 1991 to 73.97 per cent in June 2011. **Use of Personal Computers** has also increased from 5.4 million PCs in 2001 to 19.6 million in 2006. **The internet subscriber base** (excluding wireless access) has increased from 0.21 million in 1999 to 20.33 million in June 2011. Besides, there is a bigger number of subscribers who have internet access by wireless mode, which has undergone an abrupt rise in recent

times by about 62% from 213.81 million in June 2010 to 346.67 million in June 2011. Table below gives the indicator-wise achievement for the latest year as compared to the value for the base-year for selected indicators³:

Indicator	Year 1990 (est. value)	Year	Value	Year	Value	MDG target value
Proportion of population below poverty line (%)	37.5	1993-94	36.0	2004-05	27.5	18.6
Proportion of under-weight children below 3 years (%)	52	1998-99	43	2005-06	40	26
Net Enrolment Ratio in primary grade (%)	77	2004	87.4	2009-10	98.3	100.0
Literacy rate of 15-24 year olds	61	1991	61.9	2007-08	83*	100.0
Ratio of girls to boys in primary education	0.73	1991	0.76	2007-08	0.98	1.00
Ratio of girls to boys in secondary education		1991	0.60	2007-08	0.85	1
Ratio of girls to boys in tertiary education		1991	0.54	2007-08	0.7	1
Female: Male literacy rate of 15-24 year olds	0.62	1991	0.67	2007-08	0.86*	1
Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector (%)	12.7	1995	15	2004-05	17.9	50
Under five mortality rate (per 1000 live births)	126	1992-93	109	2008	69	42
Infant Mortality rate (per 1000 live births)	80	1990	80	2009	50	27
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	437	1992-93	424	2007-09	212	109
HIV Prevalence among pregnant women aged 15-24 years (%)		2002	0.74	2007	0.49	-
HIV Prevalence among pregnant women aged 25-49 years (%)		2002	0.80	2007	0.52	-
Annual parasite incidence rate	2.57	1990	2.57	2009	1.52	-
Deaths due to malaria per 100 diagnosed cases		2005	0.05	2009	0.07	-
Deaths due to TB per 100,000 population	44	1990	44	2009	23	-
Area covered under forests as percentage of geographical area		2003	20.62	2007	21.02	-
Population with sustainable access to an improved water source, (%)	66.4	1993	68	2008	84.4	78
Population without access to sanitation (%)	76	1993	70	2008	51	46
Telephone per 100 population		1991	0.67	2011 ⁴	73.97	-

*For NSS survey (2007-08) literacy rate for age 16-24 years old has been tabulated here.

Parliament's Role

In this endeavour, our Parliament's role has been quite phenomenal in bringing several path-breaking legislations, which could help significantly in fulfilling some of the major goals envisaged in the MDGs. Those legislative initiatives before and after these goals were formally announced by the Millennium Summit have begun to produce the desired result in addressing some of the areas of concern identified by the Summit. The 73rd and 74th Constitution Amendment Acts, providing reservation for women in local governance; the Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prevention of Sex-selection) Act, 1994; the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005; the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, etc. are significant legislative initiatives in that direction. Besides, our Parliament has provided a potent weapon in the hands of the people by enabling them to elicit information on virtually every area of the functioning of the Government through the Right to Information Act, 2005. Apart from contributing towards enhancing accountability and thus the effectiveness of the delivery mechanisms, this Act has made the policies and programmes of the Government more transparent by bringing them under larger public scrutiny and into the public domain.

Our Parliament has been consistently striving to usher in an era of development where all its citizens would be able to enjoy an acceptable quality of living, addressing the challenges of poverty, ensuring access to healthcare, education

and employment to the people. Though we are conscious of the target date of Millennium Development Goals, it can be emphatically said that India has been working on these targets even before the MDGs came into existence and has been following its own targets in a planned manner. However, in spite of the financial constraints of a developing economy where there is always a mismatch between the resources available and the number of people to provide for, India is moving steadily towards achieving the targets set under the MDGs.

What can Parliamentarians do about the MDGs?

In line with our mission for bringing all-round development for the people on the lines of our commitments before the international community, there is a lot that our Parliamentarians can do in this regard. The following suggestions made by the *Handbook for Parliamentarians on the MDGs* merit our attention:

Being the people's representatives, they can effectively raise public awareness about the MDGs and participate in MDG campaigns at national and local levels. They can not only influence the government through multifarious ways in implementing the developmental goals, but also monitor them at various levels. They can also encourage and establish public forums for debate about issues related to MDGs. As law makers, MPs can design, adopt and oversee the implementation aspects of the legislations concerning the developmental objectives. They can also oversee the progress and ground level commitment of the government towards the achievement of the MDGs. Fulfilling their commitments to the States in a federal set up, they can also ensure that adequate and cost effective funding is provided to the State governments to help them meet the objectives of the various schemes and programmes launched from time to time. They are also in the best position to verify that budgetary allocations are in line with the approved government priorities for meeting the MDG commitments, besides ensuring that the budget reflects the importance of MDG targets for our country. They can also raise issues pertaining to MDGs in Parliament through Questions and other parliamentary devices and the implementation of social programmes corresponding to these goals. They can highlight the need for our Parliament to integrate the MDGs within the various facets of the functioning of our Parliament and effectively scrutinize government policy positions on a continuous basis, in order to ensure that the government is meeting its obligations to achieve the Goals. The public can be awakened through organization of seminars on budgetary procedures, assessment and monitoring, and the factoring in of budgetary indicators related to each of these Goals. They can also develop and strengthen innovative partnerships with civil society insofar as scrutinizing and assessing the various government programmes, etc. are concerned. The MPs can also initiate steps to establish a Standing Committee on the MDGs so as to strengthen the measures to oversee the MDGs in its true perspective. Going a step further, they can ensure that Parliament scrutinizes all government policies to ensure that they are consistent with national and international development objectives. They can also sensitize the people by establishing the practice of having parliamentary debates ahead of all major international meetings and signing of international treaties, including WTO ministerial meetings, etc. Last but not the least, they can use foreign visits or international conferences as occasions to raise concerns about the obligations of more developed countries to increase the quality and volume of aid, and their effectiveness *vis-a-vis* the millennial goals.

Governmental Initiatives

The Government of India, over the years, has been seriously pursuing different welfare-oriented schemes for the people. Schemes like the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, Total Literacy Campaign of the National Literacy Mission, National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, National Health Mission, Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), Navjaat Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (NSSK), Total Sanitation Campaign and Bharat Nirman, etc. merit special mention. In addition, the inclusive development agenda articulated in the Eleventh Five-Year Plan (2007-2012) has set several targets for socio-economic development to be achieved by the end of the Plan period, in keeping with the MDGs. India is on track or ahead in respect of 3 out of 12 MDG targets and nearly on track for 3 more targets. Progress is, however, slow in respect of some. In the case of a few, India is slow by some indicators and on-track by other corresponding indicators. India has been credited with eradicating extreme poverty and hunger in a steady manner and is almost on track as far as the MDG target is concerned. In achieving Universal Primary Education, India is moving quite fast. In respect of gender equality and empowerment of women, we are very close to the target. Regarding reducing child mortality and improving maternal health, we are slow or off-track by some indicators and ahead by others. Insofar as combating HIV/AIDS is concerned, we have achieved moderate success. However, in combating malaria and other diseases, we are rather slow in respect of some indicators and on track regarding others. In ensuring environmental sustainability, we have attained mixed results. It is noteworthy that in developing a Global Partnership for Development, especially by harping on the new innovations in Information and Communications Technologies, we have made commendable progress.

Conclusion

One decade of implementation of the MDGs have left us with good positive results in establishing a more equitable socio-economic order in tune with the larger objectives of our Constitution. In spite of this, we have to address certain core issues to ensure that these goals are achieved within or ahead of the time schedule. For this, we have to address the challenges associated with their implementation at several levels---Central, State and Local Governments, and in a more concerted manner. As a democracy, since we are committed to an inclusive and rights-based framework in dealing with the developmental process, it is inevitable that the pace of progress and the methodology adopted will have to conform to the demands of an accountable democratic order.

India is committed to usher in an era of development wherein all its citizens will be able to enjoy an acceptable quality of living coming out of conditions of poverty, accessing good health-care, education and employment. India has been working on the targets set in the MDGs even before they were listed by the Millennium Summit and has been following its own targets in a planned manner over the years. India has reasons to feel satisfied with its accomplishments on this front and we can take pride in the fact that we are moving steadily ahead towards achieving the targets set under the MDGs within the suggested time-frame.

Endnotes

1. These are according to the revised targets worked out for **MDGs- States of India Report 2010** of Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) using comparable estimates of the three years: 1992-93, 1998-99 and 2005-06 brought out in respect of India as a whole and the 29 States of the country in the Fact Sheets by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare following the National Family Health Survey 2005-06 (NFHS-3). Revision of NFHS estimates were made according to standards of the WHO Multicentre Growth Reference Study Group, 2006 accepted by the Government of India in 2006.
2. 'The Monterrey Consensus' emerged out of a meeting of the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico in March 2002. With more than 50 heads of state in attendance, along with representatives of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) a new partnership for global development was conceived. The Monterrey Consensus is described by the UN as a 'landmark framework for global development partnership in which the developed and developing countries agreed to take joint actions for poverty reduction'. The Monterrey Consensus is distinguished by its recognition of both the need for developing countries to take responsibility for their own poverty reduction and the necessity for rich nations to support this endeavour with more open trade and increased financial aid.
3. For whole list of MDG Indicators refer to MDG Report 2009 of MoSPI. These are according to the revised targets worked out for MDGs- States of India Report 2010 of MoSPI using comparable estimates of the three years: 1992-93, 1998-99 and 2005-06 brought out in respect of India as a whole and the 29 States of the country in the Fact Sheets by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare following the National Family Health Survey 2005-06 (NFHS-3). Revision of NFHS estimates were made according to standards of the WHO Multicentre Growth Reference Study Group, 2006 accepted by the Government of India in 2006.
4. Up to June 2011.

Prepared by Dr. P.J. Antony, Additional Director and Dr. Amar K. Prusty, Research Officer of Lok Sabha Secretariat under the supervision of Shri P.K. Mishra, Joint Secretary and Smt. Kalpana Sharma, Director, with inputs from the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) for the use of Members of Parliament in support of their parliamentary work. It is intended to serve as a background aid. Feedback is welcome and may be sent to jpi-iss@sansad.nic.in.