IMPLEMENTING THE SDGS IN INDIA AS CONTRIBUTION TO ADOPTING THE NEW URBAN AGENDA

How does India employ the SDGs to encourage the use of the New Urban Agenda?

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The outcome of Habitat III was in the shape of a New Urban Agenda brought out as the Quito Declaration. This agenda, which aims to promote sustainable cities and human settlements for all, brought to the notice of the world the persistence of multiple forms of poverty, growing inequalities, and environmental degradation. These pose major challenges to sustainable development worldwide, with social and economic exclusion and spatial segregation often an irrefutable reality in cities. The New Urban Agenda reiterates that nations are still far from adequately addressing these and other existing and emerging challenges. It emphasises the need to take advantage of the opportunities of urbanisation as an engine of sustained and inclusive economic growth, social and cultural development, and environmental protection, and of its potential contributions to the achievement of transformative and sustainable development.

The New Urban Agenda reaffirms the global commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and sustainable urban development as a critical step for realising sustainable development. The implementation of the New Urban Agenda contributes to the implementation and localisation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in an integrated manner, and to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, especially SDG 11 of making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. To achieve this vision, nations have resolved to adopt a New Urban Agenda guided by the several interlinked principles: inter alia, "leave no one behind", by ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions; integration in the urban space, and providing equal access for all to physical and social infrastructure and basic services as well as adequate and affordable housing; and sustainable and inclusive urban economies.

The Government of India has also adopted the New Urban Agenda and has committed to fulfil the SDG targets. The ambitious SDGs call for significant rethinking in development processes of the country. India has, over the past years, directed its development pathway to meet its priorities of employment, economic growth, food, water and energy security, disaster resilience and poverty alleviation. India has also aimed to restore its natural capital and adopt transparent and robust governance along democratic lines. However, emerging challenges of climate change impacts, increasing inequities, and lagging human development indices are challenges which need to be addressed. The post-2015 UN Sustainable Development Agenda framework provides an opportunity to renew and integrate efforts in order to meet, to a significant degree, national and global aspira-

tions in a defined time frame. They also call for significant resources to be dedicated and invested in priority areas as identified in the framework of goals and targets.

In the past two decades, there has been an explicit recognition of the role of urbanisation in the country's socio-economic transformation; the fact that cities make significant contributions to economic growth, employment generation and poverty reduction has also been acknowledged. Successive five-year plans beginning with the Eighth Five-Year Plan (1992-1997) bear testimony to their increasing importance of urban areas. In recent years, efforts have been directed towards deepening and enhancing the role of urbanisation in the development process, with initiation of wide-ranging initiatives which aim at:

- a broad-based strengthening of the municipal system and restructuring of urban governance, which is said to be a key factor in improving the quality of urbanisation;

- eliminating the structural and systemic constraints to the functioning of cities and smaller human settlements; and

- reaching out to the urban poor via innovative financing and tenure arrangements (Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation 2016).
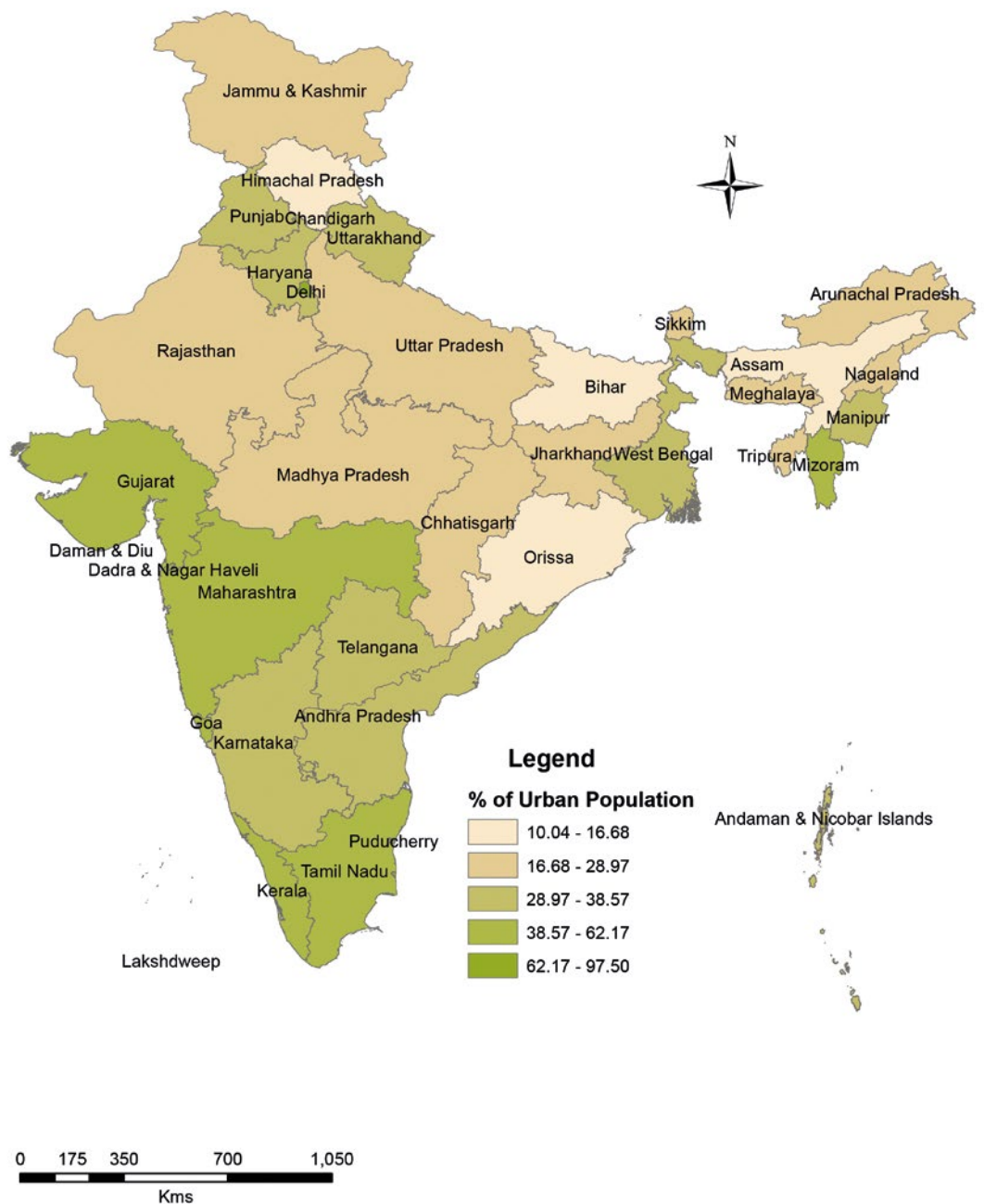
As indicated earlier, cities as promoters of economic growth – as spaces of inclusiveness, creators of urban equity, and poverty eradication – as elaborated in the SDGs are ideas that have found a space in the New Urban Agenda as well.

Sustainability efforts for Indian cities need to be looked at from a different lens, i.e. (i) recognising the peri-urban areas and rural-urban continuum, (ii) urgent need to develop and plan small towns and cities for balanced urban development and (iii) make urban spaces for all sections of the society, tolerant towards diversity. One feature of the New Urban Agenda is that it lays emphasis on competition, the private sector, alongside participation, sustainability, and inclusiveness. How all this will work together is the big challenge.

There is evidence to show that, if good amenities and livelihood opportunities are made available in rural areas, rural-urban migration slows down with concomitant reduction of poverty levels. Recent data from the Census 2011 and National Sample Survey show that employment opportunities in the rural non-farm sector have expanded in recent years due to increased spending power in small towns and rural areas, the impact of the Mahatma Gandhi

Percentage of Urban Population in India, 2011

Legend

% of Urban Population

	10.04 - 16.68
	16.68 - 28.97
	28.97 - 38.57
	38.57 - 62.17
	62.17 - 97.50

0   175   350   700   1,050

Kms

Source: Jagan Shah

National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and to contraction of job opportunities or "jobless growth" in the urban industrial sector. Increased investment in rural areas, especially in creating job opportunities in the rural non-farm sector, must be an important part of a holistic urban development policy.

According to the 2011 Population Census, the urban population grew to 377 million, registering a growth rate of 2.76 % per annum during 2001–2011. The level of urbanisation in the country increased from 27.7 % in 2001 to 31.1 % in 2011 – an increase of 3.3 percentage points during 2001–2011 compared to an increase of 2.1 percentage points dur-

ing 1991–2001. It is increasingly argued that Indian cities are highly "exclusionary" i.e. with certain socio-economic conditions which discourage the entry of poor migrants/refugees. Hence, cities are perhaps no longer perceived as spaces of prosperity.

In the cities, challenges abound like housing deficits, rising homelessness, urban poverty pockets, poor urban governance, lack of convergence of welfare services and lack of proper implementation. The Habitat approach includes villages too, but they seem to be lost in the current urban policy discourse.

Both the New Urban Agenda as well as SDGs 2015 have the goal of making cities' spaces inclusive. Urban spaces need to be inclusive not only in terms of the varied population they accommodate, but also in terms of how peacefully the diversities coexist. Current statistics on all 17 SDGs, however, reveal that India has a long path to forge on its journey to realise the vision it harbours, although, there has been substantial progress with regard to several goals. In fact, such improvement came through the adoption of the millennium development goals in year 2000, with the horizon year of 2015. The following section details India's status with regard to the SDGs which has a bearing in the urban context.

The all India Poverty Head Count Ratio (PHCR) has been brought down from 47 % in 1990 to 21 % in 2011–2012. Figure 2 shows the poverty ratio and number of poor in urban India for the years 2004 and 2012. In 1990, 53 % of all Indian children were malnourished. In 2015, malnourishment declined to 40 %. India's Under Five Mortality (U5MR) declined from 125 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 49 per 1,000 live births in 2013. From a Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) of 437 per 100,000 live births in 1990–91, India came down to 167 in 2009. Delivery in institutional facilities has risen from 26 % in 1992–1993 to 72 % in 2009. India has made significant strides in reducing the prevalence of HIV and AIDS across different types of high-risk categories. Adult prevalence has come down from 0.45 percent in 2002 to 0.27 in 2011. India has made significant progress in universalising primary education. Enrolment and completion rates of girls in primary school have improved as have elementary completion rates. The net enrolment ratio in primary education (for both sexes) is 88 % (2013–2014). At the national level, the male and female youth literacy rate is 94 % and 92 %. India is on track to achieve gender parity at all education levels, having already achieved it at the primary level. The ratio of female literacy to male literacy for 15–24 year olds is 0.91.

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Poverty Ratio
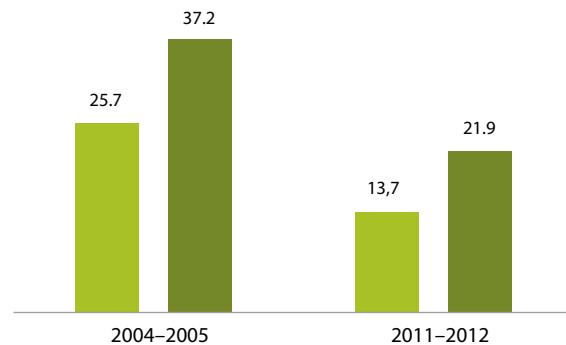
No. of Poor (in million)
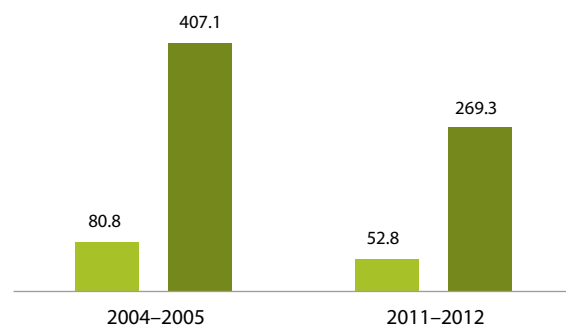
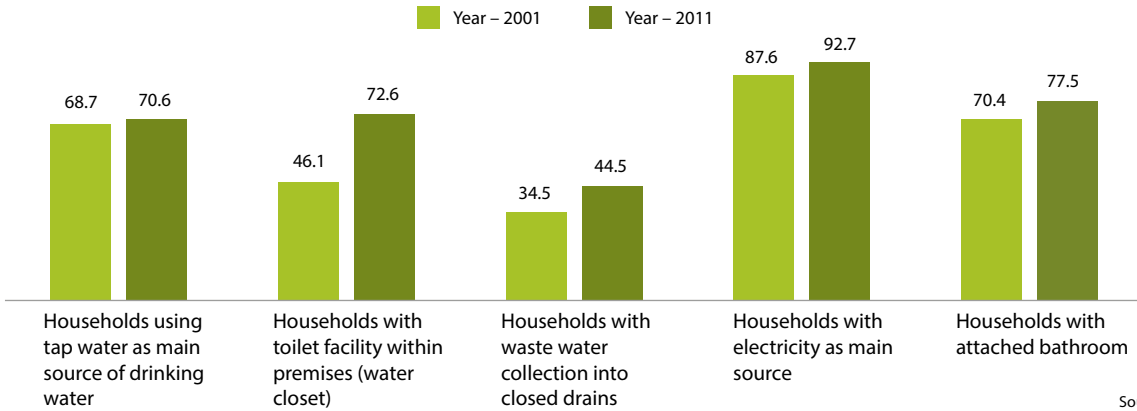■ Urban   ■ Total

Source: Jagan Shah

As of August 2015, in India the proportion of seats in National Parliament held by women is only 12 % against the target of 50 %.

The overall proportion of households in India using tap water as main source of drinking water increased from 68.7 in 2001 to 70.6 in 2011. 92.7 % households had electricity as main source of lighting and 72 % households had access to toilet facility (figure 3). Almost 600 million people in India defecate in the open, the highest number in the world. The unemployment rate in India is estimated to be approximately 5 % at all India level (2013–2014). India's labour force is set to grow by more than 8 million per year.

India's CO2 emissions per capita are 1.67 (metric tons), one of the lowest in the world, the global average being around 4–5 (metric tons). In 2010, per capita annual electricity consumption was 626 kwH compared to the global average of 2977 kwH. India has committed to reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP by 20 % to reach a level of 25 % by 2020.

Access to Basic Amenities in Urban India

Legend: Year – 2001 | Year – 2011

- Households using tap water as main source of drinking water: 68.7 / 70.6
- Households with toilet facility within premises (water closet): 46.1 / 72.6
- Households with waste water collection into closed drains: 34.5 / 44.5
- Households with electricity as main source: 87.6 / 92.7
- Households with attached bathroom: 70.4 / 77.5

Source: Jagan Shah

The Gini Coefficient of income inequality for India has risen from 33.4 % in 2004 to 33.6 % in 2011. India has the second highest number of internet users in the world. However, internet penetration in the country is under 20 %.

In order to achieve the SDGs, dedicated funding is required to meet the targets. In the urban sector, the Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) has recommended an increase in the share for devolution of funds for the urban local bodies (ULBs). In pursuance of this, the Central Government has devolved higher share of central taxes (42 %) to states and also increased the share of ULBs in central taxes up to 5 %. This devolution would help ULBs to address the infrastructure-financing gap and to meet the requirements for SDGs.

Which supporting role does the German-Indian Urbanisation Partnership take in this respect and what do you expect from a partnership between the National institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) and the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR) as particularly research-oriented institutions? Is it about technical devices (e. g. satellite data) or governance issues or other mechanisms?

The National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) has been entrusted with the role to coordinate "Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". Moving ahead from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), SDGs have been evolved through a long inclusive process for achievement during 2016–2030. The SDGs cover 17 goals and 169 related targets resolved in the UN Summit on 25–27 September 2015, in which India was represented at the level of the Honourable Prime Minister. These SDGs will stimulate, align and accomplish actions

over the 15-year period in areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet.

The task at hand for NITI Aayog is not merely to periodically collect data on SDGs but to act proactively to fructify the goals and targets not only quantitatively but also maintaining high standards of quality. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has already undertaken a parallel exercise of interaction with the ministries to evolve indicators reflecting the SDG goals and targets.

To achieve these tasks, the draft mapping of the goals and targets as an initial step on proposed nodal and other ministries has been carried out in consultation with MoSPI. Further, as an illustration, the Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSSs), including the "core of the core", "core" and "optional" schemes being implemented by the States have been mapped along with some of the recent initiatives undertaken by the Central Government. In addition, ministries are implementing Central Sector Schemes and States are also implementing various State Schemes aligned with one or more SDGs.

The Ministry of Urban Development of the Government of India has embarked on several urban sector missions for infrastructure, smart cities, heritage cities and total sanitation that are tuned to meet the SDG goal 11. It will create a vast data repository for the missions. This data would be generated as a by-product of the process of planning and executing the missions and will serve as a monitoring and evaluation platform as well. The Mission Management Information System (MMIS) will be a rich repository and a platform that will yield lot of insights, if researched.

Along with these data sets, lot of data is being generated by the government agencies on various socio-economic dimensions. It is essential to map these to get a clearer glimpse of the correlations between urbanisation, infrastructure, governance, service delivery, reforms, financing, internal resource generating capacity, public-private partnership (PPP) and so on. Of late, data on environmental degradation, pollution and urban transportation are becoming important inputs for spatial planning. It is extremely important to formulate policies based on evidence-based research. Also empirical analysis of data supported by modern cartographic techniques can influence outcome-based research by facilitating the monitoring at regular intervals. It is also important to work out methodologies to calculate indicators at the city level, analyse the data shared by finance commissions and GST data on sharing of taxes in addition to an analysis of local finances of cities in a systematic manner. These are crucial as inputs in assessing the achievements of SDGs and the New Urban Agenda.

NIUA is closely involved with the process of creating a diversified platform to deal with these upcoming needs on evidence-based evaluation, and the institute could gain a lot from the understanding of the data collection, analytical environment of the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR) and its spatial mapping. BBSR is the premier institute for handling national-level data, and NIUA would really learn a lot from its wisdom on how to use indicators for policy formulation.

As Germany's federal institute for, amongst others, cities, BBSR would be a natural fit for NIUA, although NIUA does not have as comprehensive a scope as BBSR with its command over buildings, urban affairs and spatial development, spatial planning aided by modern cartographic techniques, urban development and housing.

But NIUA would like to see this as a way that the urban agenda can truly shape the larger agenda by making urban data analytics the concomitant of 'e-governance', which is one of the leading initiatives of the Government of India. In this, there would be other departments of the government which would be involved: the geo-spatial mapping, the Census, the Sample Survey Organisation, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, etc.

NIUA intends to collaborate with BBSR to develop a data centre analysing data on various indicators aided by cartographic representation based on the developed GIS technology of the BBSR for assessment of the progress of the urban sector as a whole as well as monitoring of SDGs and the new missions. NIUA would seek assistance from BBSR in selecting standard indicators for regional or city level analysis of statistical data; for statistical analysis and GIS modelling for planning, monitoring, prediction and classification at various regional levels; and for cartographic modelling to represent the outcome at various administrative levels through a proto-type of BBSR's Integrated Spatial Information System INKAR (cf. http://www.inkar.de).

Such a collaborative effort can help to strengthen the data analytics of NIUA which in due course could help the government to assess the progress of SDGs and the centrally sponsored schemes.

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