

## Perspective of Women's Health in The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Indian Context

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### Abstract

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), aimed at solving the fundamental problem of social justice, emphasize the importance of enhancing the maternal health and lowering the child mortality. Additionally, the United Nations has urged the creation of wide-ranging global development plans. SDGs to be achieved by 2030 include health targets. If a person wants to enhance his educational and financial status, it is essential to have a long and healthy life. The average life expectancy of a new born baby is estimated to be 10 years. The mother's health plays a key role in the well-being and longevity of her new born baby. If the mother gets all the necessary facilities during pregnancy and postpartum period, then the rate of infant mortality, maternal mortality and malnutrition decreases. The presented research is based on the health goal of sustainable development. The present study analyzes the health status of women and children of the country by collecting the data from secondary sources. This encompasses health indicators such as maternal mortality rate, neonatal mortality rate, percentage of pregnant women with anaemia, and the under-five infant mortality rate.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Development, Women's Health, Social Justice, Life Expectancy, Mortality, Malnutrition.

### Introduction

Building on the successful implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the 193 member countries of the United Nations established a new development agenda after 2015 in the form of SDGs (Leal Filho et al. 2024). This was adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on September 25, 2015, containing a total of 17 goals and 169 objectives (Brondy et al. 2023). These comprehend matters related to social inclusion, economic development, and environmental protection, which are important in relation to sustainable development (Song and Jang 2023). SDGs is an international ambitious declaration which sets the key goals of eliminating poverty, hunger and violence against women (Desai 2023). It also aims to ensure that every human being in the world has a legal identity and receives respect and justice (Bexell et al. 2023). According to this declaration, approved by the consensus in September 2015, all 193 member countries of the United Nations are expected to make this concept of sustainable development a reality

between 2016 and 2030 (Trane et al. 2023). This declaration of sustainable development is now applicable to all countries of the world. It comprises both developing as well as developed countries. The objectives of sustainable development include eradicating poverty and hunger, promoting gender equality, education, health and well-being, water and sanitation, energy, infrastructure, industry and innovation, quality employment and economic growth, reducing inequality, sustainable cities, consumption and production, addressing climate change, ecosystems, peace and justice, and partnerships. (Jeevanasai et al. 2023). This global agenda of 2030 is working on the objective of 'leaving no one behind' (Samman et al. 2024).

The third goal of SDGs is to safeguard optimum health and endorse well-being of all at every age (Bartniczak et al. 2024). Illness not only affects the well-being of an individual but also puts a burden on the family and human resources, weakens society and reduces its capacity. Ensuring optimum health and well-being of people of all ages is the key point of sustainable development (AbuShihab et al. 2023). Preventing disease is essential not only for the healthy life, but also for creating opportunity for all, and promoting economic growth and prosperity. The international community has dedicated the global efforts to abolish diseases, reinforce access to treatments and health services, and address new and emerging health issues through the nine objectives of SDGs (Owolabi et al. 2023). These objectives also focus on improving the health of mothers and children. This involves reducing global maternal mortality rate below 70 deaths per 100,000 live births by 2030 (Kurjak et al. 2023), reducing the neonatal mortality rate to at least 12 per 1,000 live births (Kc et al. 2020) and bringing down the death rate of children under five to a minimum of 25 per 1,000 live births by 2030. (Perin et al. 2022), guaranteeing sexual and reproductive health services, such as education and information about family planning, reachable to all by 2030 and ensuring safe, effective, efficient and affordable health care (Appleford et al. 2020). These objectives include making essential medicines and vaccines accessible.

### 2. Objectives

- To study the reproductive health status of women.
- To study maternal mortality in India.

C.To investigate the health status of infants and young children under five

**3.Research Methodology**-The presented research reviews various health targets of SDGs to be achieved by 2030. Numerous databases were used in this study, including research papers, books, articles, health reports, and the internet. Tables and graphs were used to illustrate the data from various sources. Percentage change has been calculated for pregnant woman who are anaemic between NFHS-4 and NFHS-5HS. Neonatal mortality rate has been calculated for 2030 and 2035. The formula for projection has been given below:-

$$PNMR = \text{forecast } (x, \text{ known } y\text{'s, known } x\text{'s})$$

Where:

PNMR= Projected Neonatal mortality rate

X= Year

Y= Neonatal mortality rate

#### 4.Sustainable Development and Health Goals in India

The health goal of SDG calls for 'healthy life for all and wellness at every age'. These include reducing maternal mortality rate (per one lakh live births) to 70, mortality rate of children under 5 years of age to 25 and neonatal mortality rate (per 1000 live births) to 12 by 2030, availability of essential medicines and vaccines, availability of reproductive and sexual health services, health coverage, etc. In this, the following health indicators are important in the context of women and child health.

**4.1. Maternal Mortality Rate**-According to SDGs, By 2030, the global maternal mortality rate is expected to drop to less than 70 fatalities for every 100,000 live births. India has made some progress this time. In 1990-91, the rate of maternal deaths was 437 per 100,000 live births and it declined to 167 in 2009. In 2015-16, the ratio is 130 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. An analysis of the India's states on maternal fatality rates indicates that only Kerala (46), Maharashtra (61) and Tamil Nadu (66) have reached SDGs. Of the remaining states, southern states Andhra Pradesh (74) and Telangana (81) are close to the targets. States lagging far behind the target include Assam (237), Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand (201), Rajasthan (199), Odisha (180), Madhya Pradesh (173), Bihar (165), Punjab (122), Karnataka (108), Haryana (101), West Bengal (101) and Gujarat (91). In accordance with the State Family and Health Survey-4 (2015-16), 84% of females of age between 15 to 49 years in India receive antenatal care (ANC). Of these, 79% women received skilled maternal care services. 51.2% women in the country received at least 4 obstetric services, while only 21% women received complete antenatal check-up services (7 antenatal check-ups). Institutional delivery in the country is 78.9 percent. Only 41% babies are breastfed within one hour of birth. All these factors are

important in reducing maternal mortality and infant mortality rates.

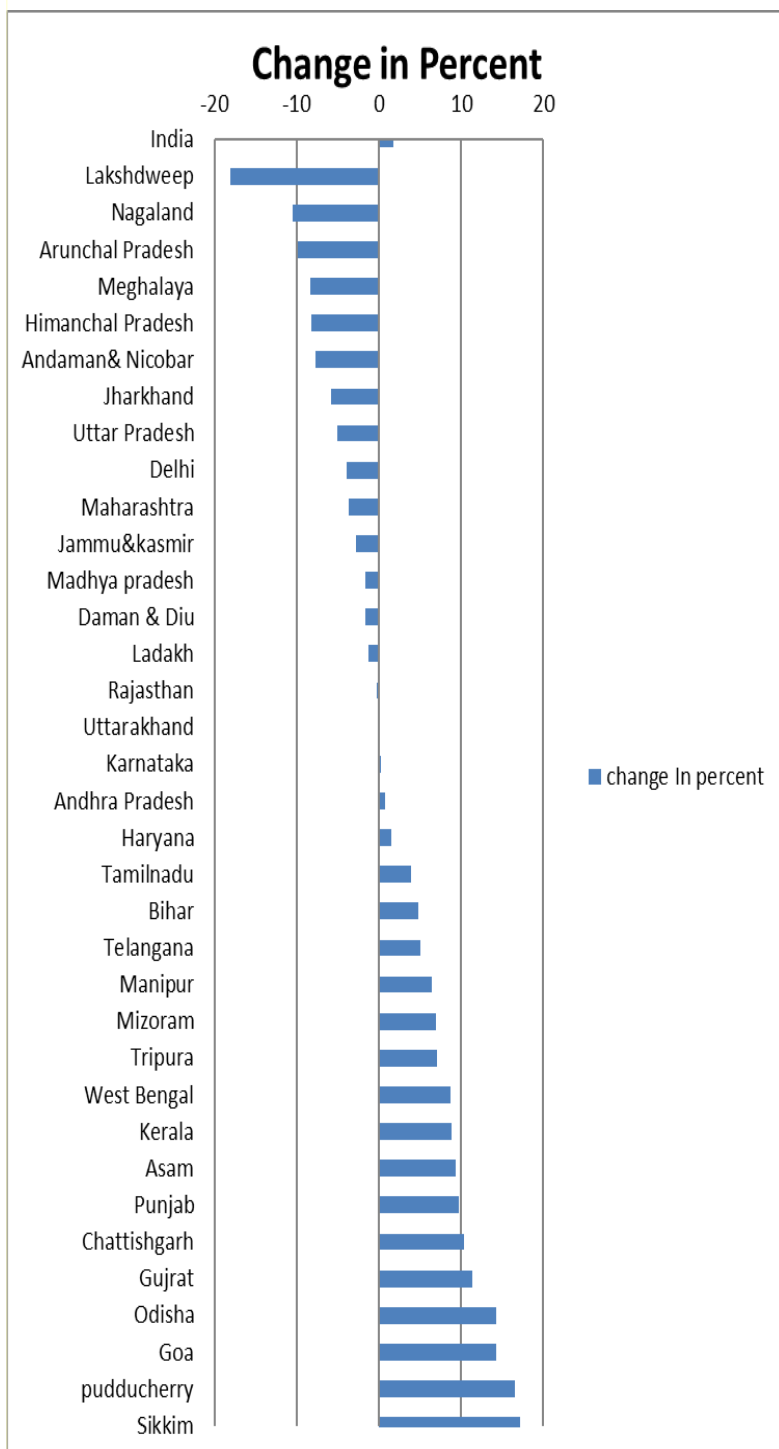
**4.2 Anaemia in women**-Women's health is important for achieving sustainable development goals. If the percentage of anaemic women in the country is low, then healthy children can be born and problems like infant mortality, child mortality, and maternal mortality can be reduced. According to Mita Meera (2016), 45% of all the child deaths worldwide are due to inadequate nutrition. As the number of malnourished girls increases, their nutrition is also reduced in adolescence and if younger women become pregnant, many mothers face many complications while giving birth. To ensure the nutrition of mothers, to increase the weight of the mother during pregnancy, as well as to ensure better nutrition for women at all times, it is important to make efforts.

**Table 1: Pregnant women who are anaemic (Age 15- 49)**

S.No	State	NFHS-4 (%)	NFHS- 5(%)
1	India	50.4	52.2
2	Andaman & Nicobar	61.4	53.7
3	Andhra Pradesh	52.9	53.7
4	Asam	44.8	54.2
5	Bihar	58.3	63.1
6	Daman & Diu	62.3	60.7
7	Goa	26.7	41
8	Gujrat	51.3	62.6
9	Himanchal Pradesh	50.4	42.2
10	Jammu & kasmir	46.9	44.1
11	Karnataka	45.4	45.7
12	Kerala	22.6	31.4
13	Lakshadweep	39	20.9
14	Ladakh	79.3	78.1
15	Maharashtra	49.3	45.7
16	Meghalaya	53.3	45
17	Manipur	26	32.4
18	Mizoram	27	34
19	Nagaland	32.7	22.2
20	Sikkim	23.6	40.7
21	Telangana	48.2	53.2
22	Tripura	54.4	61.5
23	West Bengal	53.6	62.3
24	Arunachal Pradesh	37.8	27.9
25	Chhattisgarh	41.5	51.8
26	New Delhi	46.1	42.2
27	Haryana	55	56.5
28	Jharkhand	62.6	56.8
29	Madhya Pradesh	54.6	52.9
30	Odisha	47.6	61.8
31	Punjab	42	51.7
32	Puducherry	26	42.5
33	Rajasthan	46.6	46.3
34	Tamil Nadu	44.4	48.3
35	Uttar Pradesh	51	45.9
36	Uttarakhand	46.5	46.4

**Source: NFHS-(2019-2021) and NFHS-(2015-2016)**

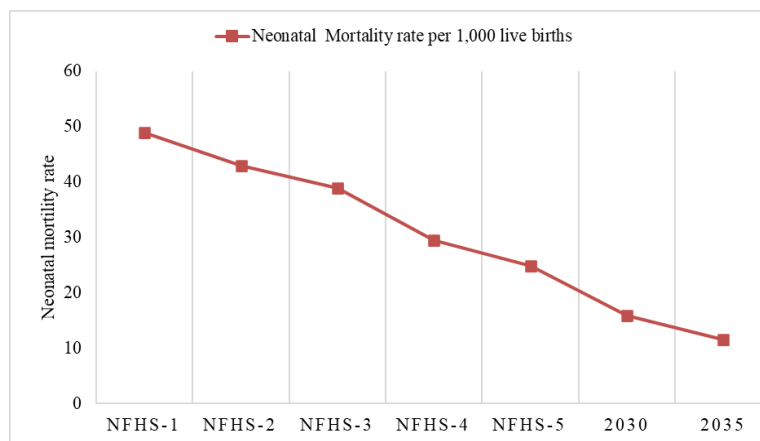
Nearly half (52%) of all pregnant women aged 15 to 49 in India are anaemic as per NFHS-5. This rate is well above the state target (23.57%) for achieving SDGs. While Nagaland (22.2%) is the only state in India to have a rate below the state target, Sikkim (23.6%) is very close to achieving the target. Among the Union Territories, Lakshadweep performed best with 20.9%. But among the states, Jharkhand (62.2%), Bihar (63.1%) and among the Union Territories, Dadra and Nagar Haveli lagged the most with 67.9% (Table 1).



**Figure 1: Percentage Change of Pregnant women who are anaemic (Age 15-49) between NFHS-4 and NFHS-5**

**Source: NFHS-(2019-2021) and NFHS-(2015-2016)]**

**4.3 Neo---natal Mortality Rate**-The SDGs aim to lower the newborn death rate to 12 per 1,000 live births by 2030. In India, the death rates of neonates was 49 per 1,000 live child births in 1992-93, 43 per 1000 live births (National Family Health Survey-1) and 24.9 in 2019-21 (National Family Health Survey-1). This means that even today in the country, one out of every 40 live births occurs during the new-born period. If seen from the perspective of the health goals of sustainable development, there is still a long way to go, the new-born mortality rate which is 30 per 1,000 live births has to be reduced to below 12.



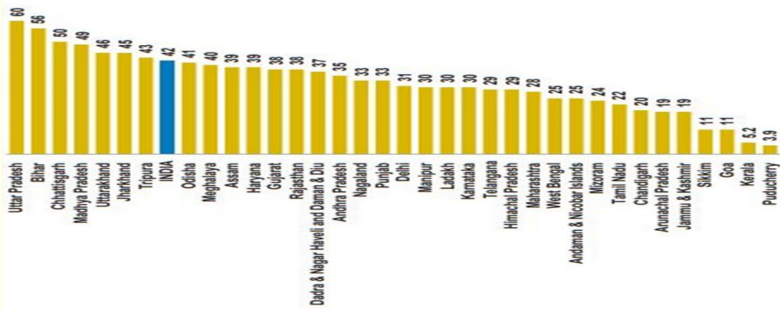
**Figure 2: Projected mortality rate of neonates**

**Source: NFHS-(2019-2021) and NFHS-(2015-2016) NFHS-(2005-2006) NFHS-(1998-1999) NFHS-(1991-1992)]**

The above graph illustrates the projected neonatal mortality rate per 1,000 live childbirths from the first NFHS report onward. If current circumstances continue, India is expected to achieve a target of 12 by approximately 2035. This emphasizes the positive results of government initiatives. If this progress is sustained, it will considerably improve the overall situation concerning early childhood mortality among neonates. Healthcare infrastructure is growing very fast in India and the government is working very efficiently to strengthen it further so that it can help the country to make it easy to reach the goals set by SDGs.

**4.4 Children mortality rate among under five years of age:-**The Sustainable Development Goal aims to lower the children’s mortality rate which comes under five years of age to at least 25 per 1,000 live births by 2030. In this context, the mortality rate of India has lessened from 109 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 50 per 1,000

live births in 2013. According to the National Family Health Survey-4, the mortality rate of children under five years of age in 2015-16 is 50 per 1,000 live births and 42 in National Family Health Survey-5. These figures indicate that approximately one in 25 children dies before their fifth day of birth. Comparing SDGs with the children mortality rate (of less than five years of age) shows that we are still far from achieving the target by 2030. A review of the states of the country in this regard indicates that only West Bengal (25), Mizoram (24), Tamil Nadu (22), Arunachal Pradesh (19), Sikkim (11), Kerala (5.2), and Goa (13) and Union Territories Andaman & Nicobar (25), and Puducherry (3.9) have achieved the Sustainable Development Goal (25). So Uttar Pradesh (60) is lagging far behind in this regard. The situation of the rest of the states of the country is like this.



**Figure 3: Children mortality rate among under five years of age** Source: NFHS-(2019-2021)

**5.Suggestion:**To accomplish SDGs in India, there is a necessity to integrate social, economic and health aspects.

The role of state governments is also crucial for the progress of SDGs.

There are not enough resources to collect the information required to reach the SDGs.

Therefore, it is crucial to establish a reliable system that works to accomplish the SDGs.

**6.Conclusion:**Looking at the development of States and Union Territories in India, it is evident that there is still a long way to go in terms of development as desired by the United Nations. The Government of India is actively working to review the health aspect of SDGs and to strengthen the health sector of the country. Under the National Health Mission (NHM), efforts are underway to ensure universal access to health services by enhancing health institutions and building human resource capacity. State health protection schemes, such as Ayushman Bharat and Pradhan Mantri Jan Swasthya Yojana (PMJSY), offer coverage of up to ₹5 lakh per year for family healthcare. Mission Indradhanush is trying to increase the full vaccination coverage in India, but it is not enough to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal. Along with this, India should increase its personal expenditure on health, which is only around 1 percent of

GDP in India, our public expenditure is only 41.4%, which is much less than other countries (Japan 82%, Canada 70%).

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