



SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES AND THEIR STATE OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT: A COMPARATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Human development is about acquiring more capabilities and enjoying more opportunities to use those capabilities. With more capabilities and opportunities, people have more choices, and expanding choices is at the core of the human development approach. But human development is also a process. Anchored in human rights, it is linked to human security. And its ultimate objective is to enlarge human freedoms. Human development is development of the people through the building of human resources, for the people through the translation of development benefits in their lives and by the people through active participation in the processes that influence and shape their lives. Income is a means to human development but not an end in itself. The human development report also introduced a composite index, the Human Development Index (HDI), for assessing achievements in the basic dimensions of human development. Those dimensions of human development are to lead a long and healthy life. This study attempts to make a comparison of South Asian countries human achievements based on the 2016 statistical update of UNDP.

Keywords: Human development index, South Asia, Life expectancy at Birth, Expected years of schooling, Mean years of schooling, Gross National Income (GNI) per capita.

INTRODUCTION

Human development is a process of enlarging people's freedom and opportunities to improve their wellbeing. With the Human Development index, it is possible to measure and compare the basic human achievements of the countries in three basic dimensions—Health, Education and Standard of living measured by life expectancy at birth; to acquire knowledge, measured by mean years of schooling and expected years of schooling and to achieve a decent standard of living, measured by gross national income per capita. The levels of human development have improved all over the world. Every developing region's HDI value increased considerably between 1990 and 2015, although progress has been slowing since 2010. This reflects important advances not only in income, but also in health and education. Between 1990 and 2015 the aggregate HDI value of the least developed countries increased 46%, and the aggregate HDI value for low human development countries increased 40%.

Human development is all about human freedoms: freedom to realize the full potential of every human life, not just of a few, nor of most, but of all lives in every corner of the world—now and in the future. Such universalism gives the human development approach its uniqueness. However, the principle of universalism is one thing; translating it into practice is another. Over the past quarter-century there has been impressive progress on many fronts in human development, with people living longer, more people rising out of extreme poverty and fewer people being malnourished. Human development has enriched human

lives—but unfortunately not all to the same extent, and even worse, not every life. The Report also clearly identifies the mutually reinforcing gender barriers that deny many women the opportunities and empowerment necessary to realize the full potential of their lives. Human Development Report is “an independent intellectual exercise” that has become “an important tool for raising awareness about human development around the world.”

Over the past quarter-century the world has changed—and with it the development landscape. New countries have emerged, and our planet is now home to more than 7 billion people, one in four of them young. The geopolitical scenario has also changed, with developing countries emerging as a major economic force and political power. Globalization has integrated people, markets and work, and the digital revolution has changed human lives.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this study attempts to make a comparison of South Asian countries Human achievements based on the 2016 statistical update of UNDP, to analyse the trends in the HDI and its Components from 1990-2015, the average annual growth rate of HDI and the change in the HDI rank.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this present study is a combination of qualitative and quantitative approach. The study makes use of only secondary data. As it was

not possible to personally collect the data, the data were collected from the UNDP Human Development Report 2016. The sample consists of South Asian countries. Some statistical tools such as percentage, mean were used in data analysis along with qualitative description. The scope of the study is narrowed down to South Asian countries only.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Progress in human development has been impressive over the past 25 years. People now live longer, more children are in school and more people have access to basic social services. The Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals—global Commitments at the turn of the century to end basic human deprivations within 15 years— added to the momentum.

The composite Human Development Index (HDI) integrates three basic dimensions of human development. Life expectancy at birth reflects the ability to lead a long and healthy life. Mean years of schooling and expected years of schooling reflect the ability to acquire knowledge and gross national income per capita reflects the ability to achieve a decent standard of living.

Yet human development has been uneven, and human deprivations persist. Progress has bypassed groups, communities, societies— and people have been left out. Some have achieved only the basics of human development, and some not even that. And new development challenges have emerged, ranging from inequalities to climate change, from epidemics to desperate migration, from conflicts to violent extremism.

TABLE 1
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX VALUE AND RANK OF SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES

S.NO	COUNTRIES	HDI VALUE	RANK
1	AFGHANISTAN	0.479	169
2	BANGLAESH	0.579	139
3	BHUTAN	0.607	132
4	INDIA	0.624	131
5	MALDIVES	0.701	105
6	NEPAL	0.558	144
7	PAKISTAN	0.550	147
8	SRI LANKA	0.766	73
SOUTH ASIA		0.621	-
WORLD		0.717	-

HDI values of the South Asian countries and their ranks are seen from the table 1. According to table 1, Sri Lanka stands first among the South Asian countries and the last place goes to Afghanistan. So, much concentration should be given to the Afghanistan to improve its HDI value as it deviates much from the HDI value of South Asia and the world.

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH (LEB)

Life expectancy at birth is number of years a new-born infant could expect to live if prevailing patterns of age-specific mortality rates at the time of birth stay the same throughout the infant's life. This is given in the table 2 to make a comparison among the South Asian countries.

TABLE 2
SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES AND THEIR LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH

S.No	COUNTRIES	LEB (years)	RANK
1	AFGHANISTAN	60.7	VIII
2	BANGLAESH	72.0	III
3	BHUTAN	69.9	V
4	INDIA	68.3	VI
5	MALDIVES	77.0	I
6	NEPAL	70.0	IV
7	PAKISTAN	66.4	VII
8	SRI LANKA	75.0	II
SOUTH ASIA		68.7	-
WORLD		71.6	-

It is inferred from the table Maldives ranks first followed by Sri Lanka and Bangladesh and these countries are above the South Asia value and closely world LEB in this also Afghanistan is in the last place

MEAN YEARS OF SCHOOLING

Mean years of schooling is another measure to compare the human development of the countries. Mean years of schooling is the average number of years of

education received by people ages 25 and older, converted from education attainment levels using official durations of each level. The below table shows the mean years of schooling of South Asian countries. As per the table, Sri Lanka stands first, followed by Maldives and the third place is Bhutan. Afghanistan has shown a better place compared to Pakistan which is a welcoming scene of Afghanistan.

TABLE 3
SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES AND THEIR MEAN YEARS OF SCHOOLING

S.No	COUNTRIES	MEANS YEARS OF SCHOOLING (years)	RANK
1	AFGHANISTAN	10.1	VII
2	BANGLAESH	10.2	VI
3	BHUTAN	12.5	III
4	INDIA	11.7	V
5	MALDIVES	12.7	II
6	NEPAL	12.2	IV
7	PAKISTAN	8.1	VIII
8	SRI LANKA	14	I
SOUTH ASIA		11.3	-
WORLD		12.3	-

EXPECTED YEARS OF SCHOOLING

Expected years of schooling means the number of years of schooling that a child of school entrance age can expect to receive if prevailing patterns of age-specific enrolment rates persist throughout the child's life. It can be seen in table 4 for all the South Asian countries and it is considered as an important component

Here Bhutan has shown a lowest level of this component among the South Asian countries .Sri Lanka is above the value of world as well as South Asia India and Maldives are above the average value of South Asia .This also shows the higher level of education of Sri Lanka.

TABLE 4
SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES AND THEIR EXPECTED YEARS OF SCHOOLING

S.No	COUNTRIES	EXPECTED YEARS OF SCHOOLING(Years)	RANK
1	AFGHANISTAN	3.6	VII
2	BANGLAESH	5.2	IV
3	BHUTAN	3.1	VIII
4	INDIA	6.3	II
5	MALDIVES	6.2	III
6	NEPAL	4.1	VI
7	PAKISTAN	5.1	V
8	SRI LANKA	10.9	I
SOUTH ASIA		6.2	-
WORLD		8.3	-

GROSS NATIONAL INCOME (GNI) PER CAPITA

GNI per capita is the aggregate income of an economy generated by its production and its ownership of factors of production, less the incomes paid for the use of factors of production owned by the rest of the world, converted to international dollars using PPP rates,

divided by midyear population. It is a very important indicator of a country's development which also reflects the standard of living of the people, the quality of life of the people they live. The table shows the GNI per capita income of the Asian countries.

TABLE 5
SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES AND THEIR GROSS NATIONAL INCOME

S.No	COUNTRIES	GNI (2011 PPP \$)	RANK
1	AFGHANISTAN	1871	VIII
2	BANGLAESH	3341	VI
3	BHUTAN	7081	III
4	INDIA	5663	IV
5	MALDIVES	10383	II
6	NEPAL	2337	VII
7	PAKISTAN	5013	V
8	SRI LANKA	10789	I
SOUTH ASIA		5799	-
WORLD		14447	-

From the table 5 it can be concluded that Sri Lanka's GNI is the highest among the South Asian countries and it is double of the South Asian average followed by Maldives lowest GNI is seen in Afghanistan which attracts attention of the other world countries, a

country to be developed with greater attention Nepal and Bangladesh also should be addressed as their GNI also is comparatively low with the South Asian countries average GNI value.

ANNUAL GROWTH OF SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES IN THEIR HDI VALUES

TABLE 6
SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES AND THEIR ANNUAL GROWTH (%)

S.NO	COUNTRIES	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Average annual growth of HDI 2010-15
1	AFGHANISTAN	0.454	0.463	0.470	0.476	0.479	0.479	1.08
2	BANGALADESH	0.545	0.557	0.565	0.570	0.575	0.579	1.21
3	BHUTAN	0.572	0.581	0.589	0.596	0.604	0.607	1.19
4	INDIA	0.580	0.590	0.599	0.607	0.615	0.624	1.46
5	MALDIVES	0.663	0.675	0.683	0.693	0.701	0.701	1.11
6	NEPAL	0.529	0.538	0.545	0.551	0.555	0.558	1.07
7	PAKISTAN	0.525	0.529	0.538	0.542	0.548	0.550	0.95
8	SRI LANKA	0.746	0.752	0.757	0.760	0.764	0.766	0.56
SOUTH ASIA		0.583	0.592	0.601	0.607	0.614	0.621	1.25
WORLD		0.696	0.701	0.706	0.710	0.715	0.717	0.61

Almost all countries have shown a growing trend of human development index. It is inferred from the above table India has shown a speedy growth and lowest growth is seen in Sri Lanka but it is a positive sign that all the countries are improving their level of HDI

CONCLUSION

Human development for everyone requires a multipronged set of national policy options reaching those left out using universal policies, pursuing measure for groups with special needs, making human development resilient and empowering those left out.

Keep in mind however countries situation differs and policy options have to be tailored to each country policies in every country are to be pursued in coherent way through multistakeholder engagement, local and subnational adaptations and horizontal and vertical policy coherence.

REFERENCE

1. UNDP (2010). *Human Development Report 2016*, New York: United Nations Development Program (UNDP) <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2016-update>