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Krishna Kumar* and P. K. Anand**

Abstract: At the 70th Summit of UN in September 2015 the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with 17 goals and 169 targets at its core called Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was adopted by the 193 Member states. Further to that, an initial set of 232 global indicators was adopted by UN General Assembly in July 2017. The 2030 Agenda provided flexibility to the countries to evolve their own set of indicators relevant in the local circumstances to complement global set of indicators. In India, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has been tasked with the responsibility of evolving national indicators, while NITI Aayog oversees the implementation of SDGs. MoSPI has evolved a draft set of 281 national indicators and placed it in the public domain, but it is yet to be finalized.

Management of a large number of indicators poses a challenge due its associated cost of collection, processing and dissemination of data. As per the estimates arrived at by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), there will be a requirement of USD 1 billion per annum to make the national statistical systems of IDA-eligible countries capable of monitoring the SDGs.

This paper proposes a set of 50 indicators, which are mainly outcome/output based indicators, named as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), to capture the essence, effectively monitor and facilitate timely achievement of SDGs and associated targets.

Keywords: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Sustainable Development Goals, global indicator framework, national indicator framework, key performance indicators

Introduction

Prelude

The idea of the sustainability has been the part and parcel of the age-old Indian culture and ethos, manifested through harmony between people and nature. In fact, India's National Development Agenda and Policies

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are mirrored in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted at the UN in September 2015 by 193 Member states. The national government working on the principle of 'cooperative federalism', towards which the State Governments are valuable partners, is striving to provide a life of dignity to all its citizens through its development agenda focusing mainly on economic prosperity, economic and social inclusion, efficient governance and peaceful societies, valuing environment, while recognizing contributions of all stakeholders, including civil societies, multilateral organizations, UN bodies/agencies.

Associated challenges for sustainable development

There are many challenges to be met to be sustainable-like rising air and water pollutions, climate change, rapid depletion of groundwater, inadequate means for conservation of natural resources (soil, water, forests, rivers, glaciers, bio-diversity) as well as lack of decent job opportunities, inequalities, irresponsible consumption, unsustainable agricultural practices, malnutrition, etc. These challenges are to be tackled suitably for ensuring sustainable development.

New India Vision 2022

The Government of India (GoI) is committed to inclusiveness and sustainable development for achieving national development agenda. Hon'ble Prime Minister on 15 August 2017 announced New India Vision 2022¹ focused on six principles²: (i) Poverty Free India, (ii) Dirt and Squalor Free India, (iii) Terrorism Free India, (iv) Corruption Free India, (v) Castism Free India and (vi) Communalism Free India. These clearly depict India's development principles of 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas' meaning 'Collective efforts inclusive development', and underlying sustainable driver that poor have the first charge on the national resource, while respecting environment for economic prosperity. These are imbibed in the action points listed in the Three-Year Action Agenda³ currently under operation, and are setting for national development priorities.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

On 25 September 2015, the 70 UN Summit adopted a set of 17 global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 associated targets as enshrined in *The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.⁴ The Paris Climate Agreement (COP 21)⁵ and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda⁶, which are an integral part of the 2030 Agenda, were also adopted in the same year. And in 2015, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction⁷ too was adopted. The 2030 Agenda also provided flexibility to the countries to evolve their own set of indicators relevant in the local circumstances to complement global set of indicators.

Follow-up and review: global indicator framework

The current format of the SDGs has laid a policy framework for the 2030 Agenda. A rigorous scientific follow-up on their operationalization and implementation based on the robust set of indicators would be the key to ensure that politically supported ambition expressed in the Agenda is achieved within the given timeline. Accordingly, addressing challenges associated with the implementation and the monitoring of the Agenda has received focused attention at the global, regional, national and subnational levels. An initial set of 232 global indicators⁸, as evolved by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group (IAEG-SDG), under the auspices of the UN Statistical Commission, has since been adopted by the UN General Assembly in July 2017. In fact, bulk of the theoretical work on the quality standards is yet to be carried out on many indicators (for instance the 62 Tier III indicators out of 232)9. Users are not generally sure as to how adequately the indicators would measure monitored phenomenon. Therefore, to evaluate indicators' relevance, methodological soundness, clarity and objectivity in terms of what is being measured, in terms of capturing policies affecting people, while simultaneously taking into account data production and dissemination capacities of the countries official statistical system have been stressed by the IAEG-SDG.

These characteristic are of utmost importance to ensure that clear and unambiguous messages are conveyed to users. The IAEG-SDG, under the guidance of UN Statistical Commission, is also entrusted to take due care on these issues at the time of comprehensive review exercises to be undertaken in 2020 and 2025.

Translating SDGs in the national context

Institutional mechanism

Nationalization and localization of global SDGs and associated targets are important steps to pursue global common ambition, as has been set-out in the 2030 agenda. Underscoring the importance of these processes, the GoI has started many initiatives. NITI Aayog has been made responsible for overall coordination of SDGs with the support of all stakeholders, including central government ministries and departments of the state governments, experts, academia, CSOs, think-tanks and multi-lateral institutions. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI) has been given the charge for evolving indicator framework commensurate with the national policies and priorities and local conditions.

NITI Aayog has constituted a multi-disciplinary Task Force to coordinate actions under SDGs. It has also organized a series of workshops and regional consultations in association with the RIS and the UN India for fast-tracking achievement of SDGs. In fact, a number of domestic policies and programmes are already in place focusing towards achieving SDGs. The subject domain Ministries are working along with the NITI Aayog for operationalization of these domestic policies. Many state governments have established similar institutional mechanisms, and some have established a dedicated centre for implementation of SDGs at the state level.

Evolution of national indicators' framework

Follow-up and review at the national, regional (national plus) and global

levels are an integral part of the 2030 Agenda. Tracking of progress needs to be taken up by each country in a systematic and transparent way on a regular basis. The GoI and the State Governments, being responsible and accountable to citizens, are committed to work together to fast-track implementation of policies and programme for attaining SDGs and in ensuring that no one is left behind. India took active part, and has placed its Voluntary National Review Report at the High-level Political Forum in 2017.

Status of national indicators' framework

As has been perceived in the 2030 Agenda, the GoI felt the need to evolve SDG indicators in the national context. To accomplish this, the MoSPI established dialogues with stakeholders, inviting central ministries and the state governments, and came out with a set of 281 draft indicators; which were placed in the public domain on 8 March 2017 seeking feedback. A large number of valuable comments were received from individuals, civil society organizations (CSOs), UN bodies located in India, and other stakeholders; the comments have been considered by the MoSPI, and finalization of the set of national indicators is at an advanced stage.

National Policy Thrust

The Indian Voluntary Review Report, 2017, has termed India as the fastest growing major economy of the world coupled with high standards of governance at all levels. India, in fact, has launched many programmes to achieve SDGs-for instance, universal rural electrification, road and digital connectivity for all, massive expansion of clean and renewable energy, sanitation, housing for all and universal elementary education; are some commitments of the government for achievements within a short period. Several of the Government programmes contribute directly to the advancement of SDG agenda. A noteworthy cross-cutting example is the *Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)*, which happens to be world's largest financial inclusion programme.

Three-Year action Agenda

To fast track the SDGs, the three-Year action Agenda released by NITI Aayog, covering the period 2017-18 to 2019-20, is a critical pointer. A close look at the Action Agenda reveals perceptible changes made in the recent past to address to the needs of the poor while pursuing growth trajectory. It covers actions to handle problems associated with environmental degradation and climate change. Enhancement in income opportunities and in employment strategy now focuses on entrepreneurship development rather than pushing entitlement. The social sector service delivery such as of education, medical and public health, availability of nutritious food, water, sanitation, etc. now focuses on the 'quality' rather than on 'expansion'. Economic sector development strategy is a mix of enhancing income/income-generating opportunities and associated environment/climate-change dimensions. Protection and conservation of natural resources is receiving priority attention in the national development programmes. On the health front, it focus is to minimize out-of-pocket medical expenses by people who are poor and deprived to in turn tackle problem of poverty. As the government is committed to provide affordable health care, recently a new scheme called 'Ayushman Bharat' has been launched to meet hospitalization needs, which has to be further fine- tuned to ensure speedy, timely and effective coverage.

Identification of priority indicators by NITI Aayog

NITI Aayog's document of February 2018, as available in the webpage¹¹, lists 63 priority indicators to evaluate performance of States/UTs. Notably, to evolve indicators for different SDG targets is a dynamic exercise. Modifications/revisions need to be taken up at regular intervals for reflecting essence of policy/programme priorities and for incorporating updated statistical technology inventions for compiling more efficient indicators, based on the cost-effective data gathering and processing methods.

A Suggested Framework and Way Forward

The World Bank's Working Paper (WPS8481)¹² together with the UN Department of Economic & Social Affairs (DESA) Working Paper¹³, provides a broad framework for countries for prioritization of specific Goals and SDG indicators. Taking this work further in the context of India, the present paper attempts to identify a set of key performance indicators, conforming to the principles, upheld in the above-mentioned working papers. Choice of these indicators does not represent importance of a particular SDG target, as all SDGs and the targets under them are globally equally important. There can be certain targets which may have comparatively lesser relevance for India; for example targets seeking specific action from the developed countries.

Data collection, processing and dissemination involve substantial cost. Any highly loaded indicator framework would increase burden on the government exchequer. As per the estimates arrived at by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), there would be a requirement of USD 1 billion per annum to make national statistical systems of IDA-eligible countries capable of monitoring SDGs. ¹⁴ The actual cost obviously will vary depending upon the number of indicators, their periodicity, disaggregation level, etc. in measurement framework.

In view of the above, the need of the hour is to keep the cost at an optimal level so to use scarce resources properly for monitoring and implementation of such policies relevant to the context of national needs and priorities and capturing essence of SDGs. A concerted view would therefore have to be taken that strikes balance between output/outcome based indicators and input/process indicators, by keeping the latter at the minimal possible number.

Salient features of the key performance indicators (KPIs) selected in the paper are as follows:

• The approach adopted is to reconcile the domestic policy objectives with the internationally agreed objectives, and thus keeping in

view trade-off between draft list of national indicators and global indicator framework. Accordingly, broad aim is to judge and capture sustainability umbrella over time, while tracking institutional and policy performance and measuring progress not only in absolute numbers but by linking it to the achievement of the SDGs as a whole.

- Focus is primarily on the outcome indicators and not on the input or process indicators. The indicators listed below, however, may be complemented by programme managers through process/input/ additional outcome indicators to internalize associated factors leading to achievement or otherwise of the programme/policy objectives and ultimately SDG targets.
- A generic indicator (in fact, the first one) is included right at the beginning of the list to assess how much progress has been made on the targets slated for 2020, which is suggested to be expanded from the next year to cover the 2025 and 2030 stipulated.
- Other proposed indicators are listed against the relevant predominant SDG. However, the possible inter-connect among proposed indicators has also been harnessed. For instance, a number of proposed indicators cover multidimensional poverty, besides the ones listed against SDG 1.
- The proposed set has only 50 indicators, far less than the 232 initial global indicators, and the initial draft of 281 national indicators, to keep the list crisp for sharper focus by utilizing inter-connects.
- Last but not the least, as the role of a good statistician is not akin
 to a pathologist limited to measurement, but of a forward looking
 stakeholder, focus is to select to the extent possible, such indicators,
 which capture the essence of the SDGs including preamble, to
 facilitate timely achievement of SDGs.

The paper intends to stimulate thinking among stakeholders particularly the ones involved in preparing national monitoring indicators as to what approach should be taken for measuring progress in timely achieving the targets. This paper proposes a set of 50 national indicators (Table Annexed); these reflect broad objectives and ambitions of the SDGs, which can be interpreted in the national context. These are primarily outcome-based indicators aimed at to capture the essence, effectively monitor and facilitate timely achievement of SDGs and associated targets. With a few exceptions, these are not merely a sub-set of draft national indicators¹⁵ or global SDG indicators.

Keeping the number of KPIs manageable would help enhancing usability by all stakeholders. Keeping limited number of indicators *ceteris paribus* has an added advantage in terms of cost of collection of relevant data.

Once the list of national indicators evolved by the MoSPI reaches the final stage, it would be taking the next step of mapping of the official data ecosystem as well as of establishing metadata for the SDG indicators' framework; and this would be a step forward for mainstreaming SDGs into the national development agenda.

Further, the following tasks would be required:

- Baseline data for many indicators are not available, which need to be generated.
- Methodological studies are also needed for some indicators to describe clear concept, definition and standards.
- Strengthening of the data production and dissemination capacity of the official statistical systems to meet data demand of some indicators at regular frequency, appropriate disaggregation level.

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- 8 Numbering 244 indicators including repetitions.
- ⁹ In 2017 the entire set of 232 initial global indicators was grouped under 3 Tiers depending upon the availability of the data and methodology.
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Annexure

Indicator no.	Indicator	Brief Genesis	Existing/ Potential Data Source	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Proportion of the early timeline (2020) targets for which indicator progress and likely year of achievement placed in public domain	To provide a thumb-nail sketch of the progress on each national indicator	MoSPI Annual Country Report on SDG Progress	Should further expand coverage to include intermediate timeline (2025) and final timeline (2030) targets
SDG 1	End poverty in a	all its forms everywhere		
2	Proportion of population below the national Poverty Line	To capture status of economic poverty.	NITI Aayog	Data is available with disaggregation at State and Rural/ Urban levels
3.	Proportion of people at risk of poverty	To identify population who are just above the economic poverty - and may be caught into the poverty trap due to any shock. Identification of such people will keep at bay people marginally above the economic poverty norm and help sustained elimination of economic poverty. State-wise and Rural/ Urban disaggregation is possible.	NITI Aayog	Till a robust national definition is evolved can take national poverty line plus its two deciles.Element of subsidy on food accessed under PDS; health facilities available / insurance coverage etc. can also be accounted for to focus on the most vulnerable.

Indicator no.	Indicator	Brief Genesis	Existing/ Potential Data Source	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5
4.	Percentage of population having access within 2 km from the place of residence to facilities of PDS Fair Price Shop, health- care facilities, primary education, and banking service facilities	To capture extent of socio- economic inclusion	NSSO Surveys	
SDG 2 sustainab	End hunger, ach le agriculture	ieve food security and in	nproved nutrition	and promote
5.	Prevalence of malnutrition among children under 5 years of age (stunting, wasting, underweight, overweight)	To identify those children whose growth is not in accordance with the international norms-height for age (stunting), weight for height (wasting), too light for age (under weight), too heavy for age (overweight). It will be reflect nutritional status among children.	NFHS	
6.	Prevalence of micronutrient deficiency among children under 5 years of age (Vitamin A and Iron)	To measure vulnerability to adverse impact of micronutrient deficiency	NFHS	Can be expanded to cover more micronutrients

Indicator no.	Indicator	Brief Genesis	Existing/ Potential Data Source	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5
7.	Proportion of gross cropped area under organic farming	To indicate an important contribution to sustainable agriculture that helps in protecting the soil and other natural resources and biodiversity. It will enhance water use efficiency and also enhance soil fertility.	MoAFW	
8.	Proportion of net cropped agricultural area with proper NPK balance	'Proper' means neither high nor low, as high will cause air and water pollution, whereas low will harm biodiversity	MoAFW	To later on add micronutrients
SDG 3	Ensure healthy	lives and promote well-b	eing for all at all	ages
9.	Life expectancy at birth	To measure general health and overall mortality level in the population and throw light on the quality of health care services availableIt also provides a snapshot of the overall mortality characteristics for the population.	RGI	
10.	Maternal mortality ratio(per 100,000 live- births)	To capture the risk of death during pregnancy or within 42 days after a live birth.	RGI	
11.	Under-5 mortality rate(per 1,000 live- births)	It being mortality rate among young children measures child health and well-being, and, more broadly, social and economic development.	RGI	

Indicator no.	Indicator	Brief Genesis	Existing/ Potential Data Source	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5
12.	Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live- births)	It reflects the access of children and communities to basic health interventions such as vaccination, medical treatment of infectious diseases and adequate nutrition	RGI	
13.	Neonatal mortality rate(per 1,000 live- births)	It being mortality rate during the first 28 completed days of live births and measures their health and well- being, and, more broadly, social and economic development.	MoHFW	
14.	Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease	To assess the extent of burden from premature mortality due to non- communicable diseases in the population	MoHFW	
15.	Tuberculosis incidence (per 100,000 population)	To measure reduction in the number of cases of this disease burden	MoHFW-	
16.	Out-of-Pocket Spending (OoPS) as percentage of the total health expenditure	To assess the burden which the people bears to avail health services.	NHFS/NSSO	
17.	Death rate due to road traffic accidents	It is a reflection on the road as well as traffic conditions.	MoRTH	

learning opportunities for all

Indicator no.	Indicator	Brief Genesis	Existing/ Potential Data Source	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5
18.	School Education Quality Index (SEQI)	To capture the learning outcomes among school children	NITI/MHRD	
19.	Per cent of people aged 15- 49 years having formal skill training	To indicate employability of work force.	Mo Skill Development	
20.	Population aged 25 to 35 have completed technical education	To indicate employability of youth in better paid technical jobs.	MHRD	
SDG 5	Achieve gender e	quality and empower al	l women and girl	s
21.	Child sex ratio	To indicate relative to the natural level the extent of perverse preference of society for male child, is also indicative of sex- selective abortion and infanticide.	-RGI	
22.	Female Labour force Participation Rate	To capture gender gaps in labour force participation rates	MoSPI	
SDG 6 all	Ensure availabi	lity and sustainable mar	nagement of wate	er and sanitation for
23.	Proportion of population using toilets having proper hand- washing facility	To indicate the degree to which the excreta remains isolated from human contact and the hygiene gets priority for improving health outcome.	MoDW&S	
24.	Change in water- use efficiency over time	To measure the efficiency of the use of water resources	MoWR	

Indicator no.	Indicator	Brief Genesis	Existing/ Potential Data Source	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5
25.	Change in Water Productivity	To capture improvement in productivity of water defined as GDP per cubic meter of total freshwater withdrawal	MoWR	
SDG 7	Ensure access to	o affordable, reliable, su	stainable and mo	dern energy for all
26.	Proportion of population getting at least 12 hours of power supply in a day	To capture deprivation of such population who do not have access to availability of power for at least 12 hours a day	МоР	
27.	Share of renewable energy in total energy consumption	To measure the share of renewable energyactually consumed	MNRE	
SDG 8 P		inclusive and sustainabl		th, full and
28.	Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita	To measure improvement rate of the average standard of living of population.	MoSPI	
29.	Unemployment Rate	To measure the extent to which the labour supply remains underutilized.	MoSPI	
30.	Proportion of youth (15-24 years) not in education or employment or training (NEET)	To measure in broader sense the untapped potential of youth labour market entrants	MoL	
SDG 9		nfrastructure, promote in lization and foster inno		ainable

Indicator no.	Indicator	Brief Genesis	Existing/ Potential Data Source	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5
31.	Proportion of rural population who live within 2 km of an all- weather road	To capture rural connectivity with an all weather road	MoSPI	NSS House listing (schedule 0.0) Block 7 coding structure for distance for facilities from village/UB be suitably modified to capture the indicator.
32.	Industry sector employment as a proportion of total employment	To indicate the level of industrialization as well as the potential of jobs created in the industrial sector.	MoSPI	
33.	Share of R&D expenditure to GDP	To capture the total expenditure incurred on R&D in relation to GDP.		
34.	Energy Productivity	To measure the ratio of output divided by energy consumption to give an understanding of the energy efficiency of the economy.	МоР	
SDG 10	Reduce inequality	y within and among cou	ntries	

Indicator no.	Indicator	Brief Genesis	Existing/ Potential Data Source	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5
35.	Growth rate of per capita household expenditure among the bottom 40 per cent of the population and the total population	To capture disparity in growth of expenditure of the four lowest deciles, leading to increase in the inequalities.	MoSPI	
SDG 11	Make cities and	human settlements inclu	isive, safe, resilie	nt and sustainable
36.	Proportion of urban populationliving in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing	To capture inadequacy of minimal housing facilities in urban areas.	MoSPI/RGI	
37.	Average Annual Mean of PM 2.5 Levels in major cities	To capture air-quality in cities.	CPCB	
38.	Number of Deaths due to natural disaster (including water-related disaster) per lakh population hit by natural disaster	To capture the degree of natural disasters. Occurrence of natural disaster is also one of the indications of effects of climate change.	МНА	
SDG 12	Ensure sustaina	ble consumption and pro	oduction patterns	s
39.	Domestic material consumption per capita	To give a broad indication of material use efficiency.	MoEFCC	

Indicator no.	Indicator	Brief Genesis	Existing/ Potential Data Source	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5
40.	Percentage of waste generated recycled	To broadly capture the extent to which the waste has been made worth re-use.	MoEFCC	
SDG 13	Take urgent act	ion to combat climate cl	nange and its imp	oacts
41.	Green House Gas emission per unit of GDP	To indicate the degree to which efforts have been made to minimize the effect of climate change.	MoEFCC	
SDG 14 sustainabl	Conserve and su le development	stainably use the oceans	s, seas and marin	ne resources for
42.	Protected Terrestrial and marine area to total terrestrial area	To measure the progress toward the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of marine ecosystems and their services	MoES	
sustainabl		l promote sustainable us combat desertification, ersity loss		
43.	Forest area as a proportion of total land area	To provide an indication of the relative extent of forests in a country.	MoEF&CC	
44.	Red list index	To measure change in aggregate extinction risk across groups of species	MoEF&CC	
SDG 16		and inclusive societies fo stice for all and build eff at all levels		

Indicator no.	Indicator	Brief Genesis	Existing/ Potential Data Source	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5
45.	Number of Victims of Intentional Homicide(per 100,000 population)	To provide an indication towards lack of physical security	МНА	
46.	Number of court cases pendingper 100,000 population	To capture the expediency of justice available to citizens.	MoLJ	
47.	Number of persons charge sheeted for corruption and bribery under IPC (per 100,000 population)	To broadly capture formal action against corrupt public servants.	МНА	
SDG 17	-	ans of implementation a inable Development	nd revitalize the	global partnership
48.	Total financial and technical assistance received from rest of the world as percentage of total revenue receipts	To capture contribution of global partnership in towards implementation of SDGs.	MoF	
49.	Trade deficit with developed countries as a percentage of trade with them.	To indicate the efforts made by the developed countries to liberalize imports.	DGC&IS	

Indicator no.	Indicator	Brief Genesis	Existing/ Potential Data Source	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5
50.	Total number of statistical personnel - imparted training at NSSTA	To measure government efforts in enhancing technical capacity of the national statistical system.	Annual Report MoSPI	

In order to keep the number of priority indicators handy, but at the same time to have a broad feel of other indicators covered under the national indicator framework, a progress measuring generic indicator titled, 'Proportion of the early timeline (2020) targets for which indicator progress and likely year of achievement placed in public domain', is included as the first priority indicator. Initially (say, during 2018) progress on the early timeline (2020) targets may be given (upto the previous year) which should be expanded in the reporting in 2019 to cover the intermediate timeline (2025) and the (remaining) final timeline (2030) targets.

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