DEVELOPMENT AFTER 2015

Ten Goals to Make a Difference for Those Left Behind in India

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been a great laboratory for poverty reduction, with major successes and frustrating failures. These fifteen years of experience provide us the wisdom to do better in a deeply changed world. This paper summarises the outcomes of consultations and studies around the question: what new framework will make a difference for groups in India that face acute poverty and social exclusion? The question brings several challenges to the forefront—addressing inequalities and exclusion; impacting on the politics of poverty in sovereign nations; financing the goals in a context where the role of aid is diminishing. The paper proposes to address these challenges in 10 goals that build on the current framework but will help make a difference for those at the very bottom.

SUMMARY

The importance of India's example hardly needs to be stressed. Globally, the majority of poor now live in middle income countries:[1] India is home to more poor people than any other country, despite crossing the World Bank's threshold to qualify as a middle income country in 2008. In-country inequalities are rising worldwide; the rise has been dramatic in India, and income inequalities now rival with South Africa and Brazil.[2] A massive demographic shift from rural to urban regions generates new dimensions of poverty: though rates of urbanisation have been relatively limited in India,[3] poverty reduction among excluded groups has been slowest in cities, where much of India's growth in GDP is created—[4] a trend that raises the question of urban poverty with urgency. Finally, with foreign aid accounting for no more than 2.8 per cent of public expenditure on social services,[5] and a government that is the game-setter on poverty reduction, India is representative of a global context where the role of aid is diminishing.[6]

Beyond these aspects, India's example holds lessons on social exclusion. The rise in inequalities has added one dimension to historic patterns of social exclusion. A World Bank report estimates that Tribal people lag 20 years behind national averages on human development indicators, while Dalits lag 10 years behind.[7] Other studies show that Muslims fare no better than Dalits; women across all groups are worse off than their male counterparts.[8] Lasting discrimination and insecurity, the lack of economic opportunities and political empowerment combine to keep certain groups at the margins of the country's economic and social development. Muslims, Dalits and Tribals constitute 38 per cent of India's population,[9] and a major share of the country's poor. Their situation is a stark

reminder that a framework for development will be of little relevance today if it does not address social exclusion.

The country not only exemplifies stark dynamics of social exclusion, it is also home to some of the most diverse policy attempts to address them: decades of experimentation with affirmative action and targeted planning for vulnerable groups provide lessons on how to tackle discrimination. This framework suggested here draws on these lessons in concrete terms, by suggesting 10 goals organised around the following priorities:

- securing human rights for all;
- addressing inequalities and social exclusion;
- targeting the real drivers of social, economic and political discrimination against women;
- achieving quality services for all in healthcare and education;
- linking sustainability and equity;
- financing the goals by supporting fair taxation and resource allocation nationally and internationally;
- ensuring accountability.

1. SOURCES

This brief draws on the analysis of several longer papers supported by Oxfam India.[10] Issues of social exclusion are discussed in Tanweer Fazal's 'MDGs and Muslims of India', Rajendra Mamgain's 'Situating Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Post-2015 Framework', Pamada Menon's 'Post-2015: A Gendered Perspective', and Lucy Dubochet's synthesis report 'Making Post-2015 Matter for Socially Excluded Groups in India'. In addition, a paper by Darshini Mahadevia looks at urban poverty and the MDGs, while Ashish Kothari's 'Development and Ecological Sustainability' discusses how issues of environmental sustainability can be mainstreamed.

2. INDIA'S CHALLENGES TO THE MDGS

2.1. Inequalities and the MDGs

Clearly, India is not on track to meet its MDG-targets, but it has made important progress on a number of them. For Muslim, Dalits, Tribals and women, improvements have been even slower. Official data claims India has attained universal primary school enrollment, but the percentage of girls who never attended school was just above 25 per cent among Muslims, Dalits and Tribals in 2006.[11] Incidence of malnutrition among children below five was estimated at 42, 48, and 55 per cent among Muslims, Dalits, and Tribals respectively, significantly higher than the projected 26 per cent target. All four groups continue to be over-represented in casual, low-skilled employment.

Income trends follow similar patterns. Income inequality has grown dramatically over the past two decades and is now on par with some of the highest worldwide. With an estimated 22 per cent of the population below the official poverty level, India is nearly on track to halving poverty over the past two decades.[12] Repeated revisions of the poverty line over recent years have raised scepticism about this figure—in contrast, 42 per cent of the population fall under the international threshold of $1.25 (PPP per day).[13] Despite this, the overall reduction in poverty has undeniably been significant.

In contrast, among Dalits, Muslims and Tribals, poverty rates range between 30 per cent and 33 per cent,[14] and the gap between these groups and the national average is increasing. Strikingly, the reduction in poverty incidence has been slowest in cities where much of the country's growth is generated: annual reduction has been 2.3 per cent in cities against 2.5 per cent in rural areas between 1993 and 2010.[15] Muslims lag behind with annual rates of poverty reduction at 1.8 per cent in cities, followed by Dalits and Tribals at 2.1 per cent. This paradox highlights some of the systemic factors that skew the country's development benefits towards relatively more privileged groups. Discriminated in the employment market and with lower levels of education on average, Dalits, Muslims and Tribals often do not find quality employment to compensate for costs of living that have dramatically increased in cities; historically deprived of assets, they are over-represented in slum areas,[16] where land rights are insecure and access to basic sanitation services lacking.

These trends tie into environmental challenges: air and water pollution is acute in cities, industrial and agricultural areas; groundwater depletion is faster in the Ganges Basin than anywhere else according to recent estimates;[17] energy production does not start to meet the basic needs of the poor,[18] while richer households have reached unsustainable levels of consumption. India has moved far away from an environmentally safe space; those most tangibly affected are the poor, who cannot afford paying for safe water or clean energy, and live in insalubrious areas.[19]

2.2. International Framework, Domestic Policies

The Millennium Declaration decade saw the introduction of major social policies in India: the right to education, the right to hundred days of minimum wage employment for rural households, and several programmes aimed at supporting access to health and housing for the poorest. The link between these policies and domestic political interests is obvious; the role of the MDGs in federating them less so.

Overall, India's attitude towards the MDGs has moved from reluctance to a relative lack of interest: it criticised the absence of consultation before defining the goals. Even after the government signed up to the goals and the United Progressive Alliance mentioned them in its election manifesto in 2004, references have been few and far between. Till today, India opposes a UN-led monitoring of performance on the goals.

The new framework will need to strike a fine balance: it needs to create effective leverage points on domestic policies and help domestic stakeholders hold their government accountable, while taking into account the sensitivities of sovereign nations. More challenging yet, it needs to do so while focusing on social exclusion—an issue that many countries are reluctant to expose.

3. PRIORITIES FOR THE 10 GOALS

3.1. Securing Basic Rights

The current MDGs are the expression of a world divided into North and South, East and West; rich countries that drive the politics of aid and poor receiving countries. This world no longer exists. Most poor people now live in sovereign middle income countries, and foreign aid no longer drives poverty reduction. This calls for a universal set of goals based on principles of human rights.

The situation of socially excluded groups in India adds to this argument by drawing attention to the link between rights insecurity, exclusion and poverty. Security remains a primary source of concern for all groups: rights violations linked to gender, caste, religion, and to the conflict that has spread in Tribal dominated areas persist. Beyond this, more diffuse forms of discrimination are widespread. The two factors combine to hamper access to basic services, economic opportunities, and prevent the emergence of a unified political leadership. These issues are at the heart of international human rights law, but they are poorly reflected in the current MDGs. The new framework should build on decades of international law making, and embed goals in existing human rights. In addition, a number of specific targets should address major causes of rights insecurity—situations of extreme vulnerability like disasters and conflicts in goal 7, the link between land rights insecurity and vulnerability under goal 6; violence against women under goal 3.

The rights focus will also help link the new goals with existing social mobilisation. Human rights are central to the struggles of organisations that lead the mobilisation for equity—for example, those representing women and Dalits in India. Linking the rights framework with a framework like the MDGs, which helps focus efforts and attentions, will give them additional leverage.

3.2. Addressing Inequalities and Social Exclusion

A quantified target on poverty reduction is not enough. The framework needs to reverse a trend that is driving social groups apart. One separate goal should focus on reducing inequalities in income and consumption to 1990 levels. In addition, goal 1, eradicating extreme poverty, should focus specifically on the bottom 20 per cent, and target the dynamics of exclusion that tie them into extreme poverty. Governments should identify vulnerable groups based on neutral criteria.

Disaggregated planning should help excluded groups overcome their disadvantages. It should support their political empowerment through affirmative action, and address systemic factors such as the lack of access to credit and assets. Furthermore, because gender acts as a cumulated vulnerability, group-specific planning should include targeted measures to address the vulnerabilities of women.

Beyond this, the focus on social exclusion should be mainstreamed across all goals. Obstacles in accessing quality health, education, and decent housing, or their specific vulnerabilities to environmental degradation, should be addressed under the relevant goals. The requirement to collect gender and group-disaggregated data on all targets discussed below will substantiate this focus.

3.3. Enforcing the Basic Social, Economic and Political Rights of Women

Women deserve more than the current framework: not only has it failed to promote real change in India—rates of maternal mortality is at 212 per 100,000 live births against the 109 target,[20] while drop-out rates for girls challenge any claim of success on equity in education—, it also does not start to address systemic issues of gender discrimination, including widespread incidence of domestic violence, the absence of economic autonomy, and insufficient political empowerment.

The new goals should build on the recommendations of the Beijing Platform and of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and focus on women's economic, social and political rights. Policy evolutions in India and worldwide provide the evidence required to select measures that will make a difference on these three dimensions:

a) Set up legal safeguards and protection policies to enforce women's right to a violence free life at home, in public, and in the workplace.[21]
b) Improve political representation of women in national and local elected assemblies through affirmative action.[22]
c) Increase women's access to land and other assets.

Social exclusion acts as an additional factor of vulnerability: to mention only one example, the number of Dalit women who report facing domestic violence, at 46 per cent, is nearly 10 per cent higher than for India's population on average.[23] This cumulated vulnerability calls for targeted measures.

3.4. Achieving Quality for All in Education and Health

The current MDGs show the limitations of purely quantitative targets for health and education. Officially, India has achieved universal primary education, but other figures suggest a bleaker reality: drop-out rates are nearly 30 per cent among excluded groups, and more than 95 per cent schools do not meet basic requirements of India's Right to Education Act.[24] Similarly, health activists argue that numbered targets on single diseases have contributed fragmenting health priorities and systems.[25] Real improvements in health outcomes will only be achieved by guaranteeing access to a set of quality essential health services for all. Evidence from India, where the expansion of an unregulated private sector has failed to meet the basic health needs of the poor and where catastrophic health expenditure is a major cause of impoverishment, shows that the government needs to play a leading role in that regard.[26] The proposed goals 4 and 5 draw on these lessons by focusing on achieving quality education and health services for all.

3.5. Linking Sustainability and Equity

The link between issues of environmental sustainability and equity is tangible in India. It plays out in everyday—efforts to seek water; insecurity due to

unpredictable monsoons; diseases caused by air and water pollution or by the use of cheap unclean sources of energy.

The new development framework needs to integrate equity and sustainability more effectively. The challenge of bringing humankind back into an environmentally safe space should be prioritised under goal 9 and mainstreamed across all other goals. A second goal should focus on the relation between access to natural resources and poverty. It should recognise the existence of critical natural resource thresholds, commit to respect them and share resources fairly within and between countries.

Beyond this, the effectiveness of the new framework will depend on its success in integrating two parallel processes—the Sustainable Development Goals and the Millennium Development Goals—and making the link with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

3.6. Financing the Goals

Foreign aid can no longer finance the goals for most of the poor who live in middle income countries, though it will continue to be an important support for those who live in low income and fragile states. The future framework will need to devise sustainable ways of financing poverty reduction. While challenging, this requirement offers a chance to better link financial requirements and democratic policy processes. It provides the opportunity to create momentum around fair taxation and resource allocation within and across countries: allocating enough public resources to achieve the MDGs—education and health for example would require 6 per cent each according to standard estimates;[27] creating progressive tax policies within countries; setting up transparent international systems to prevent tax dodging, or compensate for environmental damages and climate footprints based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibility.

4. ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY

The relevance of the new framework will depend on whether it succeeds in setting up a mechanism to hold sovereign governments accountable without antagonising them. In particular, the framework's role in pushing for better data disaggregated along group and gender lines will determine whether the focus on social exclusion is effectively mainstreamed across relevant goals. The demand for comprehensive group-disaggregated data has played a significant role in mobilisations by Dalit and women's organisations. The requirement to report group-wise progress on the goals, with a gender-wise disaggregation for each group will back their long-time demands for better data and for the related improvements in national systems of measurements. The UN should set up the frameworks with the following requirements:

- Data for all targets should follow basic parameters to ensure its coherence across countries; it should be disaggregated by socially excluded groups and gender on all relevant goals; measurements on the use of natural resources should be in line with scientific assessments.
- An independent domestic body involving civil society organisations, the government and the corporate sector should monitor progress on all goals. It should push to strengthen national systems of data collection in accordance with reporting requirements.

Outlining clear and rigorous indicators for all targets will be more challenging than it was for the current MDGs: indicators will need to capture structural changes on targets such as accessing quality public services and attaining basic rights. The UN will play a critical role in outlining indicators that are altogether robust and simple. In contrast, the political struggle for equity can only take place within countries. The

new framework should recognise this and focus on creating effective leverage points for domestic actors who fight against deprivation.

SUGGESTED GOALS AND TARGETS FOR 2030

Goals	Targets
1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	A. Extreme poverty among the bottom 20 per cent is eradicated. B. Hunger is eradicated and the proportion of people—men, women, boys and girls—who suffer from malnutrition halved. C. Better paying, secure and environmentally sustainable jobs and livelihoods are created to ensure the economic autonomy of poor women and men.
2. Reduce inequality and enhance voice and participation	A. Inequalities in income and consumption between the bottom 20 per cent and top 5 per cent is back to 1990 levels. B. Women and men from socially excluded groups have equal access to assets. C. Women and men from socially excluded groups are represented in elected assemblies (local and national) in proportion to their total percentage.
3. All women attain their basic economic, social and political rights	A. Women have equal access to assets. B. All women are protected from the risk of violence at home, in public and at the workplace. C. Women are equally represented in legislative assemblies (national and local), the judiciary, and the executive. D. In the corporate sector, women are equally represented in senior leadership positions and boards.
4. All children attain their right to basic education	A. All girls and boys complete primary and secondary education. B. Disparities in attendance between boys and girls, children from socially excluded groups, disabled children and others are eradicated. C. All schools attain basic norms of quality. D. Pre-primary education will be available to all children.
5. Ensure access to quality essential healthcare for all	A. Governments guarantee quality essential healthcare and sexual and reproductive care for all. B. Essential medicine is available free of cost to all women and men. C. Patients' rights in the medical and pharmaceutical sector are protected by tight regulations.
6. Ensure decent and secure housing for all	A. Ensure basic tenure security for all. Tenure of dwelling is protected for all women and men in cities and rural settings. B. All women and men have access to basic services irrespective of their tenure status. C. All households have access to environmentally sustainable sanitation facilities.
7. Reduce vulnerability and safeguard basic rights	A. Legal safeguards protect the basic human rights of all women and men independently of their religion, caste, and ethnicity. B. All women and men have access to basic social protection. C. Prevention and protection policies safeguard the basic rights of women and men affected by disasters and conflicts.
8. Preserve and manage natural resources so as to fulfill the basic needs of all in culturally appropriate ways	A. All women and men have access to safe drinking water through sustainable systems of collection and distribution. B. All women and men have access to nutritious food through sustainable systems of production and distribution. C. All people's basic needs for energy are secured through sustainable means of production and distribution.

9. Bring humanity back into an environmentally safe space	A. Global warming is kept below a 1.5-degree temperature rise above pre-industrial levels. B. Air pollution is reduced to safe levels. C. The integrity of biodiversity and wildlife populations is safeguarded. D. Environmental damages and climate footprints is compensated for within and between countries.
10. Secure funding through progressive tax and resource allocations	A. Public spending for social services is stepped up to internationally accepted minimum levels. B. Countries secure funding to ensure the government's role in achieving the MDGs by raising adequate taxes. C. Tax evasion and dodging is curbed by setting up transparent international frameworks. D. The needs of poor countries are addressed by enhancing debt relief programmes and increasing overseas development assistance.

NOTES

[1] A. Sumner (2012), 'Where Will the World's Poor Live? An Update on Global Poverty and the New Bottom Billion', Washington DC: Centre for Global Development, available at: http://www.cgdev.org/files/1426481_file_Sumner_where_in_the_world_FINAL.pdf (last accessed February 2013).

[2] World Bank (2011), 'Poverty and Social Exclusion in India', Washington DC: WB, available at: https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/2289/613140PUB0pove158344B09780821386903.pdf?sequence=1 (last accessed March 2013).

[3] D. Mahadevia, 'Urban Poverty and the Post-MDG Framework – India', op. cit., p. 3.

[4] S. Thorat and A. Dubey (2012), 'Has Growth Been Socially Inclusive during 1993–94 and 2009–10?', *Economic & Political Weekly* XLVII (10), pp. 43–54.

[5] The data combines state and union government expenditures. Calculation based on: Centre for Budget Governance Accountability (2012), 'Unfulfilled Promises, Response to Union Budget 2012–2013', Delhi, available at: http://www.cbgaindia.org/files/budget_responses/RUB-2012-13.pdf (last accessed February 2013).

[6] D. Green, S. Hale, M. Lockwood (2012), 'How Can a Post-2015 Agreement Drive Real Change', Oxford: Oxfam International, available at: http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/how-can-post-2015-agreement-drive-real-change (last accessed February 2013).

[7] P. Lanjouw and R. Murgai (2011) 'Perspectives on Poverty in India', Washington DC: World Bank, p.24, available at: http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2011/05/05/000356161_20110505044659/Rendered/PDF/574280PUB0Pers1351B0Extop0ID0186890.pdf (last accessed February 2013).

[8] P. Lanjouw and R. Murgai (2011) 'Perspectives on Poverty in India', op. cit., p.24.

[9] Census of India 2011, available at: http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2001/India_at_glance/glance.aspx (last accessed March 2012).

[10] L. Dubochet (2013), 'Making Post-2015 Matter for Socially Excluded Groups in India', Working Paper XII, Delhi, available at: www.oxfamindia.org/sites/default/files/Working%20paper%2014_0.pdf (accessed March 2013): Oxfam India ; T. Fazal (2013), 'Millennium Development Goals and Muslims of India', Working Paper XIII, Delhi: Oxfam India: www.oxfamindia.org/sites/default/files/13%20Millennium%20Development%20Goals%20and%20Muslims%20of%20India.pdf (accessed January 2013); A. Kothari (2013), 'Development and Ecological Sustainability in India', Working Paper, Delhi: Oxfam India, available at: http://www.oxfamindia.org/sites/default/files/Working%20paper%2016%20-%20Dr.%20Ashish%20Kothari.pdf (accessed March 2013); Mahadevia, 'Urban Poverty and the Post-MDG Framework – India', Working Paper, Delhi: Oxfam India (publication forthcoming); R.P. Mamgain, 'Situating Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Post-2015 Framework', Working Paper, Delhi: Oxfam India (publication forthcoming); P. Menon, 'Post-2015: a Gendered Perspective', Working Paper, Delhi: Oxfam India (publication forthcoming).

[11] The government has since stopped collecting disaggregated data. T. Fazal, 'Millennium Development Goals and Muslims of India', op. cit.

[12] Based on the Planning Commission's 2012 poverty line of INR 28 in urban areas and INR 22 in rural areas. R.P. Mamgain, 'Situating Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Post-2015 Framework', op. cit.

[13] International Human Development Indicators, Country Profile, India: available at http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/IND.html (last accessed March 2013).

[14] Ibid.

[15] S. Thorat and A. Dubey (2012), 'Has Growth Been Socially Inclusive during 1993–94 and 2009–10?', op. cit., pp. 43–54.

[16] D. Mahadevia, 'Urban Poverty and the Post-MDG Framework – India', op. cit.

[17] T. Gleeson, Y. Wada, M.F.P. Bierkens, L.P.H. van Beek (2012), 'Water Balance of Global Aquifers revealed by Groundwater Footprint', *Nature* (480), pp. 197–200.

[18] A World Bank study estimated that 57 per cent of rural households were energy poor in 2010. S. R. Khandker, D. F. Barnes, H. A. Samad (2010), 'Energy Poverty in Rural and Urban India', Policy Research Working Paper 5463, Washington DC: The World Bank, available at: www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2010/11/01/000158349_20101101152446/Rendered/PDF/WPS5463.pdf (last accessed March 2013).

[19] K. Raworth (2012), 'A Safe and Just Space for Humanity', Oxford: Oxfam International, available at: http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/a-safe-and-just-space-for-humanity-can-we-live-within-the-doughnut-210490 (last accessed February 2013).

[20] Government of India (2011), 'Family Welfare Statistics in India', Delhi: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, p. x, available at: http://mohfw.nic.in/WriteReadData/l892s/972971120FW%20Statistics%202011%20Revised%2031%2010%2011.pdf (last accessed December 2012).

[21] In India, two laws introduced recently after decades of struggle by women rights' groups have moved towards

aligning domestic policies with the directions of the CEDAW and the Beijing platform: the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2006 and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Bill that was adopted by the Parliament in March 2013.

[22] A law dated 1992 establishes a 33 per cent reservation (later increased to 50 per cent) for women in local elected bodies. Resistance at state and central level was so strong that it prevented the law's enactment beyond local level, but the law is an important first step.

[23] International Institute for Population Sciences (2007), 'Key Findings, National Family Health Survey-3, 2005–06', Mumbai: IIPS, pp. 509–510, available at: http://www.rchiips.org/NFHS/NFHS-3%20Data/VOL-1/India_volume_I_corrected_17oct08.pdf (last accessed March 2013).

[24] Government of India (2012), 'Social Sectors' in 12th Five Year Plan, Delhi: Planning Commission, p. 49, available at: planningcommission.gov.in/plans/planrel/12thplan/pdf/vol_3.pdf (last accessed March 2013).

[25] 'Maternal Health: Recommendations for a Post-2015 MDG Agenda', consultation report, Roundtable on Maternal Health organised by the Centre for Enquiry Into Health and Allied Themes and supported by Oxfam India, Mumbai, 25 February 2013.

[26] L. Dubochet (2012), 'Achieving Healthcare for All', Policy Brief 3, Delhi: Oxfam India, available at http://www.oxfamindia.org/content/achieving-healthcare-all (last accessed March 2013).

[27] See for example: D.B. Evans, R. Elovainio, G. Humphreys (2010), 'Health System Financing, The Path to Universal Coverage', Geneva: World Health Organisation, p. xv, http://www.who.int/whr/2010/en/index.html, (last accessed October 2012); on education: Government of India (2004), 'National Common Minimum Programme', Delhi: GoI, available at: pmindia.nic.in/cmp.pdf (last accessed March 2013).

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