

Home > [Nation](#)

India questions UNDP Human Development Report

New Delhi, Nov 09: India, which has been placed 126th in the UNDP Human Development Index, today questioned the ranking, saying comparisons should be between equals.

"Just as you cannot compare Maldives with India, you cannot compare us with countries like Norway, Sweden or Singapore which are far more developed," Union Minister of Water Resources Saifuddin Soz told reporters here while releasing the UNDP Human Development Report, 2006.

Soz said had made "spectacular progress" in many fields and it was not necessarily reflected by the index.

"The ranking should be on the basis of comparisons between equal countries in terms of size and population," he said, adding UNDP had been comparing big countries like India and China with other smaller countries.

Soz said in future UNDP should think about the ranking system and find new tools to give a more appropriate picture.

The index, which measures achievements in terms of life expectancy, education and adjusted real income, ranked 177 countries with Norway on top and Niger at the bottom.

UNDP Policy Specialist Arunabha Ghosh, however, said the rankings were limited to comparable data.

"We do not use absolute numbers but percentage," he said.

Ghosh, however, said India has moved beyond the mere rankings to achieve human development.

India has been a success and was one of the few countries which produces human development reports at state levels, he said.

Observing that water and sanitation are under-financed relative to military spending in India, a UNDP report has called for adequate funds for such basic amenities so that increased income levels could be successfully translated into human development.

UNDP's Human Development Report 2006, which ranked India 126 globally in Human Development Index for 2004 as compared to 127 a year ago, noted that India alone loses 4.5 lakh lives annually to diarrhea – more than any country.

"India spends eight times more of its national wealth on military budgets than on water and sanitation," the report, which was released today, said.

Public policy shaped the conversion of income into human development, it said, adding budget priorities raised some important questions about public spending.

"All countries see national security and defence as priorities. But viewed through the prism of human security it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that water and sanitation are under-financed relative to military spending," it said.

It observed that neighbouring Pakistan lost 1.18 lakh lives to diarrhea, with the country ranking 28 places higher in the global league table for deaths from diarrhea than in GDP per capita.

India, on the other hand, ranks 14 places higher in this regard, the report observed, adding many factors were at play but low levels of spending on water and sanitation surely contribute to the state of affairs.

The report, however, lauded efforts by India in enhancing spending on rural sanitation four-fold and doubling spending on rural water supply since 2002.

On achieving the Millennium Development Goals for water and sanitation levels, the UN study said the global aggregate picture was mixed.

"With strong progress in high population countries such as China and India, the world is on track for halving the share of people without access to water, but off track in sanitation," it said.

Pointing to the dichotomy on water availability, the UNDP report said people in slums of Mumbai, Jakarta and Nairobi faced shortages of clean water, although their neighbours in high income suburbs had enough water for household needs and keep their lawns greens and their "swimming pools topped up".

The report lamented that in cities such as Delhi, Dhaka and Mexico City, about

40 per cent of water leaks out of corroded pipes or is sold illegally. This results in low revenues for public providers, fueling a vicious cycle of deteriorating assets, water losses, low revenue collection, low investment and further infrastructure deterioration.

Commenting on the scarcity of water in rural areas, the report criticised the policy of subsidising electricity to farmers, which remove "incentives to conserve water".

"In India, agriculture accounts for about a third of the sales of electricity boards but only three per cent of revenue. According to World Bank, subsidies accounted for about a third of India's deficit in 2001," it said.

These subsidies have created disincentives for water conservation and incentives for inappropriate cropping patterns, the report said.

Bureau Report

[Print this page](#) | [Email the page](#)

[h p 7 H ^](#)
Studios Hiring Readers & Artists Upload your 97ap?N D^s7 W# qhD\B .
Resume Free Now!

Ads by Google

Advertise on this site

Contact Us : Privacy Policy : Legal Disclaimer
Copyright © Zee News Limited. All rights reserved.