



COMPARATIVE STUDY ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AMONG THE BRICS NATIONS AND NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES WITH INDIA

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ABSTRACT

With an abundance of empirical data and a new way of thinking about and measuring development, the Human Development Report has had a profound impact on policies around the world. Human Development Index (HDI) is a procedure to estimate the value of the human resources of a particular country every year. Increased HDI value indicates the better development of the country. This paper reviewed and compared the HDI ranks between the BRICS Nations and Neighboring countries with India by using the secondary data. Though there is little improvement in HDI rank of India when compared to the previous rank, but still Indian rank is the lowest among the BRICS Nations and lower with some of the Neighboring Countries. Challenges of India to improve the HDI and steps to be taken by the government, Non Governmental Organizations and other stake holders to increase the rank of HDI of India are discussed.

KEY WORDS: HDI, NGOs, BRICS Nations, Neighboring Countries, Human Resources.

Introduction:

Human development index is a composite statistical image of the human resources of a particular region regarding life expectancy, education, income and savings and about the growth rate. This method was created by a Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq and by Indian economist Amartya Sen in the year 1990. Later it was published by United Nations Development Program. (<https://www.hdi.com>)

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In recent decades, low- and middle-income countries such as Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba and China have succeeded in dramatically improving their citizens' health. The number of people living below the poverty line has also fallen significantly in many large countries such as China, India and Brazil. Within Africa, Ghana and Senegal halved their incidence of poverty between the mid-1990s and 2010. Furthermore, the highest rates of GDP growth over the past decade have been in East Asia (8%), South Asia (7%) and Sub-Saharan Africa (5%) — “the three regions which account for the bulk of absolute poverty” globally. (Indian times report 2014)

Despite these positive trends, there continue to be massive gaps in the degree of human development among countries. Comparing the lives of people in Norway, Australia and Switzerland (most developed countries) to those in Congo, Niger and the Central African Republic (least developed), astonishing disparities emerge across all measures of health, wealth, security and well-being. At 130, India ranks lowest in Human Development Index among BRICS Nations and lower than some of the neighboring countries. In this context, this paper reviewed and compared the HDI ranks between the BRICS Nations and Neighboring countries with India.

Objective: To compare and review of the Indian HDI value and rank with BRICS Nations and Neighboring Countries.

Methods:

Review with secondary data.

Inclusion Criteria: BRICS Countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) and the Neighboring Countries with India which are shared by the border (Sri Lanka, China, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Myanmar, Afghanistan).

The land gap between Sri Lanka and India is negligible and some researchers say that it is connected with very narrow stretch. There is bridge under the water called Rama Sethu (Adam's Bridge) which connects India and Sri Lanka. India has a legitimate boundary with Afghanistan. Officially India does share a small stretch of border with Afghanistan; however that is in Kashmir which is occupied by Pakistan. For these reasons, these Countries are included in this study.

Exclusion Criteria: The Countries which are not connected by land with India though they are near to India by Air or Marine travel. But some experts consider

these countries as neighbors to India. (eg:- Maldives). In this review such Countries are excluded because they are not sharing land border with India. Observation and discussion:

The BRICS countries accounted for about 40 per cent of world population and around 25 per cent of world GDP in Purchasing Power Parity terms in 2010. They have a key role to play in the post-crisis global economy. (The BRICS report - Ministry of Finance, 2010)

Brazil, Russia, India and China, known as the BRIC group, are collectively expected to overtake the major economic powers over the next few decades. Their growth is expected to shape a new economic order, replacing the one currently dominated by advanced economies. (Goldman Sachs, 2001). The BRIC group collectively accounted for approximately 11 percent of World Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1990 and this increased to about 25 percent in 2011 (Bloomberg News 15th June 2012)

China in particular has been an outstanding emerging economy, recording economic growth of about 10 percent in the past 10 years (Bloomberg News 15 June 2012). China is known as the factory of the world, Brazil the garden of the world, Russia the gas station of the world and the back office of the world is India.

The BRIC countries are said to have a lot in common in terms of population, GDP and unemployment. South Africa recently joined this bloc, extending the name to BRICS. It joins the bloc as the jeweler of the world and as a gateway to Africa. Its inclusion has not been welcomed by most analysts. The formation of BRICS is an effort by its members to foster cooperation in order to meet global challenges, especially those faced by emerging economies. (Global Sherpa1, 2009).

The collaboration of these countries aims to meet the economic needs of this century which include investment in infrastructure development, consumption and increased trade. (South Africa's position in BRICS, Quarterly Bulletin – January to March 2013)

Brazil, Russia, India and China were originally coined to members of BRIC in 2001 by Jim O'Neil. He identified these countries as having fast growing economies and projected that they would be among the top six largest economies by 2050. These countries formally became a political-diplomatic entity in 2006 called BRIC. In, 2011 South Africa officially joined the group and the name was extended to BRICS. (South Africa's position in BRICS, Quarterly Bulletin – January to March 2013)

India continued to rank low in the Human Development Index (HDI), climbing just one notch to the 130th rank in the latest UNDP report on account of rise in life expectancy and per capita income. (PTI | New Delhi | Published: December 14, 2015)

India ranked 130 among 188 countries in Human Development Report 2015 released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The ranking is for the year 2014. As per the latest report, India's rank has moved from 131 to 130. India's HDI rank between 2009 and 2014 has raised six positions. (United Nations Development Programme 2015). “India's HDI value for 2014 is 0.609, which puts the country in the medium human development category, positioning

it at 130 out of 188 countries and territories. Norway topped followed by Australia and Switzerland. Among the BRICS nations, India was ranked lowest. Other countries in the group are Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa.

Gross National Income (GNI) per capita was USD 5,497 in 2014 up from USD 5,180 in 2013 and USD 1,255 in 1980. India's GNI per capita increased about 338 per cent between 1980 and 2014. However, the expected years of schooling is stagnant at 11.7 since 2011. Also, mean years of schooling at 5.4 has not changed since 2010. Between 1980 and 2014, India's life expectancy at birth increased by 14.1 years, while mean years of schooling increased by 3.5 years and expected years of schooling increased by 5.3 years. (Financial express)

Gender Development Index (GDI) value of India is 0.795 in 2014. The female HDI value for India is 0.525 in contrast with 0.660 for males. In Gender Inequality Index (GII) India rank at 130th position with value of 0.563 out of 155 countries in the 2014. India's HDI value increased from 0.362 to 0.609 between 1980 and 2014. It indicates an increase of 68.1 per cent or an average annual increase of about 1.54 per cent.

According to UNDP approach, the HDI is expressed as a figure ranging from 0 to 1. Categories are assigned to each country accordingly: "Low Human Development" (0 - 0.55), "Medium Human Development" (0.55 - 0.7), "High Human Development" (0.7 - 0.8), and "Very High Human Development" (0.8 - 1). The first Human Development Report was published in 1990. (www.dw.com/en/the-human-development-index-by-undp/a-18249812 Feb 11, 2015)

Countries are designated with 1 to 188 ranks because 188 Countries are participated in HDI calculation for 2014 which is released by UNDP in 2015. If the Country is nearer to 188, that rank is considered worst and if it is nearer to 1 that is considered as the best in terms of human development.

When compared to the neighboring Countries HDI; Sri Lanka is in first position and China is in second position followed by India in third position. Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Myanmar and Afghanistan are in fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth place respectively. Here the HDI rank of India is lower than Russia and China. (Table-1)

Concerning to the BRICS Nations; Russia, Brazil, China, South Africa, India are in first, second, third, fourth and fifth positions. It is worth to note that Indian rank is the lowest among the BRICS Nations. (Table-1)

Table-1: Comparison Indian of HDI with Neighboring Countries and BRICS Countries
(The ranks and values are adopted from Human Development Report on HDI, UNDP; December 14, 2015).

Neighboring Countries with India			
Country	HDI Rank	HDI Value	Human Development Range
Sri Lanka	73	0.757	High Human Development
China	90	0.727	High Human Development
India	130	0.609	Medium Human Development
Bhutan	132	0.605	Medium Human Development
Bangladesh	142	0.570	Medium Human Development
Nepal	145	0.548	Low Human Development
Pakistan	147	0.538	Low Human Development
Myanmar	148	0.536	Low Human Development
Afghanistan	171	0.465	Low Human Development
BRICS Countries			
Russia	50	0.798	High Human Development Range
Brazil	75	0.755	High Human Development Range
China	90	0.727	High Human Development Range
South Africa	116	0.666	Medium Human Development
India	130	0.609	Medium Human Development

Conclusion:

HDI is one of the best tools to keep track of the level of development of a country, as it combines all major social and economic indicators that are responsible for economic development.

At 130, India ranks lowest in HDI among BRICS nations and lowers than Sri Lanka & China.

As India is a developing economy, it is showing the good results year by year in the HDI value among the world. It is tough to get the best result in a year or period of a particular time as that development depends on various aspects. Especially health, literacy and the expectancy of life etc., are long term resulted features of a developing country may take a decade of time.

With 0.609 HDI value and 130th rank among 188 Countries, India is placed in medium human development category. To place it in high human development, lot to do.

Expected school of years is almost stagnant since 2011. Also, mean years of schooling has not changed since 2010. Focus should be shifted to poor performed areas of the Country in terms of education. Because of more population, GDP/GNP will not grow fast. Efforts should be made to stabilize the population to decrease the pressure on resources of the Country. Budget allocation should be increased to increase the life expectancy.

The analysis regarding the factors of the HDI can be possible through the social and the political factors and the decisions taken by them. Non-Governmental Organizations also should play key role to develop the Quality and Standard of Life of the Human Resources among the country.

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