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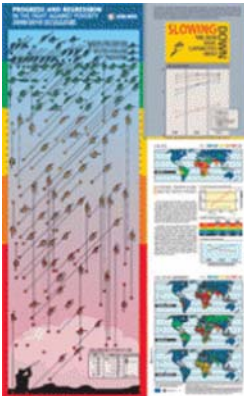
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India's growth fails to tackle poverty: Social Watch

International community's efforts have not translated into a more rapid improvement of people's lives, the report said

TRITHESH NANDAN | FEBRUARY 15 2011

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The immediate challenge in front of India may have to do more with the distribution of the benefits of growth rather than driving growth itself, international NGO Social Watch contends.

The civil society organisation has tabbed India orange in its report 'Slowing Down', a colour code for very low progress in sectors of development.

In maternal health, India is tabbed red, 'critical' according to the index adopted in the report. Here, India has been placed with many sub- Saharan African nations.

In education, the country has been tabbed orange. Only in the case of infant mortality does India show a healthy trend. It has been tabbed green denoting it has had medium progress in controlling the infant mortality rate (IMR).

"The situation of India is alarming. More than a decade of signing millennium development goals (MDGs), the country's social indicators are slowing down," Himanshu Jha, national coordinator of the Social Watch India told Governance Now.

He added, "Unless there is systematic plan to invest in people and plans, the social progress will not happen even if India achieves GDP growth of nine percent."

The report held that speed of the poverty reduction can not be determined by the economic growth alone. "Per capita income growth accelerated from 17 percent in 1990-2000 to 19 percent

between 2000 and 2009, but the Basic Capabilities Index (BCI) slowed from 4 percent to 3 percent in the first decade of this century," the report said.

"The index indicates that progress is decelerating instead of accelerating, and the international community's efforts have not translated into a more rapid improvement of people's lives," the report mentioned.

According to the report, "Social progress does not automatically follow economic growth and better indicators are needed to more accurately monitor the evolution of non-monetary poverty in the world."

The BCI, designed by Social Watch to monitor poverty alternatively is based on three factors – maternal health, education, and infant mortality. These indicators are used to measure progress on calculating MDGs.

Five colour codes were used to indicate the social progress of different countries around the world.

Blue – acceptable
Green – medium
Yellow – low
Orange – very low
Red – critical

Read the report

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