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India's Progress Towards Gender Equity

K S James



Senior Visiting Scholar
Newcomb Institute
Tulane University, USA



Context

- ❑ With 18 % of world population, India's SDG achievements are critical for the global community
- ❑ Niti Aayog, Govt of India in its SDG report published in 2021 states that significant progress has already been made across the country in achieving SDG in recent years (*SDG India: Index & Dashboard 2020-21, Niti Aayog*)
- ❑ At the same time, a study published in *Lancet* in 2023 found that India is not on target in three out of three SDG-5 indicators and 19 out of 33 overall SDG indicators considered for the study (*SV Subramanian et al, Progress.. Lancet, Feb 2023*)

Context

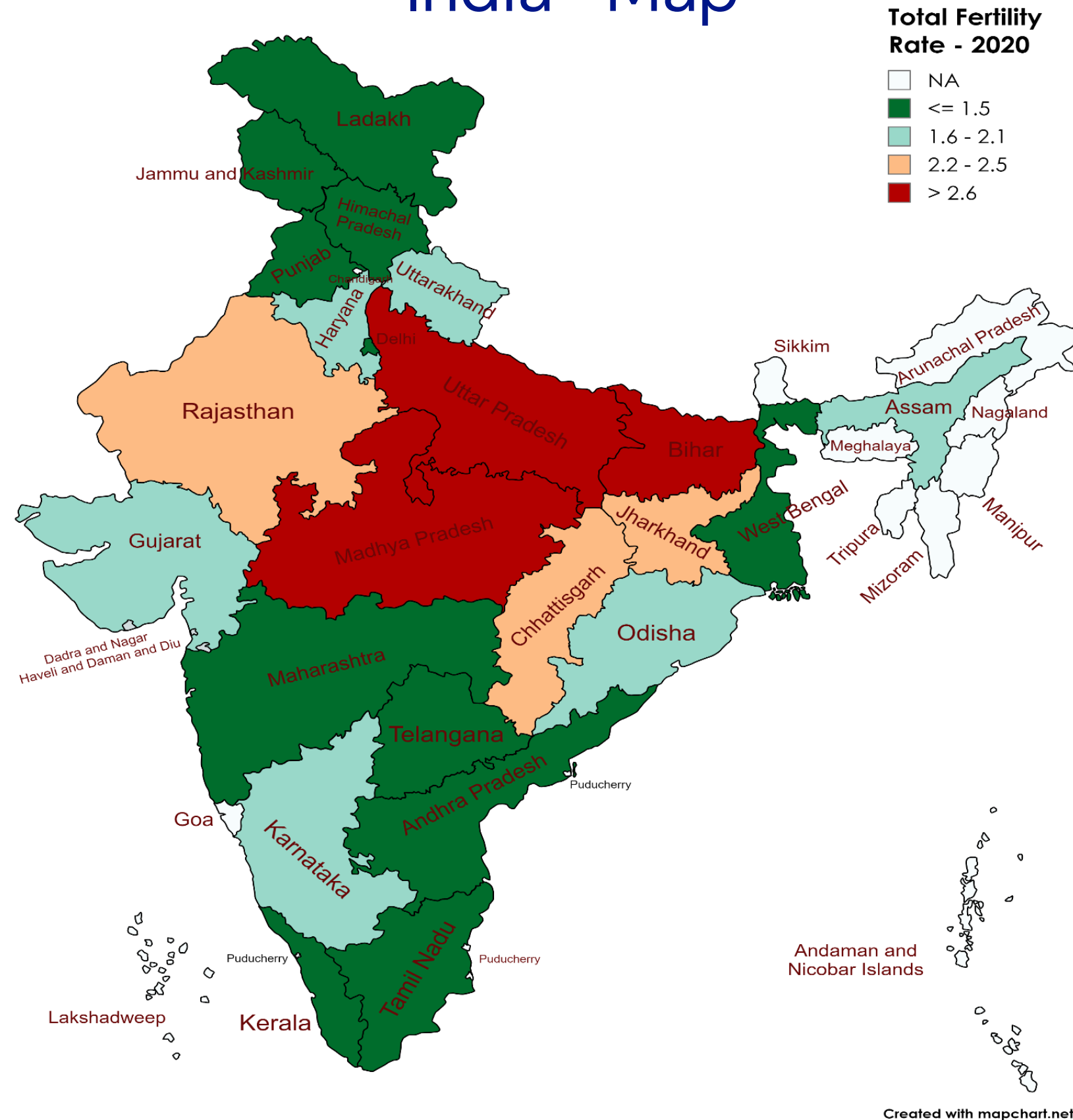
- ❑ UN India SDG report identifies major concerns on SDG-5 in India:
 1. *Access to reproductive health and prevention (SDG 5.6)*
 2. *Child marriage (SDG 5.3)*
 3. *Gender-based violence (SDG 5.2)*
 4. *Economic access (SDG 5.a/b)*
 5. *Child protection (SDG 16.2, but it has relevance in SDG 5 for female children)*

- ❑ Not only is achieving the targets important but ensuring that 'leave no one behind' (equity) is also equally vital

- ❑ India has undergone significant demographic and economic changes in recent times, and it is expected that the major concerns of gender equality will be resolved with these rapid changes

- ❑ This presentation examines the progress made by the country on the four concerns identified by UN India with a focus on "leave no one behind"

India -Map



- ❑ India's Fertility Rate has reached replacement level by 2020
- ❑ At the same time, there is significant demographic heterogeneity across states
- ❑ Many states have very low fertility of less than or equal to 1.5 births per woman while there are states with fertility over 2.5 birth per woman
- ❑ All India figures, therefore, may not capture the enormous heterogeneity existing in the country
- ❑ This presentation, however, provides only all India picture

Access to Reproductive Health (SDG 5.6) & Child Marriage (SDG 5.3)

Indicators (1)	2015-16 (2)	2019-21 (3)	% Annual Change (4)	Projection 2030* (5)
Unmet need for Family Planning	12.9	9.4	-6.0	3.7
Women aged 15-19 having children/pregnant (%)	7.9	6.8	-3.1	4.7
Women aged 20-24 married before 18 years (%)	26.8	23.3	-2.9	16.5

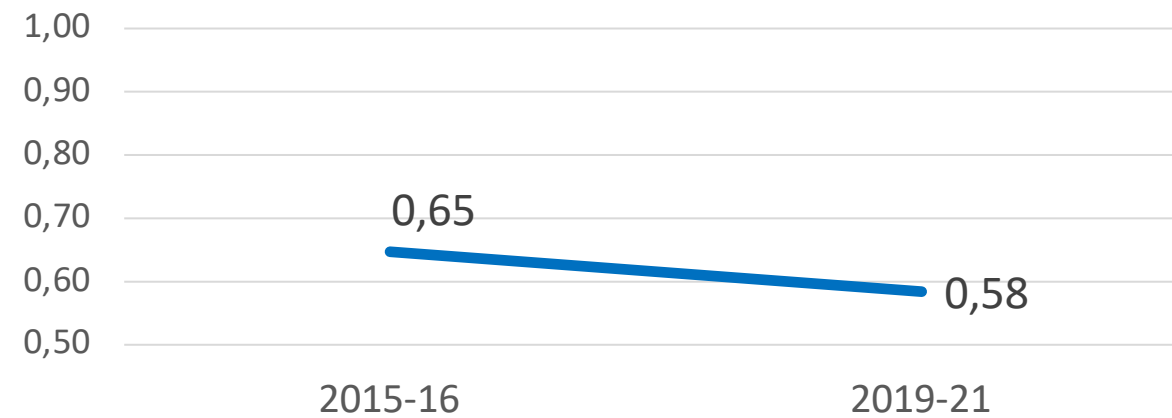
- ❑ These indicators suggest a positive trend in the desirable direction
- ❑ Although SDG 5.3 and 5.6 may not be reached by 2030, faster change in the coming years can make a big difference
- ❑ Faster demographic change can accelerate trend towards the desired reproductive health indicators

Source: Computed using National Family Health Survey -4th & 5th Rounds, India

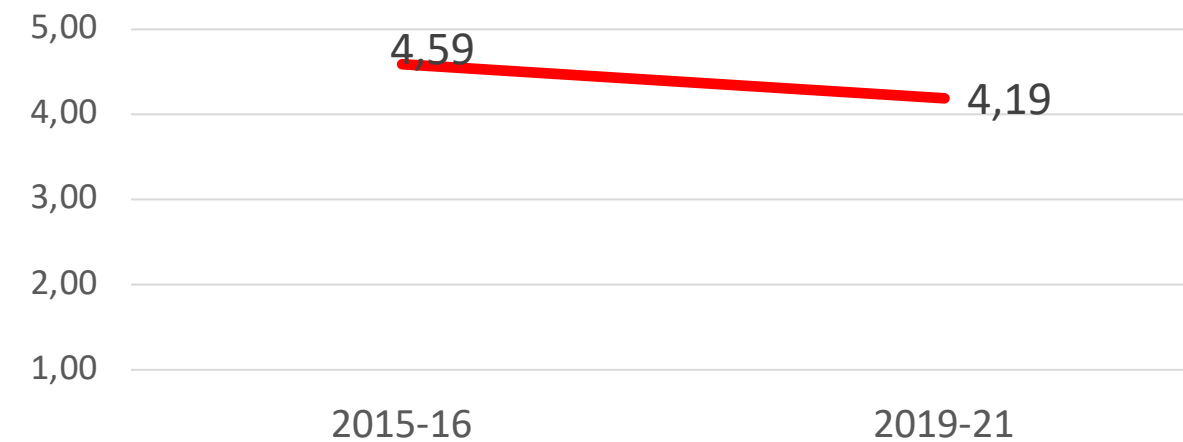
Note: * Assuming the same annual rate of change as in Col (4)

Leaving no one behind (No Education to 12+ years of Education Ratio)

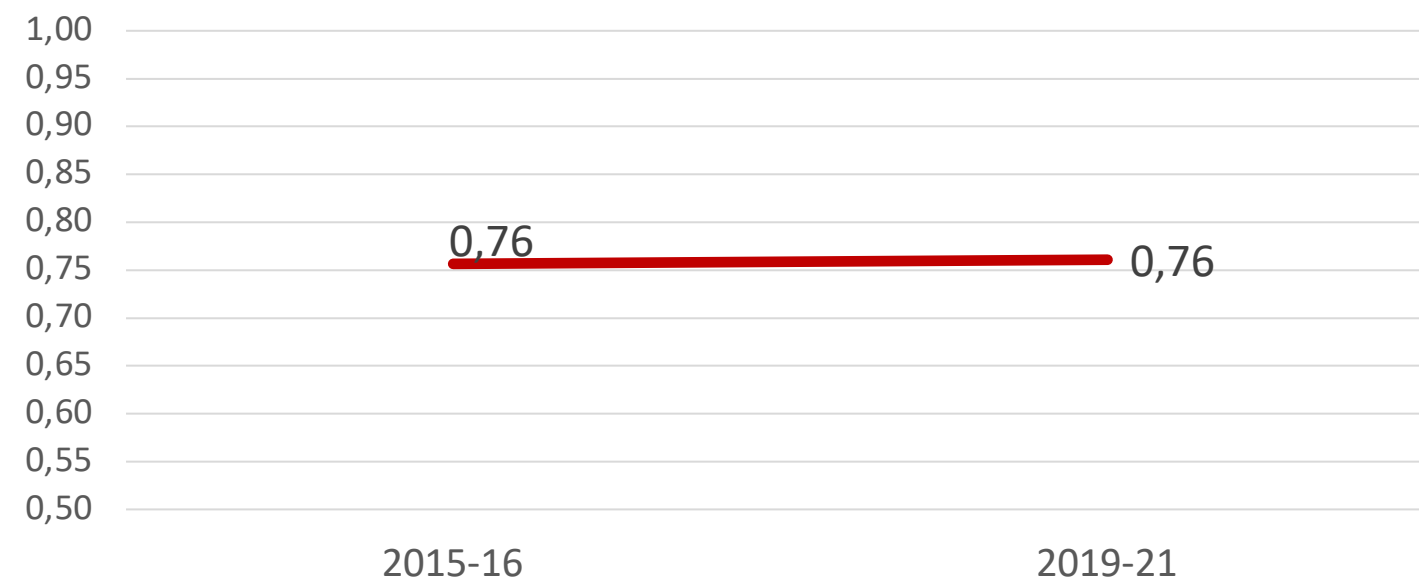
Ratio of No Edu - 12+ years of education
for unmet need for family planning



Ratio of No Edu - 12+ years of education for
women age 15-19 years having children/pregnant



Ratio of No Edu - 12+ years of education for median age at
marriage of women aged 25-29 years



There is a convergence in indicators across educational groups (Declining Ratio) except for median age at marriage

More of a positive sign in all these indicators relating to access to reproductive health

Source: Computed using National Family Health Survey -4th & 5th Rounds, India

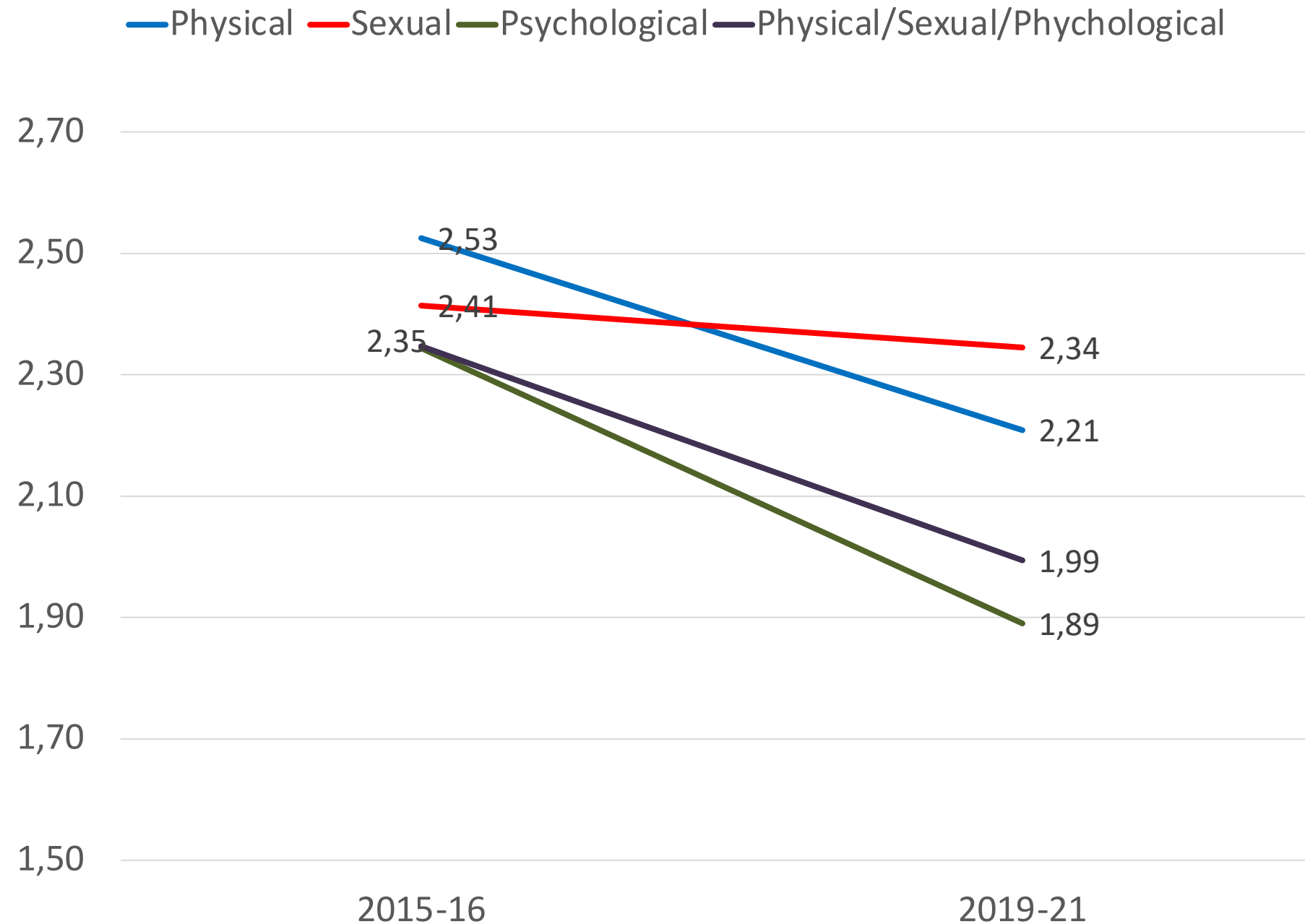
Gender-Based Violence: Violence by Husband in the past 12 months (SDG 5.2)

Indicators (1)	2015-16 (2)	2019-21 (3)	% Annual Change (4)	Projection 2030* (5)
Physical	22.6	23.0	0.4	23.9
Sexual	5.2	5.2	0.0	5.2
Psychological	11.4	12.2	1.6	14.1
Physical/Sexual/ Psychological	26.4	26.8	0.3	27.7

Source: Computed using National Family Health Survey -4th & 5th Rounds, India
 Note: * Assuming the same annual rate of change as in Col (4)

- ❑ There is hardly any change in SDG 5.2 indicators in the first five years of the SDGs
- ❑ The ongoing demographic changes and economic progress have not made any difference in gender-based violence in India
- ❑ There is a case for immediate attention to bring down violence by going beyond policy – by better designed Programmes

No One Left Behind in Violence (Ratio of No Education to 12+ years of Education)

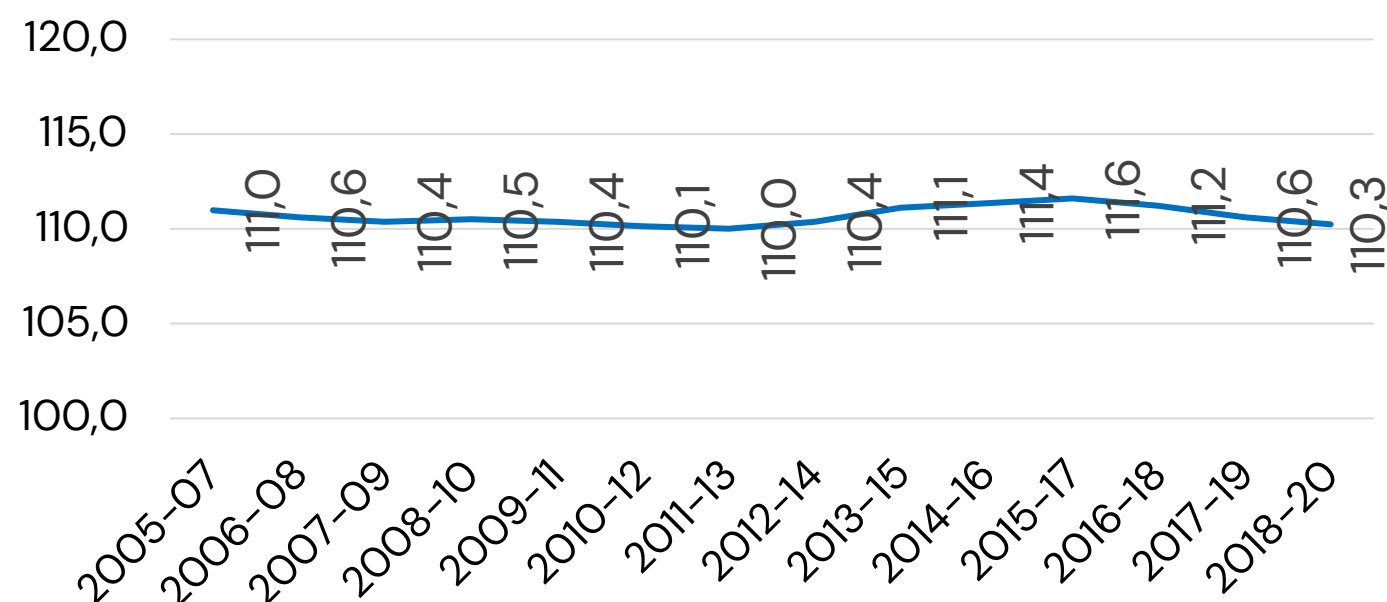


Source: Computed using National Family Health Survey -4th & 5th Rounds, India

Indicators	2015-16		2019-21	
	No Edu	12+ Edu	No Edu	12+ Edu
Physical	30.3	12.0	30.7	13.9
Sexual	7.0	2.9	6.8	2.9
Psychological	15.0	6.4	15.5	8.2
Any of the above	34.5	14.7	34.5	17.3

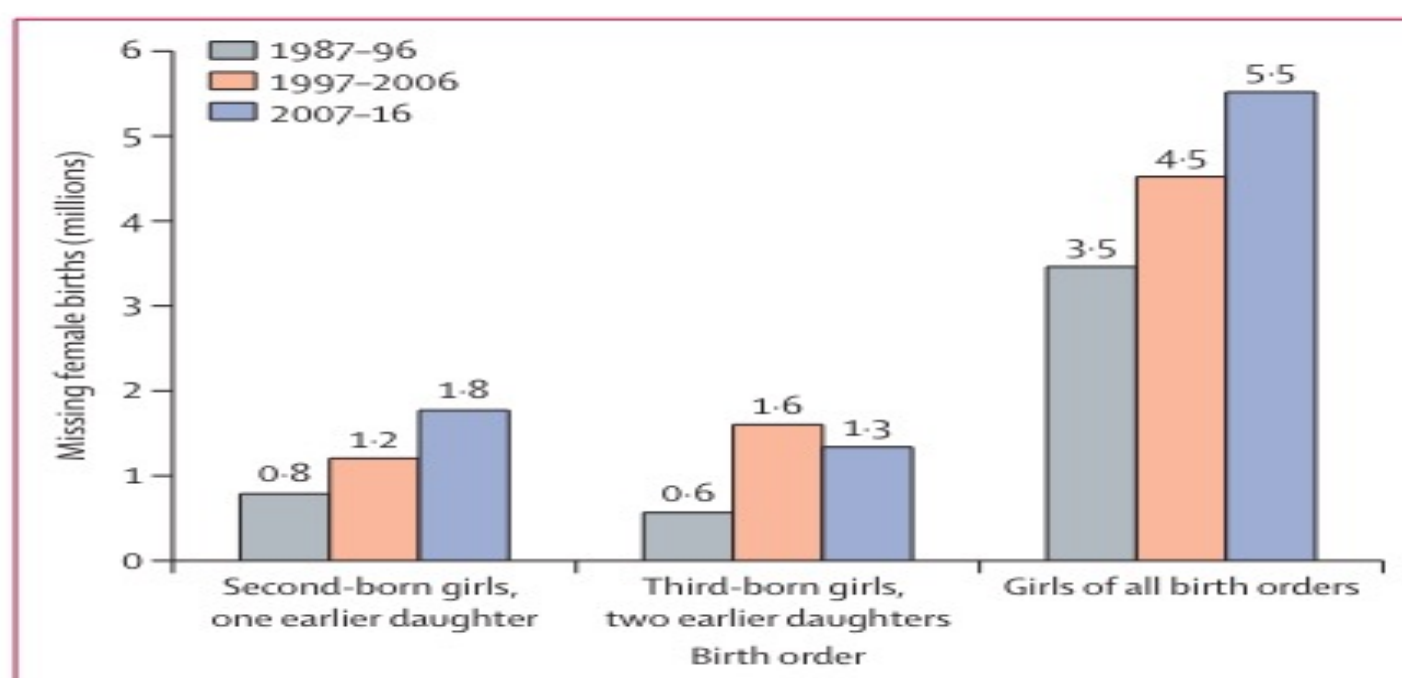
- ❑ The convergence (decline in the ratio) was due to the higher incidence of violence among 12+ edu group in 2019-21 compared to 2015-16
- ❑ It further confirms that gender-based violence is worsening despite the progress in education of women

Child Protection: Sex Ratio at Birth (M/F) & Missing Female Children (SDG 16.2)



Source: Sample Registration System, India Various Years

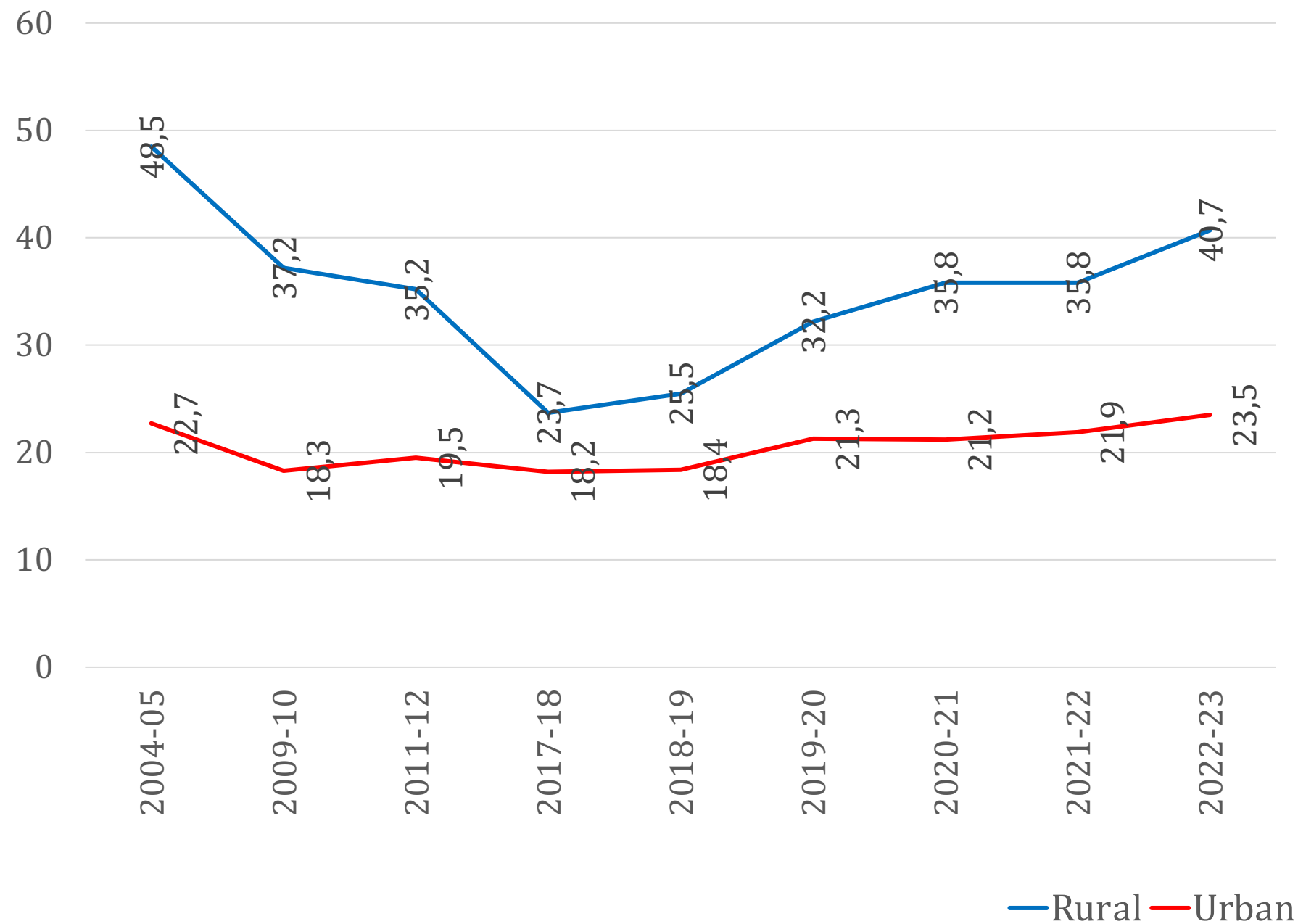
- ❑ Sex ratio at birth continues to be unfavouring for females with no major shifts over the last 15 years
- ❑ The estimated missing female births on account of the skewed sex ratio was to the tune of 5.5 million between 2007-16 as against 4.5 and 3.5 million in the previous decades of 1997-2006 and 1987-96 respectively
- ❑ It is important that the success of a few innovative programmes implemented in some parts of the country are further extended in addition to other possible measures to curb this menace



Source: Saikia et al (2021) Trends..., Lancet Global Health, April 8.

Figure 1: Trends in the absolute number of missing female births in India, 1987-96, 1997-2006, and 2007-16

Resources: Work Participation of Women (SDG 5.a)



Source: NSSO, India Employment Rounds and PLFS, India Various Rounds

- The work participation of females has been generally low in South Asia including India
- Female work participation has shown a declining trend in the past and it was considered as women withdrawing from agriculture with better education
- However, the recent increase, unexpectedly, is majorly in rural areas – not in conformity with the educational improvement
- It appears that poverty and the pandemic pushed women back into labour market

Resources: Access to house, land, and mobile phone (SDG 5.a/b)

Indicators	2015-16	2019-21	Annual Change (%)
Own house alone/jointly	37.1	42.3	3.1
Own land alone/jointly	28.3	31.7	2.7
Mobile Phone for Self use	45.9	53.9	3.9

Source: Computed using National Family Health Survey -4th & 5th Rounds, India

- ❑ The performance of SDG 5.a/b indicators appears to be in the desirable direction
- ❑ Even though resources in terms of work participation remain low, land and house ownership is progressing well
- ❑ Interestingly, however, access to land and house was highest among the no educated women and lowest among 12+ years of education (edu without work may not help in having access to resources)

Final Remarks

- ❑ Strong monitoring is important for advancing Gender Equality (SDG 5) and there is a need for a continuous flow of quality data
- ❑ There are no data to understand the progress of SDGs during the last few years now
- ❑ To accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda, a better system of monitoring is critical and must be put in place
- ❑ In addition, to ‘leave no one behind’ requires a detailed equity analysis which relies on disaggregated data for a country of India’s size

Targets	Data Source	Periodicity
SDG 5.1 - Legal	Ministry	-
SDG 5.2 - Gender Violence	Crime stat, NCRB	Yearly (but not reliable)
SDG 5.3 - Early Marriage	NFHS	4-5 years
SDG 5.4 - Domestic Work	NSSO	2019
SDG 5.5 -Women in Politics & Admin	Ministry	Data on political rep is available
SDG 5.6 - Decision Making	NFHS	4-5 years
SDG 5 a, b & c	NFHS	4-5 years

Conclusion

- ❑ India's demographic advancement (replacement fertility and increasing life expectancy) and economic progress (third largest economy in the world by 2027) are by now well-known
- ❑ However, there is a lot to be desired in achieving SDG-5 targets – Gender Equality and Empowerment of all Women and Girls
- ❑ There is a positive change in many reproductive and child health indicators during the first five years of SDGs
- ❑ But in matters relating to gender-based violence, resources, and female child protection, India's progress is far from satisfactory
- ❑ Not only is the progress very slow, but the convergence is also lacking over the period across different socio-economic groups
- ❑ There is an urgent need for regular and continued flow of reliable data to monitor the progress as we enter the final five years of SDGs



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