India's SDG 3 Progress

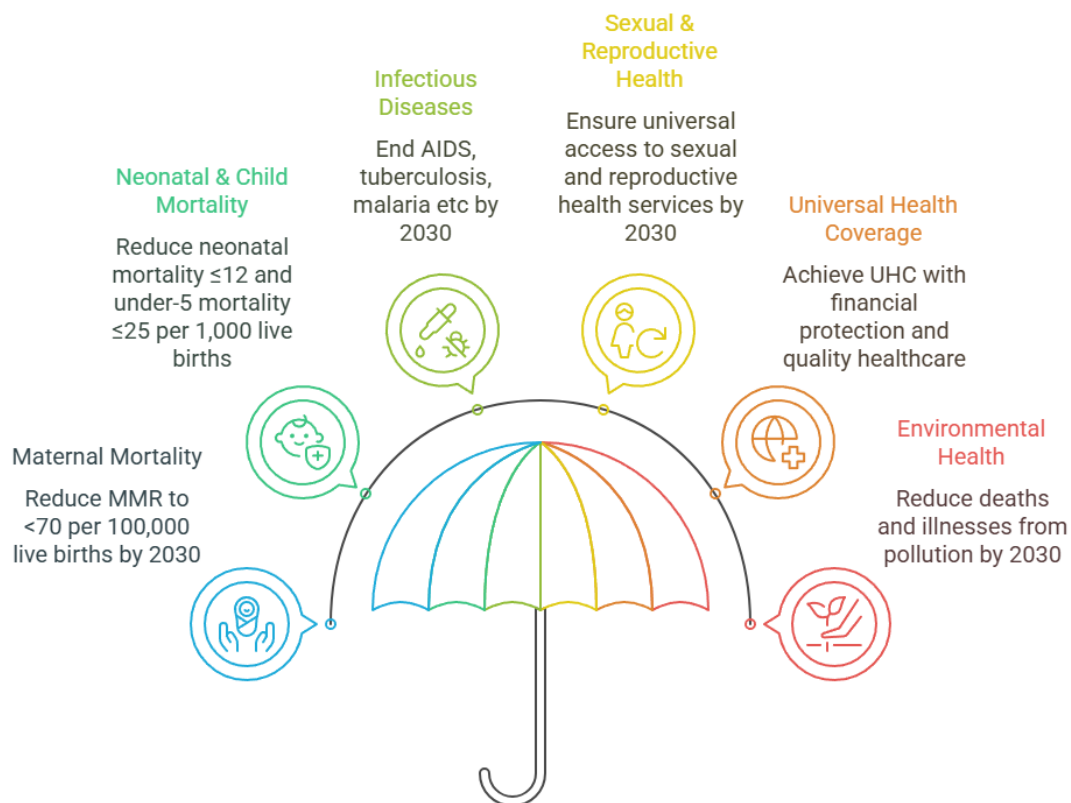## Why in News?

India has achieved its best-ever position in the **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Index 2025**, ranking **99th** out of 167 countries, up from **109** in 2024. The rise reflects progress in **infrastructure** and **basic services**.

- However, challenges remain in achieving **SDG 3**-Good Health and Well-being, with persistent **health disparities**, especially in **rural** and **tribal areas**.

SDG 3 Targets Overview

Neonatal & Child Mortality — Reduce neonatal mortality ≤12 and under-5 mortality ≤25 per 1,000 live births

Infectious Diseases — End AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria etc by 2030

Sexual & Reproductive Health — Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health services by 2030

Universal Health Coverage — Achieve UHC with financial protection and quality healthcare

Maternal Mortality — Reduce MMR to <70 per 100,000 live births by 2030

Environmental Health — Reduce deaths and illnesses from pollution by 2030

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What is the Status of India's Progress on SDG 3?

- **Maternal Health:** The **maternal mortality ratio** (MMR) stands at **97 deaths per 100,000**

live births, far from the target of **70**.

- **Child Mortality:** The **under-five mortality rate** is **32 deaths per 1,000 live births**, against a target of **25**.
- **Life Expectancy:** The **average life expectancy** is currently **70 years**, falling short of the **73.63-year target**.
- **Financial Burden: Out-of-pocket healthcare expenditure** remains a **heavy burden** at **13% of total consumption**, nearly double the target of **7.83%**.
- **Immunisation:** While high at **93.23%**, **immunisation** coverage has not yet achieved the **universal target of 100%**.

What are the Reasons for Gaps in Achieving SDG 3 Targets?

- **Access Issues: Poor health infrastructure**, especially in **rural areas**, and **economic barriers** prevent many from accessing **quality healthcare**.
- **Non-Economic Factors:** Challenges such as **poor nutrition**, **inadequate sanitation**, and **unhealthy lifestyle choices** contribute significantly to the **disease burden**.
- **Socio-Cultural Barriers:** Cultural practices and **stigma**, particularly around **mental** and **reproductive health**, often deter **communities** from seeking available **medical services**.
- **Double Burden of Disease:** India continues to battle **communicable diseases** such as **Malaria**, **Dengue**, and **Leprosy**, while the rise of **non-communicable diseases (NCDs)**—including **diabetes**, **cardiovascular diseases**, places additional strain on the **health system**.
- **Covid-19 Pandemic Disruption:** It diverted **resources** from **immunization**, **maternal care**, and **disease control**, leading to delayed **diagnoses**, interrupted **treatment**, fewer **institutional deliveries**, and setbacks in **vaccine coverage**.

What Measures Should India Adopt to Enhance SDG 3 Progress?

- **Universal Health Insurance:** Implement **universal health insurance** to **cut out-of-pocket costs** and **enhance equitable healthcare access.**
- **Strengthening PHCs & Digital Health:** Strengthen Primary Health Centres (PHCs) **for early disease detection and use** telemedicine **and digital records to expand access in remote areas.**
- **School Health Education:** Introduce a **structured health education curriculum** in schools covering **nutrition, hygiene, reproductive health, road safety, and mental well-being**.
    - E.g., **Finland reduced cardiovascular deaths**, and **Japan improved hygiene and longevity** through school health education.
- **Cross-Sectoral Convergence:** Strengthen coordination among **Ministry of Health**, **Women and Child Development**, **Jal Shakti**, and **Environment** for integrated **nutrition**, **water and sanitation**, **environmental health**, and **healthcare**.
    - Empower **Panchayati Raj Institutions** and **Urban Local Bodies** to manage **health initiatives** and conduct **social audits** for accountability.
- **Accelerating the implementation of Schemes:** Accelerate the implementation of schemes like **Ayushman Bharat (Rs 5 lakh health cover per family)**; **Poshan Abhiyaan (reduce stunting, under-nutrition)**, **Mission Indradhanush (child immunization)**, and **LaQshya (improve labour room and maternity care quality)**.

1 NO POVERTY →	2 ZERO HUNGER →	3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING ↗	4 QUALITY EDUCATION →	5 GENDER EQUALITY ↗	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION →
7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY ↗	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH →	9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE ↗	10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES ●	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES →	12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION →
13 CLIMATE ACTION →	14 LIFE BELOW WATER →	15 LIFE ON LAND →	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS →	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS →	

🟥 Major challenges 🟧 Significant challenges 🟨 Challenges remain 🟩 SDG achieved ⬤ Data not available

↓ Decreasing → Stagnating ↗ Moderately improving ↑ On track or maintaining SDG achievement

Drishti Mains Question:

Q. Examine India's progress under SDG 3 ("Good Health and Well-being") and discuss the key challenges in achieving maternal and child health targets by 2030

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Sustainable development is described as the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In this perspective, inherently the concept of sustainable development is intertwined with which of the following concepts? (2010)

(a) Social justice and empowerment

(b) Inclusive Growth

(c) Globalization

(d) Carrying capacity

Ans: (d)

Mains

Q. Access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy is the sine qua non to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)." Comment on the progress made in India in this regard. (2018)