

Human Development in the Age of AI

Posted at: 10/05/2025

“A Matter of Choice: People and Possibilities in the Age of AI”

(Highlights from the 2025 Human Development Report)

Introduction

The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** released its **2025 Human Development Report** titled:

“A Matter of Choice: People and Possibilities in the Age of AI”

This report explores how **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and emerging technologies are shaping the **future of human development**. It emphasizes that in a world increasingly influenced by digital transformation, especially AI, **human choices, empowerment, and equity** are more critical than ever.

India's Performance in Human Development (2025 Report)

HDI Rank and Category

- **India ranks 130th out of 193 countries** in the Human Development Index (HDI), improving by **3 positions** from the previous report.
- India continues to fall under the "**Medium Human Development**" category.
- **HDI value** for India: **0.685**

What is HDI?

The **Human Development Index** is a **composite measure** used by the UNDP to evaluate the progress of countries based on:

1. **A long and healthy life** (measured by life expectancy at birth)
 2. **Knowledge** (measured by mean years of schooling and expected years of schooling)
 3. **A decent standard of living** (measured by Gross National Income [GNI] per capita)
-

India's Key Achievements

1. Life Expectancy

- **India's life expectancy reached 72 years in 2023**, the **highest ever recorded** since the HDI was first introduced.

2. Education

- **Mean years of schooling** in India is now **13 years**, a significant increase from **8.2 years in 1990**.
 - Reflects broader access to education and improved literacy outcomes.
-

Challenges Despite Progress

1. Gross National Income (GNI) Per Capita

- India's **GNI per capita ranking** is **seven places lower** than its HDI ranking.
- Indicates that **economic well-being** is not keeping pace with other development indicators.

2. Gender Inequality

- India ranks **102nd on the Gender Inequality Index (GII)**.
- Major concerns include:

- **Reproductive health access and outcomes**
 - **Low political participation of women**
 - **Gender gap in workforce participation**
-

Global Human Development Trends

Slowing Progress

- For the first time since 1990, **global human development progress has slowed** to its weakest pace.
- The slowdown is attributed to:
 - **Pandemic aftershocks**
 - **Conflicts**
 - **Climate change**
 - **Economic uncertainty**
 - **Digital divides**

Widening Inequality

- The gap between countries with **very high HDI** and those with **low HDI** has **widened**.
 - Disparities in **healthcare, education, digital access, and economic opportunity** have grown, particularly affecting the Global South.
-

AI and Human Development - Key Themes from the Report

- **AI is a powerful tool**, but its impact on development depends on how societies choose to use it.
 - The report advocates for:
 - **Ethical and inclusive AI development**
 - **Policies that protect vulnerable communities**
 - **Bridging the digital divide**, especially in education and health
 - The message is clear: **technology must enhance human freedoms, not restrict them.**
-

Conclusion

India's steady improvement in **life expectancy and education** highlights positive development strides, but **gender inequality and income disparities** remain significant barriers. Globally, as AI transforms economies and societies, **inclusive policies, ethical use of technology, and social justice** are vital to ensuring human development keeps pace with innovation.

