

# Health Scenario 2015: Present Day Perspective

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During 1978 at Alma Ata all member countries of WHO pledged Health for All by the year 2000 through Primary Health Care Approach. At the Millennium Summit in September 2000, 189 United Nations member states at the time and at least 23 international organizations, had agreed to improve the situation and address many other issues directly or indirectly related to health and to try to achieve the targets set by the year 2015 [1].

All the UN member countries agreed to work on agenda to improve the present status on issues related to children, nutrition, human rights and women and Millennium Declaration was signed in September 2000 [2].

Human capital, infrastructure and human rights ,uplifting of living standards, Nutrition, healthcare like child mortality, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis ,malaria reproductive health ,education, access to safe drinking water, safe environment [1], were some of the broad categories in which the world leaders were committed for a global partnership.

These targets within a timeframe set by the UN partner countries, with a deadline of 2015 become known as the Millennium Development Goals.

All UN member countries and many international organizations made commitment to help achieve these Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Subsequently the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) came in to help with resources.

The **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** are eight goals with 21 targets [3], and numbers of health indicators and economic indicators for each target [4,5].

Each MDG has targets and indicators to monitor progress from 1990 levels. Those broad eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are

**Goal 1:** To Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

*Targets [6]*

*1A:* Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day

*1B:* Achieve Decent Employment for Women, Men, and Young People

*1C:* Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

**Goal 2:** To Achieve universal primary education

*Target [7]*

By 2015, all children can complete a full course of primary schooling, girls and boys

**Goal 3:** To Promote gender equality and empower women

*Target [8]*

Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015

**Goal 4:** To Reduce child mortality rates

*Target [9]*

Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate

**Goal 5:** To Improve maternal health

*Targets [10]*

*5A:* Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio

*5B:* Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health

**Goal 6:** To Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases

*Targets [11]*

*6A:* Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS

*6B:* Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it

*6C:* Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

**Goal 7:** To Ensure environmental sustainability

*Targets [1]*

*7A:* Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs; reverse loss of environmental resources

*7B:* Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss

*7C:* Halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation

*7D:* By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers

**Goal 8:** To Develop a global partnership for development

*Targets [1]*

*8A:* Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system

*8B:* Address the Special Needs of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs)

*8C:* Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States

*8D:* Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term.

8E: In co-operation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable, essential drugs in developing countries

8F: In co-operation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

Some countries did make impressive progress in achieving health-related targets, while many others are lagging behind for various reasons.

A UN conference in September 2010 reviewed progress and adopted a global plan to achieve the eight goals within stipulated time frame. Women's and children's health, and initiatives to alleviate the worldwide poverty, hunger and disease were stressed.

During 2013, progress towards the goals was unequal. Some countries achieved goals, while many others were not able to achieve any. Brazil achieved many of the goals [12], while others, such as Benin, could not reach any target [13]. The major successful countries include China (whose poverty population declined from 452 million to 278 million) and India [14]. The World Bank estimated that MDG 1A (halving the proportion of people living on less than \$1 a day) was achieved in 2008 mainly due to the results from these two countries and East Asia [15].

In the early 1990s Nepal was one of the poorest countries in the world. Still Nepal spent more for the health sector which resulted in maternal mortality reduction between 1998 and 2006 by half. Significant improvement was also achieved in Bangladesh in infant and maternal mortality rate [16].

It would be worthwhile to know the present health scenario in various fields of medicine through intersectoral research, any improvement, innovation or ongoing new trials or experimentation.

We invited research articles in various fields of medicine to throw some light as to what was happening and where we were at the present juncture.

It was nice to compile and compare the research papers from various fields and countries to generate an idea as to how far we have achieved the MDG targets. We need to focus our attention to find out the best modalities to reach the desired level.

Original research articles were received mainly from Nepal & India and one input from African continent ranging from various aspects of maternal and Child Health, HIV transmission through breast feeding practices, Malaria, T.B., from mad rush world of road traffic accidents, geriatric care to propagating education to the future medical professionals.

In absence of articles from many countries it was not possible to compare but I hope that with the limitations readers will peep through the small window to find any ray of new light.

I am really indebted to the contributing Researchers, my co-guest editors Dr Brijesh & Mr. Suresh, especially to Mr. Steve Robert and Mr. Philip Smith of Science and Education Publishing, USA to bring out this special issue on "Health Scenario 2015; Millennium Development Goals" in time.

#### MDG Key Updates: [1]

- **Goal 1:** Globally, the number of people living in extreme poverty has declined by more than half, falling from 1.9 billion in 1990 to 836 million in 2015. Most progress has happened since 2000.

- **Goal 2:** The literacy rate among youth aged 15 to 24 has increased globally from 83% to 91%.
- **Goal 3:** More number of girls are now in school compared to 15 years ago.
- **Goal 4:** The global under-five mortality rate has declined by more than half, dropping from 90 to 43 deaths per 1,000 live births between 1990 and 2015.
- **Goal 5:** Since 1990, the maternal mortality ratio has declined by 45% worldwide, and most of the reduction has occurred since 2000.
- **Goal 6:** New HIV infections fell by approximately 40 per cent between 2000 and 2013, from an estimated 3.5 million cases to 2.1 million.

The global malaria incidence rate has fallen by an estimated 37% and the mortality rate by 58%.

Between 2000 and 2013, Tuberculosis prevention, diagnosis and treatment interventions saved an estimated 37 million lives. The tuberculosis mortality rate fell by 45% and the prevalence rate by 41% between 1990 and 2013.

- **Goal 7:** In 2015, 91% of the global population is using an improved drinking water source, compared to 76% in 1990.

Of the 2.6 billion people who have gained access to improved drinking water since 1990, 1.9 billion gained access to piped drinking water on premises. Over half of the global population (58%) now enjoys this higher level of service.

Globally, 147 countries have met the drinking water target, 95 countries have met the sanitation target and 77 countries have met both.

Worldwide, 2.1 billion people have gained access to improved sanitation. The proportion of people practicing open defecation has fallen almost by half since 1990.

- **Goal 8:** Official development assistance from developed countries increased by 66% in real terms between 2000 and 2014, reaching \$135.2 billion.

The UN is working with member countries and other partner organizations to maintain the momentum of achievements attained so far in MDG's goal and will continue with the agenda even after 2015.

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