

# Bengal Journal of Otolaryngology and Head Neck Surgery

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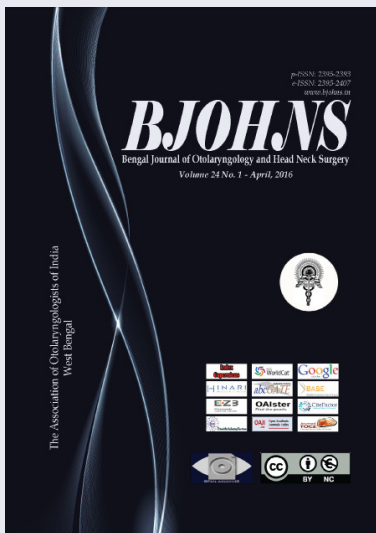
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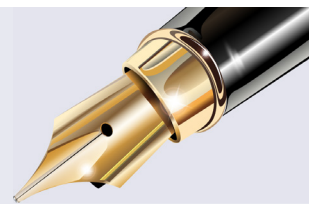
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## *From the Desk of the Editor*



The United Nations is aiming at a better future for the world and is working on ‘Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.’ The September 2015 United Nations General Assembly resolution urges the member nations to work comprehensively for the next fifteen years to achieve the specified 17 universal goals and 169 targets, collectively termed as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Achieving such difficult targets need determined and concerted efforts from all the agencies.

The past performance of the countries and their present status may be indicative of their potential trajectories for the next 15 years. Health forms the core of any effort towards sustainable development. The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, University of Washington has come out with its report (Lancet 2016; 388: 1813–50. Published Online September 21, 2016. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(16\)31467-2](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(16)31467-2)) on the performance of 188 countries related to their health-related SDG indicators during the last 25 years (1990-2015).

This report, unfortunately, has some bad news for India. While Iceland, Singapore and Sweden topped the list of performers, “India, despite its rapid economic growth, is ranked 143rd, just below Comoros and Ghana” among the 188 countries. The study highlighted the importance of income, education and fertility as drivers of health improvement, that need to be strengthened by policy reforms and financing in the healthcare sector and political resolve. Timor-Leste and Tajikistan, despite civil unrest and severely disrupted health services in late 1990s, could reorganize them and progress even faster than the USA (which has a much higher Socio-demographic Index – SDI) in their pursuit for universal health care. India, on the other hand, performed even worse than its South East Asian neighbours like Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Myanmar.

Though India has improved its health considerably by the adolescent birth rate, skilled birth attendance, sanitation, neglected tropical diseases, consumption of alcohol and smoking etc., it needs to tighten its belt in its fight against maternal mortality, neonatal mortality, tuberculosis, malaria, HIV, air pollution and diseases that can be controlled by better wash, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH) as well as access to improved drinking water.

The Government, while strengthening its health sector, should also address the full range of economic, environmental and social factors to ensure healthy lives for its citizens. Improvement in income/wealth distribution, education, gender equality, peace and security is of paramount importance for a healthier India to emerge during the next fourteen years.

Dr Saumendra Nath Bandyopadhyay  
Editor,  
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