

China, India played central role in global poverty reduction: UN

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United Nations: More than a billion people have been lifted out of extreme poverty since 1990 with China and India playing a central role in global poverty reduction, a major UN report has said.

The UN Millennium Development Goals galvanised the world to produce the most successful anti-poverty movement in history, helped lift more than one billion people out of extreme poverty, made inroads against hunger and enabled more girls to attend school than ever before.

However, despite remarkable gains, it will take more to ensure the poorest and most vulnerable people are not left behind, according to the final assessment report of the MDGs, which range from halving extreme poverty rates to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, all by the target date of 2015.

The MDG target of reducing by half the proportion of people living in extreme poverty was achieved five years ago, ahead of the 2015 deadline.

The latest estimates show that the proportion of people living on less than USD 1.25 a day globally fell from 36 per cent in 1990 to 15 per cent in 2011.

Projections indicate that the global extreme poverty rate has fallen further, to 12 per cent, as of 2015. The poverty rate in the developing regions has plummeted, from 47 per cent in 1990 to 14 per cent in 2015, a drop of more than two thirds.

By 2011, all developing regions except sub-Saharan Africa had met the target of halving the proportion of people who live in extreme poverty.

"The world's most populous countries, China and India, played a central role in the global reduction of poverty. As a result of progress in China, the extreme poverty rate in Eastern Asia has dropped from 61 per cent in 1990 to only 4 per cent in 2015," the report said.

"Southern Asia's progress is almost as impressive -- a decline from 52 per cent to 17 per cent for the same period -- and its rate of reduction has accelerated since 2008," it said.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, speaking at the launch of the report in Oslo yesterday, said, "The report confirms that the global efforts to achieve the goals have saved millions of lives and improved conditions for millions more around the world."

"These successes should be celebrated throughout our global community. At the same time, we are keenly aware of where we have come up short," he said.

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