# Human Development in the Age of AI

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## "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.

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### 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)

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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.

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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

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**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.

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**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**.

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**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.