

A Study of Human Development Achievements in Norway

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ABSTRACT

This study delves into the multifaceted impact of economic policies on human development in Norway. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a vital metric used to gauge the overall level of development in a country by combining indicators of life expectancy, education, and per capita income. Norway consistently ranks high on the HDI, reflecting its well-rounded development. This high ranking is primarily due to significant investments in education and health, coupled with a robust economic model that emphasizes equitable wealth distribution. The education component of the HDI, which considers the average years of schooling among the adult population and the expected years of schooling for children, shows Norway's strong commitment to education. Health, measured by life expectancy at birth, is another area where Norway excels, thanks to its comprehensive healthcare system. The income dimension, though slightly more variable, still supports a high quality of life in Norway. These indicators collectively highlight how deeply embedded development is in the Norwegian societal structure. By employing a rigorous research methodology, the study utilizes secondary data from reputable sources such as Statistics Norway to evaluate trends in life expectancy and educational attainment. The study compares Norway's and India's HDI trends.

1. INTRODUCTION

Norway's exceptional standing in the global Human Development Index (HDI) is not merely a reflection of its present-day prosperity, but rather a result of a long-standing, strategic commitment to enhancing the quality of life for all its citizens. The Scandinavian nation has consistently ranked among the top countries on the HDI map, an achievement that goes beyond economic growth to encompass a holistic approach to development. Norway's model stands out in its integration of sustainability, equality, and social inclusion into its national development agenda, making it a beacon of progress in health, education, and income distribution. Its success offers valuable lessons for other countries seeking to foster equitable and sustainable human development.

Central to Norway's HDI achievements are three key pillars: education, healthcare, and income equality. The country's educational system is one of the most inclusive and accessible in the world, contributing significantly to its high literacy rates and educational attainment. The government's substantial investment in universal healthcare ensures that every citizen has access to high-quality medical services, a factor that contributes to Norway's extraordinarily high life expectancy. Moreover, Norway's economic policies have prioritized fair income distribution, which has resulted in a notably low level of income inequality compared to other nations. These factors, however, are not isolated; rather, they form part of a broader policy framework that includes a strong commitment to environmental sustainability and social inclusivity, ensuring that development is both equitable and balanced across various sectors of society.

While Norway's high HDI ranking places it among the top countries globally, it is important to recognize that regional disparities do exist. Urban centers like Oslo, for example, tend to have higher HDI values, while some rural areas lag behind due to factors such as limited access to services, regional economic conditions, and demographic differences. However, Norway's government has proactively worked to address these disparities through regional development policies. Investments in infrastructure, education, and public services in less developed areas are key strategies aimed at reducing these imbalances and ensuring equitable development across all regions. This comprehensive, forward-thinking approach has helped mitigate significant disparities and foster more balanced human development throughout the country.

Beyond its economic and social achievements, Norway is a nation defined by its stunning natural beauty and diverse landscapes. From its iconic fjords to its rugged mountains and lush forests, the country offers a wealth of outdoor opportunities for nature enthusiasts and adventurers alike. Norway's pristine wilderness, home to diverse wildlife including reindeer, elk, and polar bears, attracts global attention as a hub for eco-tourism and outdoor recreation. The country's unique geography and commitment to environmental conservation have also made it a leader in sustainability, exemplifying how a nation can harmonize economic development with ecological stewardship.

Norway's cultural heritage is equally rich and diverse. The country is home to well-preserved medieval architecture, including traditional stave churches and Viking settlements, offering a deep connection to its historical roots. The vibrant cultural scene in cities like Oslo and Bergen, along with the indigenous Sami culture in the northern regions, reflects the nation's dedication to preserving its heritage while embracing modernity. Norway is a land of contrasts, where ancient traditions coexist with cutting-edge technology and innovation. Its emphasis on sustainability, social equality, and environmental conservation is a testament to the country's progressivism and commitment to future generations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This research paper compares the human development achievements of India and Norway, focusing on key indicators such as life expectancy, mean years of schooling (MYS), expected years of schooling (EYS), per capita income (PCY), income index, health index, and education index. Previous studies have highlighted the stark disparities between the two countries in these areas. Norway consistently ranks high in human development indices, with high life expectancy, MYS, and EYS, reflecting its well-developed healthcare system, education sector, and high standard of living. In contrast, India, despite notable improvements over recent decades, lags behind in most indicators due to challenges like poverty, limited access to quality education and healthcare, and income inequality. The comparison of these indicators reveals how income distribution, healthcare access, and educational opportunities shape the overall human development outcomes in both countries. Furthermore, while both countries show progress over time, the gap in HDI rankings underscores the structural differences that influence development trajectories. Understanding these disparities can offer insights into policy solutions tailored to improving human development in lower-income countries like India while maintaining the high standards in nations like Norway.

3. METHODOLOGY

The Human Development Index (HDI) is a commonly used tool to evaluate the overall quality of life of a population. It takes into account three critical aspects of human development: a long and healthy life,

access to knowledge, and a decent standard of living. The HDI uses various metrics such as life expectancy, expected years of schooling, average years of schooling, and gross national income per capita to create a single index that captures the overall performance of a nation in these areas. A long and healthy life, as measured by life expectancy at birth; Education as measured by expected years of schooling for children at school age and by the mean years of schooling that adults aged 25 and above have undertaken; A decent standard of living as measured by Gross National Income (GNI) per capita in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP) in US dollars.

Table 1: Human Development Index Parameters Ranges

Dimensions	Indicator	Minimum	Maximum
Health	Life expectancy (years)	20	85
Education	Expected years of schooling(years)	0	18
	Mean years of schooling(years)	0	15
Standard of living	Gross national income per capita (2017 PPP \$)	100	75000

Formulae for estimation of HDI:-

1. Health Index = $\frac{\text{Life expectancy at birth} - \text{min. Value}}{\text{Max value} - \text{min value}}$
2. Mean years of schooling (MYS) index = $\frac{\text{mean year of schooling} - \text{min. Value}}{\text{Max value} - \text{min value}}$
3. Expected years of schooling (EYS) index = $\frac{\text{expected year of schooling} - \text{min value}}{\text{Max value} - \text{min value}}$

On the basis of MYS AND EYS, we calculate education index:

4. Education index = $\frac{\text{MYS index} + \text{EYS index}}{2}$
5. Income Index = $\frac{\ln \text{PCY (PPP)} - \ln (\text{Min. PCY})}{\ln (\text{Max. PCY}) - \ln (\text{Min. PCY})}$
6. Human development index(HDI) = $[\{\text{Health Index}\} \cdot \{\text{Education Index}\} \cdot \{\text{Income Index}\}]^{1/3}$

5. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Trends in Basic Parameter of HDI in Norway and India

Table 2: Human Development Index Parameters Data in Norway

year	PCY (\$) based on PPP	Life Expectancy	MYS	EYS
1993	44857.39	77.221	11.402	15.175
1999	55612.51	78.387	11.852	17.098
2004	61216.45	79.965	12.227	17.559

2011	62216.96	81.243	12.606	17.523
2017	66942.35	82.624	12.947	18.06
2022	69189.76	83.393	13.062	18.638

- Norway’s PCY has consistently risen, reflecting its strong and stable economy, largely driven by the petroleum sector and prudent fiscal management. The country’s economic growth is robust, with PCY increasing by approximately 53% from 1993 to 2022. The country’s wealth, derived largely from its oil reserves, has allowed for substantial investments in public services and welfare.
- Norway’s life expectancy has steadily increased over the years, reaching **83.39 years in 2022**, one of the highest in the world. This reflects Norway’s strong healthcare system, characterized by universal access to high-quality services, public health initiatives, and a focus on preventative care.
- Norway's MYS has steadily increased, reaching **13.06 years in 2022**, reflecting a highly developed, inclusive education system. The country’s focus on high-quality, universal education and its strong tertiary education sector has contributed to this growth. Norway has a relatively small population, which facilitates easier access to educational resources across the country.
- Norway’s EYS has increased from **15.18 years in 1993** to **18.64 years in 2022**, reflecting the country’s comprehensive and high-quality educational system. Norwegian children have near-universal access to primary, secondary, and tertiary education, with a strong emphasis on lifelong learning and skill development.

Table 3: Human Development Index Parameters Data in India

year	PCY (\$) based on PPP	Life Expectancy	MYS	EYS
1993	1882.701	59.815	3.092	8.082
1999	2503.444	62.207	3.975	8.214
2004	3016.522	64.524	4.452	9.242
2011	4335.661	67.359	5.302	11.07
2017	6045.97	70.467	6.014	12.071
2022	6950.527	67.744	6.571	12.584

- India’s PCY has also seen significant growth, increasing by approximately **269%** from 1993 to 2022. However, India’s PCY remains substantially lower than that of Norway, reflecting a different economic structure, with agriculture and manufacturing still playing a more significant role in India’s economy compared to Norway’s oil-driven wealth. Despite rapid economic growth, India still faces challenges in translating income growth into widespread prosperity.
- India's life expectancy has also improved significantly, increasing from **59.82 years in 1993** to **67.74 years in 2022**. While this is a positive trend, it is still much lower than that of Norway, which is indicative of disparities in healthcare access, quality, and outcomes. The improvement in life expectancy in India can be attributed to better healthcare infrastructure, vaccination programs, and

improvements in sanitation and nutrition, though challenges remain in providing universal health coverage, especially in rural areas.

- India has seen significant improvements in MYS, growing from **3.09 years in 1993** to **6.57 years in 2022**. However, this increase is slower compared to that of Norway. India's education system has made great strides, particularly in terms of expanding access to primary education and reducing dropout rates. Yet, challenges such as quality of education, gender disparities, and regional imbalances persist, which slow the pace of improvement in educational outcomes.
- India's EYS has increased from **8.08 years in 1993** to **12.58 years in 2022**, reflecting improvements in school enrollment rates and educational access, particularly at the primary and secondary levels. However, challenges such as disparities in rural-urban educational access and the quality of education provided in government-run schools continue to pose barriers to further expansion in educational attainment.

Table 4: Trends of Human Development and its Associate Index in Norway

Year	Income Index	Health Index	Education Index	HDI
1993	0.922	0.895	0.801	0.867
1999	0.954	0.899	0.869	0.907
2004	0.969	0.922	0.895	0.929
2011	0.971	0.9422	0.840	0.94
2017	0.982	0.963	0.933	0.959
2022	0.987	0.975	0.952	0.966

Table 5: Trends of Human Development and its Associate Index in India

Year	Income Index	Health Index	Education Index	HDI
1993	0.443	0.612	0.327	0.446
1999	0.486	0.649	0.360	0.485
2004	0.514	0.684	0.404	0.523
2011	0.569	0.728	0.484	0.586
2017	0.619	0.776	0.535	0.636
2022	0.640	0.734	0.568	0.644

- India's **Income Index** has increased steadily, reflecting the country's **economic growth** post-liberalization. However, it remains much lower than Norway's (by 2022, Norway's **Income Index** reached **0.987**, one of the highest globally, indicating its superior standard of living), reaching **0.640**

in 2022, indicating that while India has made substantial progress, income levels are still significantly below those of high-income nations like Norway. This gap highlights the difference in economic development between a **developed country** (Norway) and a **developing country** (India), with India still working towards achieving higher income levels for its population.

- India's **Health Index** has improved over the years, reaching **0.734 in 2022**. Despite significant progress, especially in terms of **life expectancy** (from 59.8 years in 1993 to 67.7 years in 2022), India still lags behind Norway (rising from **0.895 in 1993** to **0.975 in 2022**), reflecting the ongoing challenges in healthcare access, infrastructure, and quality, particularly in rural areas. The significant drop in health performance from **2017 (0.776)** to **2022 (0.734)** could be attributed to several factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on healthcare services and the burden of disease in some regions. Norway's universal healthcare system, focus on preventive care, and high-quality medical facilities have contributed to its leading position in global health outcomes.
- India's **Education Index** has made impressive progress, from **0.327 in 1993** to **0.568 in 2022**. However, the country is still far behind Norway in terms of educational attainment. Norway's **Education Index** has experienced steady improvement, reflecting the country's strong **education system**, which provides **universal access** to quality education. The drop in 2011 (**0.840**) could be due to changes in the measurement methodology or a temporary shift in educational attainment, but the country has bounced back to **0.952** in 2022, showing continuous educational advancement. India has made strides in improving access to education, especially at the primary and secondary levels, but quality issues, dropout rates, and regional disparities continue to impact educational outcomes. The country's challenges in **education quality**, **teacher shortages**, and **infrastructure deficits** hinder its ability to match Norway's educational standards.
- India's **HDI** has made significant progress, increasing from **0.446 in 1993** to **0.644 in 2022**. While the country has made substantial gains, particularly in terms of income growth and education access, India still faces considerable gaps in **healthcare**, **education quality**, and **income inequality** that prevent it from reaching the levels of human development seen in high-income nations like Norway (from **0.867 in 1993** to **0.966 in 2022**). The **HDI value of 0.644** in 2022 reflects a developing country's efforts towards human development but also highlights the distance that still remains in areas like **social services**, **equitable growth**, and **regional disparities**.

6. CONCLUSION

This research has examined the **Human Development Index (HDI)** trends of **Norway** and **India**, focusing on the key indicators of **income**, **health**, and **education**, and analyzing the underlying factors that contribute to their respective HDI scores. The comparison reveals that **Norway**, with its high HDI ranking, benefits from a well-developed welfare state that prioritizes **universal healthcare**, **high-quality education**, and **sustainable economic policies**, ensuring a high standard of living for its citizens. However, challenges such as **regional disparities** and the need for **economic diversification** remain as the country transitions away from fossil fuel dependence.

In contrast, **India**, while making significant strides in economic growth and human development, still faces considerable obstacles. The country has made progress in **life expectancy**, **mean years of schooling**, and **per capita income** but continues to grapple with issues such as **income inequality**, **regional disparities**, and **healthcare access**, particularly in rural areas. India's HDI is still relatively lower than that of developed countries, and improvements in **education quality**, **health infrastructure**, and **social**

security are critical to accelerating its human development trajectory.

Both countries, though at different stages of development, share common goals of achieving **equitable growth, sustainability, and inclusive development**. For **Norway**, the focus should be on **addressing regional inequalities**, improving **mental health services**, and maintaining **economic sustainability** through **green policies**. For **India**, enhancing **healthcare accessibility**, improving **educational quality**, addressing **income disparities**, and focusing on **inclusive growth** will be vital for reducing the gaps in development and advancing human well-being.

7. REFERENCES

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